

The New Urban

April 2018



**1 Million Houses for
Kenyan Counties**

**Managing Waste?
Think Simple**

SymbioCity Replicated in Maseno



Council of Governors

Physical Address

Delta Corner, 7th Floor
Chiromo Road (Off Waiyaki Way)
Westlands, Nairobi.

info@cog.go.ke
www.cog.go.ke
www.sklinternational.se

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EDITORIAL CONTENT:
Tabitha Onyinge, Deer Leaps Communications Ltd

PHOTOGRAPHY:
Benjamin Sakwa, Isabella Gomez & SCK Programme Archives

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Open Spaces: A Pedestrian path in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (pg 10)

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Cover Photo: These Butere women draw water from an open well, for their domestic use.



From the Programme Manager's Desk

Resilient, resolute, persistent, teachable, resourceful, are just some of the words that spring into my mind as I reflect on the one and a half years of implementing the SymbioCity Kenya Programme. Together with the seven pilot counties in the programme, we've over this period accomplished successes, which we've graciously celebrated; and encountered flops, which we've reviewed and learnt from. Our resolve from the onset has been to tap into the more than 150 years experience of the Swedish way of planning, packaged through the SymbioCity Approach, in our endeavour to make our Kenyan cities and urban areas planned in a participatory and sustainable way.

The Swedish success in decentralised governance and urban development offers great learning for us through the Council of Governors (CoG). The joint effort of the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and the CoG is gradually yielding fruits with more stakeholders appreciating the domestication of the approach in the seven pilot counties. Worth noting is the contribution of the Urban Sustainability Reviews (USRs) for the seven pilots to the second generation County Integrated Development Plans.

Where are we at as per our timeline?

We have developed USR Reports for each of the seven pilots, detailing diagnosed challenges and opportunities in the respective counties. Each pilot county now has a vision and priority projects. The short-term improvement phase, in the form of quick-win projects, are on going. The pilots are currently developing longer-term solutions through change project proposals, which will be implemented by close of this year. I welcome you to flip through the pages of this issue of The New Urban Magazine, and read more about our progress in the counties.

Read about the National Government's pledge of one million houses, as articulated by Lands, Planning and Urban Development Committee Chairman at the CoG, HE Ferdinand Waititu. You will also be interested to know that away from the pilot counties, the SymbioCity Approach is fast gaining popularity. Read it all in **SymbioCity Replicated in Maseno** (page 21) and **CSOs Value SymbioCity Approach** (page 22). Also, learn about how our pilot counties are managing the challenging waste and water issues, through simple but sustainable methods. Still on resourcefulness, read about creative and cost-effective approaches to spatial and project planning. For these and more stimulating stories from our pilots, take a few minutes to run through the pages of this magazine. Don't forget to write back to us with comments and queries.

Thanks for your continued support.

Nicodemus Mbwika
SymbioCity Kenya Programme Manager



The SymbioCity Kenya Programme

Neighbours gather around the SCK team at the Eco Park land in Butere

The SymbioCity Kenya Programme aims at supporting counties to strengthen management, work structures and service delivery in urban areas, due to the nature and complexity associated with urban areas. The programme emphasises collaborative work between counties and the local communities towards developing a more integrated and inclusive solution to current and projected urban challenges. It stresses the need to leverage on locally available resources.

STRUCTURE

SymbioCity Kenya is organised in to three tiers:

- Stakeholder Group forms the base upon which the people voice their needs and challenges, and suggest solutions. The group is made up of representatives of the community from all trades and sectors, youth and persons with disability.
- Technical Working Group consists of middle-level county staff with relevant skills and competences for urban development. With the support of the SymbioCity facilitator and experts, this group synthesises input from the community and provides technical advice.
- The steering committee is the top decision making organ of SCK. It is responsible for policy advice, oversight, support and approval of on-going working group activities.

BASIS

The Council of Governors, through the Urban Support Team, under the Lands, Planning and Urban Development Committee, delivers activities of SCK in collaboration with the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions.

THE APPROACH

The SymbioCity Approach is aimed at sustainable development with emphasis on improving the living conditions of urban residents. While it doesn't provide ready-made solutions to all urban challenges, it offers committed local elected representatives, officials and activists a chance to develop properly planned and managed cities where people work, access services and thrive.

THE PILOTS

The seven counties that were competitively selected to pilot the SymbioCity Approach in one of their towns are: Homabay (Mbita); Kakamega (Butere); Kisumu (Ahero); Kitui (Kwa Vonza); Meru (Ontulili); Nakuru (Njoro), and Transzoia (Kimini).



Naomi Moranga
Nakuru County (Njoro Town)

Vision: A well-planned agricultural, industrial and educational town.

Quick Win Project: Preparations to improve access to water and reduce flooding in Jewathu Settlement.

Change Project: Improving access to water and reducing flooding in Jewathu Settlement through roof and storm water harvesting in two schools, and drilling a borehole.



Dennis N. Waswa
TransNzoia County (Kiminini Town)

Vision: A green vibrant town with opportunities for all

Quick Win Project: Solid waste management and greening through: tree growing; bulk bin and waste bin installation; benches; awareness creation; compost training.

Change Project: Enhancing waste reduction and increasing green spaces in Kiminini urban areas by improving solid waste disposal, water conservation and better sanitation, and increased greening of Kiminini.



