SymbioCity
Kenya

Urban
The new buzzword

Council of Governors
Taking the lead
In urban development

How to
become a SymbioCity
Pilot County

SISTER ORGANISATIONS
partnering for sustainability

BY NICODEMUS MBWIKA, PROJECT MANAGER FOR SYMBIOCITY KENYA AT COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS

A FIRST JOINT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING FOR SALAR AND COG TOOK PLACE LATE FEBRUARY 2016, WITH EMBASSY OF SWEDEN PRESENT.

Council of Governors (CoG) and The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) and its subsidiary SKL International have partnered to work towards a more sustainable development in the counties of Kenya.

The Council of Governors provides a framework for consultation and cooperation between the national and county governments, and amongst county governments. The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions is the body that represents and supports all local governments in Sweden.

SALAR is a large organization with a long history of supporting Swedish municipalities to provide better and more efficient service delivery to its citizens. Like the CoG, it is a politically governed organization with a similar structure as CoG and can therefore provide interesting models and experiences for the institutional

support to CoG at organizational level, policy development, advocacy, and networking and information provision.

HE Governor Munya, Chairman of Council of Governors concluded at a recent Joint Steering Committee meeting between CoG and SALAR;

"This partnership will enable Council of Governors to grow as an institution and perform its role more effectively. We can benefit from the experience of over 150 years of local government coordination that SALAR has had with Swedish municipalities."

The SymbioCity Kenya Programme
The programme is mainly funded by the Embassy of Sweden in Kenya, which is responsible for Swedish development cooperation in Kenya. It is a formal agreement between Embassy of Sweden ▶

VISITING SWEDEN; GOVERNOR AHMED ABDULLAHI OF WAJIR AND GOVERNOR DAVID NKEDIANYE OF KAJIADO.

JERKER STATTIN, DIRECTOR OF
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AT SALAR

HE GOVERNOR MUNYA, CHAIRMAN
OF COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS

HE GOVERNOR MALOMBE AND COG VISITING HAMMARBY SJÖSTAD,
AN EXAMPLE OF HOLISTIC URBAN PLANNING IN STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN.

"This partnership will enable Council of Governors to grow as an institution and perform its role more effectively. We can benefit from the experience of over 150 years of local government coordination that SALAR has had with Swedish municipalities."

(Government of Sweden) and the Ministry of Finance (Government of Kenya). A Joint Steering Committee, consisting of representatives from the two sister organisations has been established as the decision making body for the programme.

The Kenya SymbioCity programme is implemented by a dedicated team at the Urban Development Secretariat of the Council of Governors. It is composed of staff from CoG as well as technical assistance staff provided by SKL International.

The main cooperation areas within the programme are;

→ Institutional development of Council of Governors

→ Application of the SymbioCity Approach in seven pilot counties

→ Intergovernmental cooperation on urban development

→ Sharing of experiences and networking

Focus on learning and sharing – for all 47 counties

All project activities will primarily be driven by local actors, with the support of national and international experts in order to ensure that all knowledge and experience obtained through the programme is maintained and institutionalised locally.

The SymbioCity Kenya programme will generally leave strong and functioning urban governance platforms in which

LAMU COUNTY EXECUTIVE IN CHARGE OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT, MS AMINA MASOOD, HE GOVERNOR DAVID NKEDIANYE AND PRINCIPAL PLANNER OF TYRESÖ MUNICIPALITY IN SWEDEN, MS CAROLINA FINTLING RUE