Richard O. Bonyo
Homabay County (Mbita Town)

Vision: An orderly, scenic and vibrant lake town for sustainable growth

Quick Win Project: Proper solid waste management in Central Mbita and the market area.

Change Project: Enhancing the state of Mbita Town by fixing street lights in market areas and backstreets; installing modern prefabricated market stalls; enhanced waste management; and improving public spaces and pedestrian walkways by incorporating street furniture and landscaping, among others.



Sammy Kathike
Kitui County (Kwa Vonza Town)

Vision: A thriving university town with a vibrant economy and sustainable green environment whose people delight in its habitability

Quick Win Project: A demo site for roof water catchment and use; and lighting of three public buildings.

Change Project: Upgrading and integrating Kwa Vonza Market in to a vibrant and useable space with a cleaner, greener town environment; enhanced economic and recreational vibrancy in and support for orderly development.



Stephen O. Sule
Kisumu County (Ahero Town)

Vision: A clean, healthy, resilient, convergent and people-centered city of prosperity.

Quick Win Project: Building the capacity of residents on waste management – encouraging recycling and using waste for entrepreneurial purposes.

Change Project: Cleaning existing drainage channels and constructing new ones; improving waste management; and building standard modern business stalls and a recreational park by River Nyando.



Benjamin O. Orwa
Kakamega County (Butere Town)

Vision: A green, vibrant and friendly city

Quick Win Project: Ground preparation for creation of a multi-purpose eco-park.

Change Project: Rehabilitating idle public space and creating a multi-purpose eco-park near Lower Butere Bus Station.



Jefferson P. Musyoka,
Meru County (Ontulili Town)

Vision: A well-planned, managed and economically sustainable town

Quick Win Project: Lighting and greening with trees and grass, Katheri and Makutano Markets

Change Project: Transforming Ontulili in to a green modern integrated market with improved mobility and waste management.

1 Million Houses For Kenyan Counties

The UDC Chairman hopes that SCK will help the Kenyan counties, working collaboratively with the national government, to implement relevant aspects of the four-pillars-five-year development agenda.



**Kiambu County Governor;
H.E HON. FERDINARD NDUNGU WAITITU**

The seven pilot counties in the SymbioCity Kenya (SCK) Programme prepare to launch their change projects later this year, following one and a half years of intense learning and active community participation in urban planning related activities. As a boost to the programme, the newly elected Lands, Planning and Urban Development Committee (UDC) Chairperson at the Council of Governors (CoG), HE Ferdinand Waititu, pledges his committee's support. "We need to prioritise planning in every county through appropriate expertise. I'm glad the programme is enhancing expertise," he states. "There is need to plan. Rural to urban migration is a reality. We need to plan the future. Plan for transport – railway and road. Plan for human resource. Plan for food."

Waititu however adds that the SCK programme would have a greater sense of equity and effect were it piloted in all the 47 Counties of Kenya. But Anna Backmann, the SCK Support Team Leader, and Project Manager at SKL International clarifies that the SymbioCity Approach is being piloted in only seven of 47 counties due to financial limits "plus this is just the piloting phase. We would be happy to see SymbioCity Approach replicated in all 47 counties at the close of the piloting phase."

The CoG, through the Urban Support Team, under the UDC Committee, delivers activities of the SCK Programme in collaboration with the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR). The seven counties were competitively selected to pilot the SymbioCity Approach in one of their secondary towns. The Approach is aimed at sustainable development with emphasis on improving the living conditions of urban residents.

The UDC Chairman hopes that SCK will help the Kenyan counties, working collaboratively with the national government, to implement relevant aspects of the four-pillars-five-year development agenda. Affordable housing; better-developed manufacturing sector; universal healthcare, and food security form the pillars.

Other urban development priority projects include solid waste management, road construction, and provision of alternative building materials. "We have to eliminate traffic jams and improve sewerage and drainage systems in this country. Definitely all these are not accidents. Governors have a chance to shape the urban development trend. The how is more important now, not the what," Waititu concludes.



These women sell their wares by the entrance of Butere Market Toilet



A youth who hawks foods for a living and looks forward to a brighter Butere



The Railways Station Master's house at the defunct Butere Railway Station got destroyed by fire a few years ago



Kakamega

Working with Academia

Mwale Medical and Technology Centre is expected to support Butere Town development

The vision of SymbioCity is to jump start processes and work with all stakeholders – business community, county and national government, etc. Kakamega County is working with 34 students of landscape architecture at the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology to generate a master plan for Butere Town area, and landscape designs for the projected Eco Park.

In January this year, the students surveyed Butere and are in the process of generating plans. Benjamin Orwa, the SCK Coordinator for Kakamega County can't hide his joy. "The partnership makes us fortunate because we'll have a suitable roadmap for development. It also saves us about Kshs. 60 million."

The design is a competition between the students. Their lecturers will evaluate, short list and present to SymbioCity to select designs that

best meet standards of sustainability and aesthetic value. "The design should be revealed by May," states Orwa. The best designers will be awarded in a ceremony. The larger vision of Kakamega County is to upgrade Butere to town status, and the Eco Park is one step forward. "The master plan will capture all that is required to make Butere a town," he adds.

Already a privately owned Techno City is coming up near Butere, and is expected to support the town's development. The Kshs.200 billion Mwale Medical and Technology City is a gigantic complex with shops, a residential area, a golf course, tarmacked roads, and a referral hospital. Orwa terms it a good initiative. "Definitely the project impacts positively on SymbioCity programming. Strategic Urban Development Plan is one of the aims of this programme. The developer is definitely ahead of us, and so we'll capture what he has," he says.

We're on the Right Track

By Tabitha Onyinge, Communications Consultant, SCK Programme



Henry Alukaba, the chairman Butere Community Policing, and member of the Butere SCK working group is flanked by the youth in the bus park

The Vision of Butere Town is: A green vibrant and friendly city. The town is vibrant; right. Unemployed (some intoxicated) youth pass time at the boda boda (motorcycle taxi) stage, making catcalls at women. Women who won't even give them a glance. "Could SymbioCity open a supermarket where we can buy girls?" one of them asks in slurred speech. It is 9 am. His companions chuckle. Another tells me that he is educated but can't get a job or a wife. "We're frustrated. Girls get employed, then they despise us." With his friends cheering, this youth describes a sad cycle.

"We drink and abuse drugs because of frustration. When we sober up, we come face to face with more frustrations and run for the bottle. Then we get into crime because

“We drink and abuse drugs because of frustration. When we sober up, we come face to face with more frustrations and run for the bottle. Then we get into crime because we have to sustain this lifestyle. Then we feel guilty. And the cycle continues. Who will rescue us?”

we have to sustain this lifestyle. Then we feel guilty. And the cycle continues. Who will rescue us?” He asks. He later sends me his documents. He is a trained orthopaedic plaster technologist! (google it out).

Because of excellent weather and plenty of rainfall, Butere is “green”. Even the rails on the abandoned railway track, the former glory of the town, are green with grass and shrubbery. Cows feed on them happily, but the people can’t stop mourning the loss of their beloved railway transport. “But the railway alone is not a development driver. Other transport e.g. roads can also drive development,” SymbioCity Kenya (SCK) County Coordinator, Benjamin Orwa, says.

At least Vitalis Masakhwe, the Sub-County Administrator sees this. “What lies ahead of Butere far surpasses its former glory,” he says. Jacob Akhonya, the kind and friendly seventy-something-year-old retired teacher says that SCK was a gift to stir up Butere’s economic

development. “Complementary services like factories will spring up and the former Butere will just fade into distant memory,” he says. The lunch hour conversation in Butere Town is inspiring. No wonder these wise men sit in the steering committee of the programme! But wait, where are women? Zablon Indakwa yanks me off this thought. “If we follow the tenets of SymbioCity to the letter, Butere will grow into a vibrant town,” he says. His choice of language, plus the 10-point recommendations for the programme’s technical team speak of precision.

But Henry Alukaba is the life of the party. He is not just famous he commands authority. He reminisces his hilarious past and how Muniyana, the Eco-Park site, was his favourite swimming spot. “Then I thought that water came from Inyanzwa (a very big mythical sheep, after which the swampy site is named), I was right,” we wait for the kicker, “the envisioned development, especially the tree project, will give Butere water and more.”

A Welcome Eviction

Butere people can already visualise the soon to be Eco-Park, and are excited about it. This includes immediate neighbours of Muniyana, the four-hectare piece of project land. Even neighbours who appear to illegally occupy sections of the government land support the upcoming project and welcome relocation, should it be necessary, as they told the SymbioCity Kenya Communications team.



Silas Okute Asoni, 58, resident

“I’ve lived here the whole of my adult life. I’ve heard of the upcoming ‘stadium’ and look forward to lively games. We’d be mad to reject the project.” I hope we neighbours will be priority beneficiaries of the project. Upgrade our lives. Should there be need to evict, let it be done humanely.



Indakwa Wycliffe, 30, resident

“As a surveyor, I have a slightly better understanding of land laws than my neighbours, and I do appreciate the Symbio team’s approach so far. The development is excellent because Western Kenya thrives in sports. Many of us here are businessmen. We have to start planning how to benefit from the project.”



Christine Omung’ala, 74, resident
(widowed mother of eight)

“I’ve lived here for 40 years. I’ve heard of the project, and support it. I suspect that I’ve encroached on the said land, but I’m ready to bargain for relocation. I’d longed for the space to be transformed into a market, but the ‘stadium’ is also welcome. I hope to get a chance to do business in the project.”

Millicent Cherotich, the assistant coordinator of the programme says that community engagements will be done. “We’ll consider relocations and compensations where necessary. The space that’s not encroached is sufficient for now, but we’ll be looking at expansion in future.”

Whose Open Spaces?



Everlyne Otieno speaks to a participant during the World Urban Forum

Kenya has playgrounds, public parks, public seating/picnic areas, cemeteries, parking lots, public halls and theatres, among others. But these spaces are only available in a few urban areas, and where they are found, they are few, poorly managed and often unsafe, or turned into temporary markets. Besides, a majority of the Kenyan public don't seem aware that they have a right to open spaces. This is what a few urban planning experts in Kenya say.