A DELEGATION FROM COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS LED BY THE FORMER CHAIRMAN HE GOVERNOR RUTTO VISITED SWEDEN DURING THE SALAR ELECTION CONGRESS IN MARCH 2015.
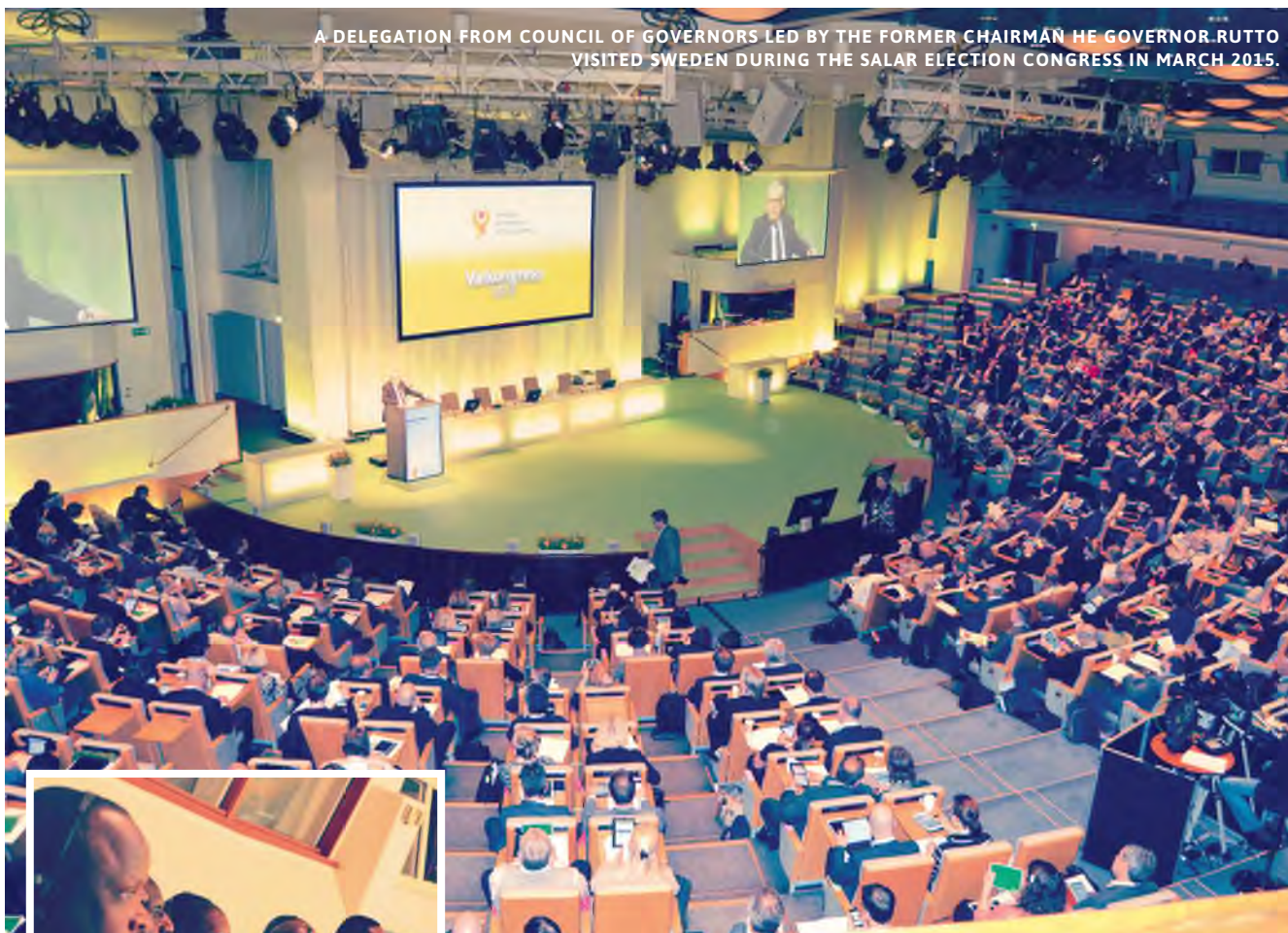
county governments and urban citizens as well as other interest groups demonstrate transparent and participatory decision-making tradition for sustainable growth and equitable development.

The knowledge gained through implementation and experience sharing will enable counties plan and implement strategies and solutions based on local realities.

Pertinent to this will be the generation of urban visions that will be nested in to the prevailing planning frameworks such as the integrated urban development plans, county spatial plans and sectoral plans.

Civil society organisations will be involved to share best practices and lessons deemed relevant to all 47 counties. The program also provides options for collaboration with the private sector and academic institutions will actively engage to explore on-going urban development processes.

ABOUT THE WRITER

Nicodemus Mbwika has a background in planning and project management. He has over five years' experience in planning, design and execution of development projects in different counties of Kenya. He has previously worked for DSW Kenya and Fintrac Inc. Besides his background and experience, he has highly developed communication and socio-interaction skills that are adaptable to different settings and key to sustaining positive interpersonal relations, a skill that will be key in putting the SymbioCity Kenya team together as the Project Manager.

What is SymbioCity Kenya?

The SymbioCity Approach is a concept for sustainable urban development which has been developed in Sweden. It has been applied in several urban development projects globally and the approach will now be adapted to Kenyan conditions through the SymbioCity Kenya Programme.

At the highest level, the program is expected to contribute to a more sustainable development in Kenya.

The approach to how to do this, is to strengthen Council of Governors as an organisation to deliver on its constitutional mandate, to apply the SymbioCity Approach in seven pilot counties, to support intergovernmental urban cooperation and to share learnings across a wide net of stakeholders.

SymbioCity Kenya does not have a primary focus on infrastructure and investments, but rather on processes and cooperation.

What to expect?
Council of Governors will have a more strategic role in Urban Development in Kenya, through a mix of technical expertise,

experiences from the pilots and stronger intergovernmental cooperation.

The seven pilot counties will see transformation in terms of changes in practices, relationships and routines, having access to facts and evidence on which to base critical decisions, but also tangible change through seed funds available to implement parts of the plans developed.

Urban stakeholders in general will have access to learnings, good

practice and stories – from the Pilots but also from scoping studies and reality checks produced to support a strong intergovernmental urban understanding.

The timeframes
SymbioCity Kenya is currently being established at Council of Governors and by July 2016, all components are expected to be initiated.

→ **Pilots will run from July 2016 to December 2018, other components concurrently.**

TAKE THE *lead!*

Mayors, city managers, governors, wherever you are … It is time to take the lead!