Charles Otieno Konyango,
Director, Housing and Urban Development, Ministry of Lands, Kenya

"Open spaces have in the past attracted a lot of attention where they were perceived as vacant spaces that were available for conversion and development. This was because there were no regulations and legislation on their management. Currently under the Urban Areas and Cities Act, they are an "ingredient" for urban development. The National Land Commission is tasked to manage all open spaces, starting off by securing titles to ensure that they are not forcefully taken.

Countries like Malaysia, Ghana and South Africa have excellent examples on management of open spaces because they long secured the spaces in law. They also developed their open spaces with the requisite community furniture i.e. landscaping; water; sanitation; rest places; footpaths; cycling paths; gaming areas, etc. These were developed to cater for all people – the young, the old and the disabled. This is the next step that Kenya has to move into."

Everlyne Otieno,
Urban Development Specialist, SymbioCity Kenya

"Open spaces have been left idle for too long in Kenya, giving room to forceful take overs. If made active, these spaces would cease to attract "grabbers". As I walk to work every day,

I notice how Kenya has focused on building roads, and neglected the convenience and safety of pedestrians. We forget that cities are for people.

There is need to change our thinking and start planning for the people - making public spaces secure, attractive and functional for the benefit of the people. Consider this: a majority of Kenyans cannot even afford private vehicles, yet more infrastructure is developed for private cars and not public transport. In Kuala Lumpur, pedestrian crossings are wide and clearly marked, and some walkways are sheltered. There are also sections of roads marked blue, or with bike signs, for the sole use by pedestrians or bikes. Surely we can achieve this in Kenya."

***Constant Cap,**
A Nairobi based blogger on Urban Planning
 Open spaces, which include playgrounds, parks, gardens and general open spaces, are required in all residential areas. Public purpose land use management also provides for market centres, shopping areas and public halls. Most residential areas were duly planned with shopping/market areas and other public amenities in close proximity. However, the last two decades has seen a rapid increase in the urban population, diminishing space for urban development and a corresponding increase in land value.

The use of open spaces in middle and upper class residential areas however remains a paradox. Whereas public spaces in working class neighbourhoods are in constant use, middle class residents tend to prefer privately owned spaces such as members' clubs or gated community fields. As a result many public open spaces in middle and upper class areas remain dilapidated and abandoned, and an easy target for "grabbers". This ought to change."

*Read more from this blogger via: <http://africacityplanner.com>



Bukhungu Stadium, Kakamega County



Njoro recreational park, built in the 1960s



Bicycles for public use in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia



Ndarugo River, alternative water source for Jewathu Residents

Regained Hope,
“We are now at Par”

As other SymbioCity Kenya pilot counties made programming progress, Nakuru County only started to work on its quick win project in December 2017. It has since risen to a fair level. The team now also has a change project whose proposal is under development. “We identified the reasons for the one year lapse, were able to rise and now feel at par with other pilot counties,” shares Naomi Moranga, a Physical Planner in the county. Naomi is the county’s pilot coordinator having joined the programme in September 2017. “Once we take off, we will complete implementation soon,” adds assistant pilot coordinator, John Kamau. Kamau is a Senior Housing Officer in the county.

Some causes of the delay, according to the team, included not focusing on clear problems to address. Changes in political leadership at county level also shook up the composition of the working group. “There is now better management support and linkages have been built between the project and other county priorities like Strategic Development Goal 11,” explains core team member, Arch Benard Maina. Maina is the acting Chief Officer for Lands and Physical Planning at the county.

Project delays can cause anxiety amongst stakeholders. Residents of Jewathu settlement, in Njoro Town, are no exception. They have however regained confidence in the project. “We’re moving from the unknown to the known, and project ownership is rising,”

explains Naomi. After an end of 2017 SymbioCity workshop, some stakeholders in the project “were eager to start implementing a new project the next week. They are now better informed and appreciate how the project works,” says Kamau.

Core-team member, Solomon Mbugua, a GIS Officer at the county, adds that the engaging nature of SymbioCity Approach ensures active participation by all stakeholders. “They don’t just endorse decisions, but are deeply entrenched in the process, therefore feeling included. Their engagement is worthwhile and memorable,” he adds.

Jewathu Settlement, the project’s location for both projects, has perennial water shortage and flooding. A community water point is to be established at Njoro Township Integrated Primary School, in the quick win phase. To manage flooding, a water pan to drain storm water will be constructed in Njoro Boys’ High school. Additionally, a borehole is to be drilled for the community.

To fast track implementation, a working group member who has political and grass roots influence has been appointed to champion the project. The resident of Njoro, John Icigo has a good understanding of the project and is expected to sell the project to the community and the political class. “The enthusiasm of our super champion is evidence that the community finally believes that something will happen,” states Maina.

Unique Jewathu Settlement

Jewathu Settlement in Njoro Township bears typical characteristics of most unplanned settlements, yet it is just about 15 to 20-years-old. Jewathu grew exponentially after the post 2007 election violence. The rapidly rising population of residents are displaced farmers who are now informally employed, hence the greatest percentage of Njoro’s urban poor. For the few remaining farmers, returns from agriculture have reduced. Similarly, some residents are loggers, which is largely illegal in Kenya.