BY ANDERS KNAPE, FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE SWEDISH ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES (2007-2014)

Positive change does not happen by itself. Creating change means being bold. Leadership and development is about taking uncomfortable decisions, 'thinking outside the box', and proposing innovative ideas that challenge people to move out of their comfort zones. In order to realise a bold vision, you sometimes need to challenge not only your opponents but also your followers.

Cities can be wonderful places, and they should be embraced. However, urban challenges are coming at us, and at high speed. Evidence shows that experts sitting around tables do not solve urban problems. Good planning is necessary, but in order for solutions to be implemented and have an impact, broader involvement is needed.

Cities that have managed to reverse negative trends have succeeded in making citizens the drivers and owners of the change process. This happens through innovative and visionary leadership that reaches outside the municipal offices and beyond the drawing boards of the urban planners and engineers.

The need for bold and innovative leadership has never been greater.

Get started, move forward, take the lead!

> *"Cities can be wonderful places, and they should be embraced. However, urban challenges are coming at us, and at high speed."*

HE GOVERNOR MALOMBE AND HE GOVERNOR MUNYA DURING A PRESS CONFERENCE AT UN HABITAT.

Council of Governors

DRIVING THE URBAN AGENDA

Council of Governors (CoG) and The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) and its subsidiary SKL International have partnered to work towards a more sustainable development in the counties of Kenya.

HE GOVERNOR MALOMBE, CHAIRMAN OF THE URBAN DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE AT COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS. EDITED BY NICODEMUS MBWIKA, PROJECT MANAGER SYMBIOCITY KENYA

The Fourth Schedule of the Constitution of Kenya clearly designates the roles of transport, planning, survey, mapping, county public works and services, water supply, storm water management, and sanitation among others to counties. These are roles that County Governments continue to undertake. One critical mandate of the Urban Development Committee therefore becomes to ensure that County Governments speak in one voice on all matters of urban development in Kenya.

The Committee has already embarked on the journey towards the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals and in particular Goal 11, which seeks to *enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization.* This through the recently concluded "Joint Statement" by the Council of Governors which will guarantee that the Kenyan position that will be presented be presented at the Habitat III conference in Ecuador in October 2016 indeed reflect the position of County Governments.

The Urban Development committee has also been instrumental in the review of current national policy and legislation with a bid to align these to the constitution and devolved functions for each level of Government.

Through the Committee, counties have input into the Draft National Urban Development Policy, the proposed Physical Planning Bill, National Land Use Bill, Community Land Bill and the Omnibus Land Bill. The Committee has further facilitated inputs into the proposed revisions of the Urban Areas and cities Act, particularly on the matter of classification and management of urban areas.

The Urban Development Committee has initiated programmes which will go a long way in guiding urban development in the counties. These include, the multi-stakeholder, multi-agency, Urban Sector Reference Group, which meets regularly to advise the Committee on pertinent urban issues.

Mandates of the Urban Development Committee

Development of a framework to guide and assist County Governments in the establishment of institutional structures for the management of urban areas, as envisaged in Urban Areas and Cities Act.

Creating forums for sharing of emerging issues and best practices including modalities for prioritisation and promotion of Urban Areas as engines of socio economic growth.

Providing a platform for review and mainstreaming of ongoing urban development programmes within respective county integrated development plans.

Providing a framework for the review and mainstreaming development partners' engagement and support to county Governments on Urban Development and management issues.

Members of the Urban Development Committee

→ **Chairman:** H.E Dr. Julius Malombe, Governor of Kitui
→ **Vice Chairman:** H.E David Nkedianye, Governor of Kajiado
→ H.E Capt. Ali Roba, Governor of Mandera
→ H.E Samuel Ragwa, Governor of Tharaka Nithi
→ H.E Amason Kingi, Governor of Kilifi
→ H.E Ahmed Abdullahi, Governor of Wajir
→ H.E Hassan Joho, Governor of Mombasa

We have also established the Intergovernmental Committee of County Executive Committee Members in charge of Land, Housing, Physical Planning and Urban Development to harmonise county approaches to urban development.

The dream of midwifing resilient, sustainable and safe cities cannot be realized without effective county spatial planning. These, alongside county sectoral plans, integrated cities and urban area plans and the county integrated development plans present the necessary ingredients for coordination of economic investments, conservation measures, new and upgraded areas of settlement, strategic infrastructure investments and principles of land-use regulation that will determine our urban future.

By launching the SymbioCity Kenya programme together with our Swedish sister organisation, Council of Governors through the Urban Development Committee is taking yet another step towards a more sustainable and more inclusive Kenya.

Paving the way for Habitat III

As part of its mandate, the Urban Development Committee has spearheaded county-specific input to the agenda at Habitat III.

On three separate occasions late 2015, Governors and County Executive Committee members in charge of urban development gathered by invitation from the UN Habitat Regional Office for Africa. The conferences availed an opportune platform for intensified dialogue between national and county governments and enabled the participants to add their voices to the ongoing national and global discussions on sustainable urban development.