According to Arch Benard Maina, the acting Chief Officer for Lands and Physical Planning in Nakuru County, Jewathu is fairly well structured and easy to identify. However, it has perpetual water shortage and flooding, which makes water vending a major economic activity there. The residents’ main source of water is the highly polluted River Ndarugu, and perhaps harvested rainwater. Other problems include substance abuse, infrastructural deterioration, insecurity, poor housing, etc.



A donkey cart water vendor in Jewathu Settlement

Arch Maina adds apathy to the list. He says that small towns are indifferent to development initiatives because they have not benefitted much from governmental development over time. "It takes intervention at levels such as the SymbioCity Approach to begin to draw out participation from communities... Jewathu lacks resident associations hence it has been hard to hear their voice on any matter," he says.

But core-team member, Solomon Mbugua, says that the team will apply on Jewathu project lessons learnt from other pilot counties. "From Kisumu and TransNzoia we've learnt how to step up our engagement with the community, for a wider and more gender responsive representation."

Water is Life

The SymbioCity Kenya Programme in Nakuru County has identified water shortage and flooding as its project focus in Jewathu Settlement, Njoro Township. A community water point from roof water harvesting and a rehabilitated bore hole, is to be established in Njoro Township Integrated Primary School. Similarly, a water pan is to be constructed in Njoro Boys' High school to drain off a major flood path. The water will be used for agriculture and greening of the area. A borehole is also to be drilled for the community.

Water is a serious problem in the area. Some residents had this to say:



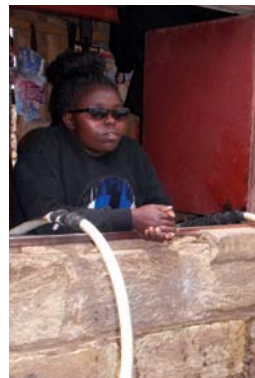
James Njoroge, Head Teacher, Njoro Township Integrated School

"I'm very excited that we'll be a source of community water. Our borehole is down, and the tank that holds our harvested rainwater leaks. Water supply is insufficient. Many times, our pupils have to bring to school water for cleaning, yet we know the shortage in their homes, and the unsafeness of River Ndarugu."



Maina Kariuki, Businessman, Njoro Town

"Water is life, yet it costs Kshs. 20 to 30 a day in the settlement, yet most people there earn Kshs.150 a day! Water problem should be history in this area. A lot of money has been pumped into it with nothing to show. The problem can be solved within two years by leaders who have the people at heart."



Susan Wanjiku, Cashier, Masmem Water Company

"We have 9 10-litre overhead tanks filled up by a bore hole. We make about Kshs.4000 per day from water sales. We start to sell as early as 5am and close as late as 10pm because demand is greatest early morning and late evening."



Mary Nyambura, Stay-at-home-mum

"I can't harvest water from my roof because I'm sandwiched between two houses. We use very limited water. When my daughter has to carry water to school, she fetches from what I've bought. That reduces our supply."



14-year-old pupil, Njoro Township Integrated School

"I hate this water shortage. Sometimes we're forced to come to school dirty. And when there is no water at home, we can't cook and yet I can't come to school hungry. Thank you for the project."

Managing Waste?

Think Simple

Waste Management is a major challenge in most urban areas in Kenya. The Director of Housing and Urban Development in the Ministry of Lands, Kenya, Charles Otieno Konyango, acknowledges this, adding that effective waste management needs to be backed up with comprehensive policy implementation regulation.

As the seven Pilot Counties in the SymbioCity Kenya Programme formulated their respective Urban Sustainability Reviews, Solid Waste Management stood out as an area needing urgent intervention. In March, the counties gathered in two workshops to formulate their change project proposals, and unsurprisingly, solid waste management was at the centre of all proposals. SymbioCity invited waste management expert, Benard Obera, to carry out focused discussions with the pilot counties on effective waste management.

"Think simply when thinking waste management. Waste management programmes need not be grandiose, the solutions are always simple and found within the community," he stated. To support his assertion, Benard shared local examples of successful waste management in Kisumu, Homabay and Nairobi, in domestic, market and industrial settings.

"Knowing your waste is the starting point to proper management," he stated. Understanding waste entails knowing the quantities and composition of waste from each source, and the time that the waste is generated. It also involves understanding waste management process, i.e. generation, storage, collection, transport and treatment. It also involves understanding the easiest point at which to process the waste at the least cost but with the best outcomes.

At the point of generation, it is important to know the source and quantity of waste and whether it can be reduced, reused or recycled. During storage, consider whether or not the



Residents dump waste in a stalled upcoming building in Kiminini

waste should be stored and where to store it in order to preserve its quality for the next step. At collection and transport consider frequency of collection and routing. In all the stages, legal and cost implications of actions taken must be considered.

Benard reiterates that the three main components needed for successful waste management are: infrastructure, e.g. dustbins and transport; enforceable law e.g. on segregation and storage of waste; and attitude change by the people. "However, the ultimate decision on waste management must be based on what is available in the immediate environment."



12-year-old Std. 6 pupil, Njoro Township Integrated Primary School

"Lots and Lots of Water Wastage"

Many homesteads in the rural areas of Kenya depend wholly on natural water sources which include rivers, rainwater, storm water and ponds for all their household and farming needs. "Very few rural homes have running tap water provided by councils or municipals. Water management in the urban set-up is a different case all together; lots and lots of wastage," states Theophilus Kioko, a water resource management expert.