The devolution wave in Kenya poses both a great potential and a risk to a sustained urban growth and development. The move by the Urban Development Committee and the County Executives to share and discuss urban leadership in Kenya is strategic and salient to ensuring counties capitalise on the urban opportunities to leverage economic development. Further, a unified vision among urban leaders creates a conducive platform for knowledge and experience sharing.

The platform also provided an opportunity to provide input to the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), which is scheduled to take place in Quito, Ecuador, in October 2016.

GOVERNORS, URBAN CECS AND UN HABITAT PREPARING COUNTY SPECIFIC INPUT TO HABITAT III.

Professor Alfred Omenya, one of the keynote speakers at the conference, and the rapporteur for the Unified Statement by Kenyan Counties on Habitat III, summarises its purpose and value:

"The county governments of Kenya are key partners of the national government in urban development. This positions counties to play a direct role in Habitat III, as key partners in implementation of the new urban agenda and Sustainable Development Goals. Counties – together with the national government – also play an important role as state parties to Habitat III. The statement produced at this conference, by county governments, towards Habitat III serves both as Kenya´s vision for urban development and as an emphasis of Kenya´s national statement to Habitat III."

HE GOVERNOR NKEDIANYE, VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE URBAN DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE, AT AN EXHIBITION OF THE KENYA COUNTY INVENTORY MAPS, PRODUCED BY SYMBIOCITY KENYA.

From the SymbioCity publication "Get started, move forward! Leadership in Sustainable Urban Development"

Sustainable urban development requires leaders who:

→ **Think and work holistically**

→ **Transcend political and other limited interests**

→ **Facilitate collaboration across boundaries**

→ **Balance immediate and long-term needs**

→ **Act in the interests of current and future citizens**

→ **Take difficult decisions, and responsibility for implementing them**

→ **Value feedback for learning and improvement**

→ **Promote participation and share ownership**

These leaders play a critical role in:

→ **Helping people understand sustainable development and why it is essential.**

→ **Facilitating the development of an inspiring shared vision.**

→ **Developing strategic programmes and projects.**

→ **Involving communities, civil society, business sector and the media.**

→ **Assigning financial and other resources.**

Devolution & sustainable urban development

TOWARDS A NEW EPISTEMOLOGY OF THE "URBAN" IN KENYA

BY **JULIUS C'OREDO**, URBAN DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST AT SYMBIOCITY KENYA

Belief and Opinion on Planning

You will be forgiven, if at first glance you thought that the plane of this article just taxied from the hangar of day-to-day operational urban governance issues and is about to launch you in to the skies of intellectual realms. You are partly right. But even with all the benevolence I can summon, any effort to make 'epistemology' a word from-the-street will certainly come a cropper. It belongs to the abstract mental processes that make our understanding of certain knowledge more concrete. Rightly so, in a scholastic sense it is '... the theory of knowledge, especially with regard to its methods...' but and most importantly, it helps us establish 'the distinction between justified belief and opinion.'

There is no arena for the conflict of 'belief' and 'opinion' than the landscape of 'urban planning and development' in Kenya.

'Urban is spiky'

In 2005, Richard Florida wrote an article in the Atlantic Monthly in response to Thomas Friedman's assertion that through globalization, the World had become flat. Florida argued instead that, although globalization had changed the map of the world, it had not become flat. His article was entitled, 'The World is Spiky 'arguing that the most obvious challenge to the Flat-World hypothesis is the explosive growth of cities. Cities are, in furtherance to the metaphor, the World's demographic Mountain ranges. In Kenya today, under the devolved system of government, 'Urban is spiky'.

Understanding the term 'Urban' is by no means a pure academic exercise. Even in academic circles its appreciation ranges from the arduous to the hilarious. In India for instance, up to 1971, the dichotomy between rural and urban definitions contained such criterion as ▶

> *"There is no arena for the conflict of 'belief' and 'opinion' than the landscape of 'urban planning and development' in Kenya."*

The Key words with reference to urbanization are:

→ transformative force
→ opportunity
→ synergy
→ investments
→ revenue
→ legislation
→ sustainability

"The heart of the urban agenda in Kenya today is the need for sectoral and intergovernmental coordination"

an urban area is where 'at least 75% of the male working population was non-agricultural.' In our gender sensitive world, this would be problematic!

But primary urban characteristics such as size of population and density of settlement have prevailed.
As have the concentration of surplus and the institutionalized channels for management of distribution and exchange of goods and services which are nested in the urban core.

But state organization of urban areas has evolved over the years. Earlier, cities were well-structured political organisations with membership based on residence. This replaced political identification based on kinship.

Urban and Political Struggles

It will be unfair to delve in to this subject without paying credit to an article by Neil Brenner and Christian Schmid titled 'Towards a new epistemology of the urban?' Published in the City journal in 2015. The authors acknowledge that debates on the urban question continue to proliferate and intensify within the social sciences, the planning and design disciplines, and in everyday political struggles. In it they vouched for a more radical rethinking of inherited epistemological assumptions regarding urban and urbanisation.

I can agree with them that the term 'urban' today confronts us with an understanding of new processes of urbanization that is bringing forth diverse

socioeconomic conditions and territorial formations across the planet. And Kenya is no exception to this global trend.