The planning paradigm of most planners is draining storm water out of towns, leading to excess water and flooding in some parts and waterlessness in others, explains Kioko. He stresses the urgency for towns to focus on collecting storm water and creating buffers from rooftops, road water, storage ponds, rivers and streams, and redirecting excess storm water to recharge ground water.

Effective water management is a priority area in the developing change project proposals of the

seven Pilot Counties in the SymbioCity Kenya Programme. The issues range from clogged or non-existent drainages causing flooding, to dry taps and consequent high water costs that are running urban residents broke. But speaking during a proposal development workshop in Nyahururu, Kioko asserted that, "water solutions lie in the normal environmental opportunities that we overlook, e.g. tapping the rainfall that we let to drain away, or storm water that flows away."

During a similar exercise in Kisumu, water expert, Bernard Muendo, listed the two main methods of collecting road water as: draining it through side ditches, mitre drains, diversions, culverts, ponds, etc., and creating road or river crossing structures on seasonal rivers. The two experts state that the solution to growing water problems in urban areas lay in harvesting roof water, road water, tree growing, and storage ponds in farm and fields.



Benson Odinga, bicycle water vendor, Jewathu resident

Homabay

Set for the Future



Beatrice Ogola, the CEC for Land and Urban Development, Homabay County

Homabay County made a big deal of the recently held proposal formulation workshops for SymbioCity Kenya Pilot Counties. The county's working group consisted of policy formulators and implementers, as well as project beneficiaries, to ensure the success of the project. Present were two members of county assembly (MCAs); the Chief Executive Committee Member (Minister), Chief Officer and technical staff from the Ministry of Lands, Physical Planning and Urban Development; the governor's policy and resource mobilisation advisor, and representatives of the community.

"We selected the best technical team – planners, environmentalists, oversight and policy level people because we're passionate about the SymbioCity Programme," disclosed Beatrice Ogola, the CEC who participated actively throughout the workshop. "We want to best implement the project in Mbita to enable us replicate it in other towns, with the same quality service and attention," she added.

The strong team gives confidence to the county pilot coordinator, Richard Bonyo. "We are guaranteed ownership and political goodwill. Needless to say that we're assured of this project's sustainability," he boasted. From the start of the project, the Homabay team has been purposeful in its approach. During the Urban Sustainability Review phase, the team lobbied and educated MCAs in the Lands, Housing and Urban Development Committee on the SymbioCity Approach. "Political goodwill is very important for the success of any project. We're glad that SymbioCity naturally enriches extensive participation," said Bonyo.

These efforts are paying off, as the SymbioCity Programme has been allocated Kshs.23 million in the 2018/2019 financial year. Apparently the Homabay County Governor is passionate about the programme and is keen on its success. "Our goal is simple: to show appreciation to our donors, and seriousness to our people by putting forward the best team going forward," says Beatrice.

Homabay County's change project proposal is about improving the state of Mbita Town by mounting street lights in market areas and backstreets; installing modern prefabricated market stalls; enhancing waste management mechanisms; and improving public spaces and pedestrian walkways by incorporating street furniture and landscaping, among others. "Mbita Town is currently dull...it doesn't have a toilet in the market, or even electronic shops. Soon it will have those and more. Including financial institutions," dreams Bonyo.

A change project is a sustainable urban development intervention that is focused on economic, social or environmental sustainability, and which contributes towards poverty reduction in the pilot town. "We are determined to change the picture of urbanisation in Homabay County, starting with Mbita Town," discloses Beatrice. She is ensuring sustainability of the programme by embedding the learnings in the best team for posterity.

Data Eases Planning in Kwa Vonza

“Solid data is now available and useable”

Five years ago, accessing data on the upcoming urban area of Kwa Vonza was hard. “If you wanted to know, for example, how many people had access to safe drinking water in Kwa Vonza, your only option was to visit homesteads to gather information then add up the numbers,” shared Planner Grace Njambi, of Kitui Town Administration Office.

Njambi who was speaking at a recent SymbioCity Kenya (SCK) Programme proposal writing workshop added that only geographical and population distribution data was easy to access. “This has since improved and we now have data on everything,” stated the assistant Pilot Coordinator of SCK Programme in Kitui County.

Planner Sammy Kathike, the County’s Pilot Coordinator for SCK, credits this development to SymbioCity Kenya.

“There was data on Kwa Vonza, but it was sectorial and scattered all over the place. Everyone used it in his/her own way, as it wasn’t integrated in a repository,” he explains.

According to Sammy, the form of the SymbioCity Programme, and particularly its composition during the Urban Sustainability Review (USR) made it possible to “stumble upon” important data in different places.

“Because of the USR’s multi-agency, full and divergent participatory approach, solid data is

now available and useable,” Sammy states. The USR forum contained a working group, a technical committee, and a steering committee that incorporated various government agencies and departments, the private sector and community members, all with divergent experience and knowledge. “We consolidated important data from the Ministries of Health, Environment, Lands, etc.; from agencies like Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI), Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) and (Kenya) Water Resources Management Authority (WRMA); and from Kenyatta and South Eastern Kenya Universities, and particularly participants from the departments of water,” explains Sammy.

One may wonder what data has to do with planning of urban areas. Just like in other sectors, data is important in making sound decisions and devising long-term strategies for sustainable development. For instance, the Kitui County USR

illustrates the extent of natural resources that are available in the area, and how they can be distributed effectively and equitably to the residents.

SymbioCity Kenya Project Manager, Planner Nicodemus Mbwika adds that data influences which areas to prioritise during resource distribution. Besides, the population of an area determines whether it is classified as a market, a town, a municipality or a town, he states.

Data on Kwa Vonza is now available in the USR report. “With data, it has been easy to formulate projects for the people of Kwa Vonza,” concludes Njambi.





“Having a name was the first great achievement for us”

Community ready for New Ontulili

In January last year, life in Makutano and Katheri Markets in Meru County was slow. Traders, mainly farmers from the neighbourhood, seemed to dump their green produce in the make-shift wooden stalls, and stand by, hoping to get one or two city-bound motorists to make good purchases. Like twins, the two markets had a lot in common but faced their struggles independently. SymbioCity Kenya Programme was establishing itself in the neighbourhood, and residents appeared disinterested in the programme’s promises. Barely two years later, today, residents of the two small markets have seen rapid changes that have increased their investment confidence.

To begin with, the markets started to operate under one name – Ontulili. “Having a name was the first great achievement for us...the area has existed as small markets that have grown in five years, as a spill-over from Nanyuki Town,” discloses, Dennis Mutwiri Magiri, the assistant pilot coordinator for SymbioCity Kenya in Meru County. The common identity causes the people to think and act in unity, which is tremendous for the SymbioCity Approach.

Most recently, the town has experienced a burst of activities. “Commercial and residential buildings are coming up in anticipation of our change project,” reveals Planner Jefferson Musyoka, the county’s pilot coordinator. In SymbioCity jargon, a change project is a sustainable urban development intervention that is focused on economic, social or environmental sustainability, and which contributes towards poverty reduction in the pilot town.

With the entry of SymbioCity, Ontulili residents have benefited from elaborate street lighting courtesy of the national government, in addition to on going piping of water, and grading of connecting roads. “Fuel stations are coming up, churches are being built, and hostels too, all by local residents,” shares Jefferson. “Top county leadership already have plans to replicate the SymbioCity Approach in Keria and Murara Markets. They like the Approach because it is not just about having plans, but implementing them,” he adds.

The change project for Meru County is about transforming Ontulili Market in to a green modern integrated market with improved mobility and waste management. “The project has many additional components like improving accessibility, creating community support facilities, allocating a matatu parking area, etc.,” explains Jefferson.

Economist Eric Mutwiri, a member of the county’s working group sees agriculture as the main driver of Ontulili’s urban growth. “This town offers numerous solutions to Nanyuki’s problems, including food solutions,” he says. It is proven that most urban areas, like Nanyuki in this case, do face food challenges because no one takes responsibility for food production and distribution, yet food creates great opportunities in urban areas. Food production is the greatest consumer of water and transport, and the greatest source of employment and waste.



Hadija, a fish monger in Butere Market, is happy about the sheltered market stalls

Kiminini Shares Valuable Lessons

TransNzoia County launched its SymbioCity quick win project in 2017, and has learnt many valuable lessons from the outcome. The project entailed improving solid waste management and greening Kiminini Town. Trees were planted and waste bins fixed around the town, while two additional bulk bins are being bought. The team also erected some benches in public places and got VI Agroforestry to initiate compost training for residents, in addition to donating trees and supporting the community trainings.

The trees did not thrive as expected, and litter is dumped around the bins. "Those outcomes give us the correct picture of the state of waste and trees in the town," shares working group member, Emmanuel Situma. Some trees dried up due to lack of care, while residents and animals spoilt others. "Only a handful of the trees survived," he says.

SymbioCity Expert, Åsa Forsman, explains that one of the major reasons for continued littering could be lack of public training on the use of waste bins, and the whole waste management system. She also points out low ownership.

"The people who live near the waste bins don't feel responsible for them, and so they don't demonstrate to others, their proper use." In addition, the waste bins may be too small, and the generally dirty environment doesn't inspire the community to use the bins.

The team now plans for intensive public awareness and training around the project, to increase ownership and encourage willing residents to adopt trees and waste bins near them. Four additional sweepers, and an environment enforcement officer, will be employed and trained to manage aspects of the project.



A teacher demonstrating tree growing techniques to pupils of a local school in Kiminini

Larger waste bins will be installed and emptied frequently. "A clean-up day will be organised on the day the bins are erected, to incentivise the community to keep the town clean," Åsa explains. "Through GIS, many residents and organisations have, after training, adopted the trees, which also have protective cover," adds Emmanuel.

Waste management expert, Benard Obera, praises the team's efforts and suggests designing a waste management strategy for effective long-term waste management. He advises that in place of composting, the team can retain the value of waste by working towards reducing the distance between the point of waste generation and waste use e.g. using waste as animal feed. "Make waste management as easy as possible. Having extremely physical bulk waste processing e.g. using wheel burrows to transfer waste into bulk bins makes it difficult to improve on waste management. This could be the reason waste doesn't reach the bins," he states, and recommends building a ramp in to the bulk bin.