In Kenya, devolution has thrust the political organization of 'urban' and therefore its management in to a whirlpool. There are high intellectual and political stakes in contemporary debates on the urban question in Kenya. To offer an analytical basis for deciphering the rapidly changing geographies of urbanization and urban debate under the devolved system of Government is therefore urgent.

The Urban Development Committee

I am aware this is a humongous task and I am under no illusion that this article will achieve that. Let me be clear too, that I do not intend to attack the rubric of 'urban-ness' as understood in our intellectual spaces and as taught in our planning schools. My concern is with the manner in which we have conceptualized urban planning and development under the new constitutional dispensation.

The Committee for Lands, Physical Planning and Urban Development (UDC) at the Council of Governors, is tasked with developing, among other things, 'institutional structures for the coordination and harmonization of policies, legislations and regulations relating to urban planning, management and development.'

You all know that the implementation of the Urban Areas and Cities Act (2011) encountered a false start (But...). However, with the very potent 'metropolitanisation' in our urban development, the management of our urban areas is at the centre of Kenya's development.

The Urban Buzzword

In the just concluded series of consultations with Governors and county executives in developing a unified statement on the future of our country's urbanization for Habitat III to be held in Quito, later this year, several epistemic opportunities arose on the concept of 'urban' in Kenya.

Once you watch the video you can attest to how many times (important as they may be to the definition of 'urban'), buildings, infrastructure and space are mentioned. Sparingly.

What I can conclude here is that at the heart of the urban agenda in Kenya today is the need for sectoral and intergovernmental coordination.

May be that's too quick. But consider the County validation workshop on National Urban Development Policy, held in Naivasha in June 2015, for instance. One of the CECs had this to say:

'Urban planning in the old school of thought looked at the physical processes but overlooked Urbanization,

> *'Urban planning in the old school of thought looked at the physical processes but overlooked Urbanization, Urban management and Urban development. These need to be looked at as thematic areas first, since they also inform urban development policies.'*

Urban management and Urban development. These need to be looked at as thematic areas first, since they also inform urban development policies.'

Implementation of the National Urban Development Policy

In the preparation of the implementation matrix for National Urban Development Policy, the participants allocated approximately 86% of the 523 lead roles to the counties and a circa 14% (about 71) to the National Government (principally the MoLHUD & MDP).

We truly are far from overcoming the primate challenges of the built form (buildings, space and infrastructure related). But what these leaders and practitioners are saying is that urban development cannot be guided from raucous and competitive institutional silos. For prosperity, urban areas need sectoral and intergovernmental coordination in which combinations

of infrastructure, technology, specialty activities, entrepreneurial culture, human capital, and quality of life are significant.

As I conclude, it's worth noting that devolution has subjected the terrain of the 'urban-scape' to a high-intensity, high-impact earthquake. Players in the urban space cannot ignore the role of intergovernmental and inter-sectoral coordination that the Council of Governors is playing.

May be a rendition of Richard Feiock, Jae Moon and Hyung-Jun Park's writing on appropriate governance structures in response to Florida and Friedman, applies to Kenya as well. The 'urban' in Kenya is neither flat nor spiky; instead, it is rough and uneven, marked by sectoral and inter-governmental clamour that require intergovernmental coordination and regional governance strategies for successful economic development.

HARNESSING KENYA'S *Urban Potential*

BY JULIUS C'OREDO, URBAN DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST, SYMBIOCITY KENYA

Kenya is urbanizing rapidly and a majority of Kenya's youth aspire to live in urban and not rural areas. The task of managing the hopes of the majority of the nation's population and its development aspiration rests with the county governments.

The harmony between daily actions and such broad questions by individuals, community groups, associations, sub-national and national governments is the hallmark of the SymbioCity Approach.

Humanity crossed a significant milestone in 2008 when, for the first time in history, the global urban population exceeded the rural population. Since then the pace of urbanization has increased to unprecedented levels. Kenya has been no exception to this global phenomenon. The rate of Kenya's urbanization today is 4.3% annually. By 2030, nearly 54% of the population will be living in urban areas. Observers however, portend that such a high growth rate occurring against a backdrop of low urbanization level (27%), should be celebrated with caution.

Kenya is staring either at potential prosperity or a calamitous urban future.

Urban areas key economic drivers

Five of Kenya's leading towns; Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu, Nakuru and Eldoret account for nearly 70% of the country's physical, financial, intellectual and technological capital. Urban development will certainly be a key determinant of Kenya's regional and global competitiveness as well as its progress towards becoming a middle-income country as envisioned in Vision 2030. With a GDP of USD 1200, Kenya's urbanization level should be about 40% with the capacity to leverage greater economic growth for the Country.

Kenya's urban development policy is alive to the fact that urban areas in the past have suffered under the burden of poor governance and management making them unable to harness their potential to adequately spur growth across the country.

Urban Development – the challenges

The constitution of Kenya has placed the mandate of managing urban areas at the doorstep of the county administration. The national government on the other hand, has been tasked to provide policy directions and general principles for coordination among counties. However, even with the preponderance of legislations such as the Urban Areas and Cities Act, the challenge of managing urban development still persists.

Nationally, there lacks institutional frameworks and guidelines on to which anchoring of county spatial planning activities can be made possible. For instance, there is no national land use plan to support county spatial plans.

Additionally, the link between sectoral policies and spatial anatomy at the urban area level is impaired by lack of integrated urban development

plans. Even with glaring infrastructure and basic services shortage in most urban areas, lack of urban boards and predominantly rural outlook make many county authorities less incentivised to invest in urban areas.

Thus counties are beginning the journey of managing Kenya's urbanisation with inordinate expectations invoking questions of whether consummate capacity and goodwill exists for this enormous task. With proposed new Urban Areas and Cities legislation set to reduce the threshold for classification of urban areas, nearly 200 disparate urban entities will fall within the jurisdiction of county governments compounding further the challenge of services provision. ▶

The rise of a system of cities in the counties

However, there are tremendous potentials in these circumstances. Numerous legislations that guide the manner in which counties can ensure that urban and rural development is in harmony with national economic and social aspirations already exist. Urban residents too can be allowed to participate in devising solutions through innovative participatory approaches.

Academic institutions, civil society organisations, as well as the private sector need not be left behind in shaping Kenya's urban future. There are visible trends of collaboration between county governments and academic institutions as well as private sector, which augurs well for the country's urbanisation.

Creation of regional economic blocs will inspire the rise of a system of cities in the counties. This promises to win in economies of efficiency and proximity with the emergence of primate locations that can positively shape urbanisation trends in the future.

The Youth's obligation to sustainable urbanisation

Progress in urban development will have to be chiselled by collective interpretation of what the visions and strategies at the grass root mean for our collective future.

Progress will be hollow if isolated county efforts to establish functional planning departments or an enviable gated community is not matched by system-wide resolve to eliminate barriers to cooperation between the levels of government and among counties. The locomotive of good governance will drive sustainable urbanisation, like it does other facets of development. Ethical questions are crucial for sustainability. As noted by recent studies, ours is a nation of young people caught in mass ethical fright. Are we confident the next generation of citizens is aware of our obligations to each other as far as urbanisation is concerned?

The harmony between daily actions and such broad questions by individuals, community groups, associations, sub-national and national governments is the hallmark of the SymbioCity Approach.

ABOUT THE WRITER

Julius C'Oredo has a background in planning and engineering. He has over ten years' experience in local government support programmes in the East African region, having worked for the Lake Victoria Region Local Authorities Corporation, as well as the United Nations Development Programme in Sudan. He teaches urban planning related courses at Technical University of Kenya, and is happy to join the Kenya SymbioCity programme as an Urban Development Specialist.

"Urban" THE NEW BUZZWORD

Urbanisation is the key defining trend of our time.

Currently more than half the world's population live in cities, and in the next 35 years the urban population of the world is expected to double. Another three billion people will live in cities by 2050. Much of this growth will happen in Africa, and Kenya is not an exception.

Experience from the policies of the last decades has shown that urbanisation cannot be stopped. Instead, we have to find a way to benefit from the opportunities that urbanisation brings. Cities will have to deliver its services to an increasing number of urban dwellers. This will put tremendous stress on the urban infrastructure, on environmental resources and public administrations. But it also brings a lot of opportunities.

Increasingly, cities around the world are turning urbanisation into a positive thing. They are seeing that cities can be both productive, clean and friendly places to live. The time to look for a new direction for Kenya's urban areas could not have been better.

ZEROS AND ONES =
better decisions?

In an era of fibre optics and super-fast internet connectivity, county managers and policy makers are better placed than to acquire information on a myriad of issues more easily than ever before - on their smart phones, tablets and laptops.

BY EVERLYNE OTIENO, URBAN DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST AT SYMBIOCITY KENYA

But even so, the particular data or analysis they need to inform decisions still may not be available, or may be difficult to obtain. Hence the Urban Development Committee at Council of Governors strives to seal this gap through providing requisite information to counties on ways to access this data.

Getting it right

Governors, town managers, urban planners and finance managers in counties are dependent on accurate, timely data and correct analysis concerning their counties, communities, citizens, environment and economy to render services effectively and efficiently. Some leaders have decried unavailability of data, others have felt that the information is available but difficult to find, whereas another group have felt that the data/information is not user friendly.

As a result counties have experienced difficulty in identifying strategic gaps and setting the right priorities to address them.

The Kenya National Bureau of Statistics have been mandated with national, regional and county statistics and sectoral data, and we must appreciate the effort that has been put by this government agency to produce boundless data for the entire country.

> *"As a result counties have experienced difficulty in identifying strategic gaps and setting the right priorities to address them."*

The question that has continued to linger beyond these efforts is why county governments and policy makers still continue to decry lack of data.

Statistics versus analysis

In my previous assignment as Director City Planning in Kisumu, I was in a position capable of influencing policy at the county level and make decisions that would have an impact potentially both positively and negatively on the county. I can relate with policy makers who constantly decry the lack of data. But when policy makers say they cannot get data they need, they actually mean they cannot obtain data in a form that is usable for county purposes. Looking back, sitting in my position, I required interpretation or analysis of the data rather than to examine the data.