SymbioCity Replicated in Maseno



A flooded street in Ahero Market



A resident cleans up the banks of River Nyando, in Ahero

Kisumu County is replicating the SymbioCity Approach in Maseno Township, County Pilot Coordinator, Stephen Sule and his assistant, Sospeter Onunga, have disclosed. "After detailing Governor Peter Nyon'go about the SymbioCity project in Ahero, he was very impressed and couldn't wait to implement it in one more town," shares Sospeter. The team that is to deliver on the project has already been selected.

The SymbioCity Approach promotes an integrated, holistic and multi-disciplinary approach to sustainable urban development, to achieve better-quality urban environments through efficient resource use and synergies between different urban systems. The Ahero team has, from the start, enjoyed devoted support of the county government. Additionally, it has a strong working group with members drawn from various relevant departments of the county, who consult widely throughout the processes.

Maseno was selected to go through the upgrading because its population and proximity to Kisumu City is similar to that of Ahero. "Maseno is a model town that would be best upgraded in to an urban centre with requisite amenities. It is a satellite town to the city," says Stephen. While he is excited about the developments, the pilot coordinator prays that the Maseno project won't derail the on going progress in Ahero. Nevertheless, the Ahero Town working group is prepared to help make Maseno a success.

According to Sospeter, the composition of the technical team from the county government isn't right for the task ahead. "It consists of top tier county leaders who include Chief Executives and Chief Officers, who we know from experience to be a very busy category. They may not have the time to deliver," he states. Besides that, the synergy and inter-departmental linkages that drive the success of the SymbioCity Approach are wanting. "As it is now, they have not brought aboard the relevant ministries," observes Stephen.

The Ahero team will guide the Maseno team accordingly. It has so far shared learning on the process of generating Urban Sustainability Review Reports and managing project challenges. "We realise that the Maseno team is keen to implement faster than we have done in Ahero, and we shall give them the best possible support," states Sospeter. The seven Kenyan pilot counties have had one-and-a-half-years of intense learning on the SymbioCity Approach. They have within the period, diagnosed challenges and opportunities in their counties (documented in the USRs). On top of creating visions and prioritising projects, they have made short-term improvements through quick win projects. The pilots are currently developing longer-term solutions to be implemented soon.

Ahero's quick win project consisted of cleaning and installing compartmentalised waste bins in the market, and unclogging the town's entire drainage system. It now plans to escalate waste management and build the Nyando River multi-park that will contain an eatery, information and cultural centre with Internet access, a childcare centre for young women traders, pedestrian and cattle crossing bridge, modern stalls, and wet lands to purify the river water.



CSOs VALUE SYMBIOCITY APPROACH

CSOs take notes as Everlyne Otieno makes a presentation about the SymbioCity Approach

The SymbioCity Approach is gaining recognition in Kenya as a superior and unique approach to urban development. This was apparent during a two-day training of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) specialising in urban development, and drawn from ten Kenyan Counties.

SymbioCity Kenya (SCK) staff Everlyne Otieno and Maureen Njoga demonstrated to the CSOs, SymbioCity's six-step approach to planning. The planning approach is a participatory tool and method for the development of inclusive and integrated urban development solutions.

"The SymbioCity Approach to planning has demonstrated its uniqueness as an enabler for social inclusion in the urban form. By integrating economic, environmental and social-cultural dimensions as well as gender and pro-poor perspectives, it aims at creating

sustainable results. This is excellent for Kenyan urban spaces," said Prof Alfred Omenya, Architect and Urban Development expert.

The Civil Society Urban Development Platform (CSUDP) has collaborated with other organisations to equip residents of informal settlements with participatory tools and methods for developing plans in their settlements and strategies for incorporating these into the Urban Integrated Development Plans. One such planning model is the Adaptive Settlement Planning Model (ASPM), which builds the skills of the residents to collect and analyse data that empowers them to effectively participate and negotiate in urban planning platforms.

"While ASPM is strong in community data gathering, it is not strong in producing final plans. On the other hand, SymbioCity is strong in the planning process and indeed in production of plans," stated Prof Omenya. Some participants shared their thoughts about the Approach with SCK communications:



Kennedy Kibet, Sociologist, Chairman Uasin Gishu Youth Consortium

"The SymbioCity Approach sounds like a wonderful planning tool. The six-step approach brings together every detail of planning. I will definitely apply the Approach in proposal development, and specifically the concept of participation, which we are missing."



Jared Babu, Cherangani Environment and Development Forum, Transnozia

"The Approach has made clear collaborative approach to planning. Our organisation will definitely collaborate with housing and other sectors. Community involvement in urban planning is also clearer to me. I didn't know that the community was entitled to feedback especially in prioritising CIDP interventions."



Lydia Chavulimo, Environmental Scientist, Dajopen Waste Management, Transnozia

"The Approach gives the roadmap to participation and inclusion. Obviously in participation, people's interests are varied, and some vested, hence the need to harness all participants towards achieving a common goal."



SymbioCity Kenya promotes sustainable urban development. It is a programme anchored at the Council of Governors (CoG), and carried out in partnership with seven Kenyan Counties and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR).

SymbioCity is a holistic approach to urban planning. It is about seeing the bigger picture to achieve synergies between urban systems. It is also about finding the best and most sustainable solutions for everyone by including multiple stakeholders in the processes.

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