I had to rely on special studies by consultancy firms that would happen occasionally or after a long delay due to cost implications. Yet multi-million

ABOUT THE WRITER

Everlyne Otieno has extensive experience from both Local and County Government in the area of urban planning and management. Before joining Kenya SymbioCity she was the Director of City Planning in the County Government of Kisumu where she was responsible for coordinating and delivering the Kisumu Integrated Urban Development Plan in 2014. Currently she is an Urban Development Specialist dedicated to the Kenya SymbioCity programme at Council of Governors. "I'm truly happy and looking forward to supporting devolved Governments in Urban planning management".

> *"In Kenya, development partners and non-governmental agencies are constantly producing data that can be useful for counties - as baseline and a salient foundation for building on."*
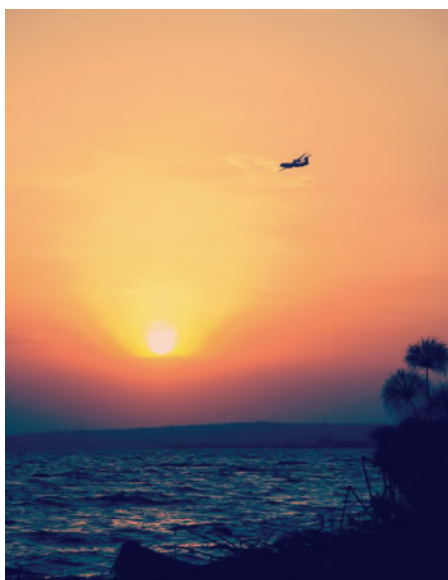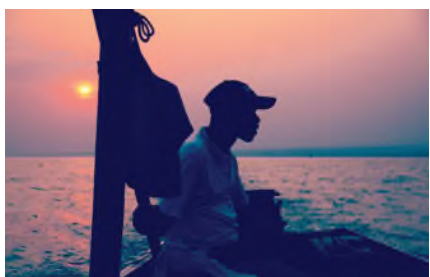
projects were being implemented based on projected or outdated data whilst a small percentage of project funds would be directed to gather and analyse information prior to implementation.

Quality data a pre-requisite to sound decision making

The current constitution has overseen the transfer of most national government roles to the counties. And whilst these functions require substantive information and data to deliver effectively; most national data agencies have remained the function of national government. In addition, a quick skim through the County Integrated Development Plans used by counties as budget tools, reveal that no resources have been allocated to data-related activities - but most are investing in Information Communication and Technology (ICT) and Geographic Information Systems (GIS). What does this mean? The establishment of ICT departments is a step towards progress but these systems require data or information to feed into them. In addition, for that data to be useful, analysis of such data is required for sound decision making.

How can counties jump-start data access for ICT?

In Kenya, development partners and non-governmental agencies are constantly producing data that can be useful for counties - as baseline and a salient foundation for building on. The Council of Governors in partnership with the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions will support counties through the SymbioCity Kenya programme to improve governance, participation and stakeholder engagement. One of its outputs is to ensure counties have knowledge of where and how to access data. The programme during the pilot implementation phase will improve capacity in counties to start gathering or to improve their data collection methods, analysis and presentation in forms that can be useful to county departments and directorates. ▶

Examples of sources of urban data that can be beneficial to counties

SYMBIOCITY KENYA

The programme has conceived a Kenya County Urban Inventory; a series of maps and info-graphics showing "layers" (literally, maps) of particular urban development issues in different counties and also in the whole country. Each layer provides a thematic focus that could then be overlaid on top of each other to reveal new insights. Some of the layers are generic, for example 'Urbanisation' while others were specific, for example 'Geographical Spread of Donor Funds'. The maps are intended to provide easy to use and comparable data on urban development in the country.

Today there are nine different layers of maps covering the following issues:

→ **Urbanisation:** general statistics on the state of urban development in the county including levels of urban development, urban growth, urban populations, etc.

→ **Urban infrastructure and services:** what is the status of infrastructure and services in urban areas in the counties; what main infrastructure and services initiatives are going on in which counties?

→ **Urban planning initiatives:** what major urban planning initiatives are underway in which counties/urban areas?

→ **Legislation:** what urban legislations are being passed in various county assemblies?

→ **Urban economy; revenue and expenditure:** proportion of exchequer allocation to counties; to counties own revenue; to conditional grants and loans. The map shows which counties have high own revenue sources and conditional grants and loans.

→ **Geographic Spread of Donor Funds:** which development partners are involved in which counties/urban areas?

→ **Urban governance and management:** what systems and approaches do counties have in place to govern and manage urban areas?

→ **Public participation:** what is the state; typology; areas of public participation in urban development in the counties?

UN HABITAT

UN Habitat has developed online platforms through which global best practices are shared with partners in countries and cities around the globe.

The Urban Gateway (www.urbangateway.org/) is a collaborative platform that allows Habitat Agenda Partners to network and share data.

The Free and Open access Data Portal (urbandata.unhabitat.org/) is an online site through which urban data for 220 countries and 741 cities is accessed. It has useful information for academia, civil society, national and county government agencies, NGOs/INGOs, development partners and the private sector in Kenya.

CLINTON FOUNDATION

The Department of Resource Surveys and Remote Sensing (DRSRS) has been producing landcover maps.
In support of the production of these maps, the SLEEK program (supported by the Clinton Foundation and the Government of Australia) has made a significant investment in Kenya's remote sensing lab at DRSRS. These landcover maps are produced using LandSat imagery, robust methodology and QA/QC processes to provide Kenya with a consistent, credible map that will allow tracking of change over the past 20 years.

Key highlights of the maps include:

→ Wall to wall, consistent, comparable and credible land-cover maps – for 1990 to 2014

→ Maps will be provided every two years

→ Land cover classification to level II which would be easy for Counties to extend to level III where necessary

→ Provides a basemap for county spatial planning

→ Provides change over time to inform the planning processes

The landcover maps can be accessed through visiting the Department of Resource Survey and Remote Sensing

under the Ministry of Mining. They are available in both softcopy and hard copies.

The maps are being developed by the Government and therefore will be available for use by other Government agencies (national and County Government)

County Government can use the data (shapefiles or raster images) shared to carry out additional analysis. Any GIS software would be able to access, manipulate and work with the products produced by the DRSRS.

REGIONAL CENTRE FOR MAPPING OF RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPMENT

RCMRD is an intergovernmental organisation serving over 20 countries in East and Southern Africa, with its headquarters in Nairobi.

RCMRD works to build and boost the government's capacity in survey, GIS, remote sensing, land administration and climate change through training and technical assistance.

The organisation operates a number of satellite stations that are capable of delivering image maps and satellite images not only at the county level but also country wide.

www.rcmrd.org

SymbioCity *APPROACH 101*

The SymbioCity Approach is a concept for sustainable urban development with emphasis on improving living conditions for the citizens, through the involvement of various actors and disciplines. The Approach does not provide ready-made solutions to all urban challenges. Instead it offers committed local elected representatives, officials and activists to develop properly planned and managed cities where people work, access services and thrive!

BY ANNA BACKMANN, TECHNICAL TEAM LEADER AND MATS JARNHAMMAR, SENIOR ADVISOR AT SYMBIOCITY KENYA

SymbioCity supports cities and urban areas in developing in a more sustainable and inclusive way: To improve the health, safety, comfort and quality of life for the people who live there. To provide urban services like waste management, mobility and water more effectively. And to capture the economic potential that urbanisation brings while protecting the urban environment.

SymbioCity offers an approach for successfully dealing with urban development and a way of working for moving from ideas to action. We work from visions and strategies, through integrated urban planning to urban improvements and strengthened management of urban areas.

It is about supporting urban stakeholders - be it county governments, civil society or the private sector - in working together and finding new solutions to urban challenges. ▶

ABOUT THE WRITER

Anna Backmann´s background from diverse sectors like media and international relations bring new perspectives to a programme like SymbioCity Kenya. "I believe that the value of the process and communicating and sharing experiences sometimes is bigger than the results themselves in a project". Anna has worked with SKL International for a considerable period of time, in Sweden but also in South Africa, Namibia, Botswana and Iraq. Her role in SymbioCity Kenya is to coordinate technical assistance.

Process versus project thinking

Urban development is not a result of urban planning alone. What happens in cities is a consequence of the decisions and actions of a large number of stakeholders. To change urban development in a more sustainable direction, SymbioCity adopts a holistic perspective and promotes collaboration between stakeholders at the local level. It is about seeing how each stakeholder can contribute to urban improvements. Thereby, SymbioCity is more of a process support than a planning methodology. It looks at the whole system; from planning to development and management of urban areas.

Swedish touch with international exposure

SymbioCity builds on the approach that Swedish municipalities have to urban development. So in a way, the 290 municipalities of Sweden have been our testbed; we know what works and what doesn't. It is also based on the experiences in implementing numerous urban development projects globally. It has been piloted in cities in India, Macedonia, Zambia, China and Indonesia. Based on the experiences of testing the concept in these different countries, we have developed it further into what it is today.

THE SYMBIOCITY WORKING GROUP OF PALU, INDONESIA TRYING OUT COMMUNITY BIKES IN STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN.

From 2016, there are upcoming SymbioCity applications in Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Tunisia and Colombia and trainings in Turkey, Serbia, Macedonia, Georgia and Myanmar.

SymbioCity in Kenya, will it work?

The beauty of the SymbioCity Approach is that it is not a concept that tells you what to do. It is a concept that shows a new way of thinking and a new way of working together to find solutions that are adapted to the local context, while drawing on best practices and experiences worldwide. The solutions that emerge will be Kenyan. The ownership will be local. It is about strengthening existing structures and processes – not introduce new ones.

However, it is important to remember that there are no quick fixes.

Achieving more sustainable urban areas requires vision, leadership, commitment and lot of hard work!

ABOUT THE WRITER

Mats Jarnhammar is an urban planner and human geographer with a special interest in the dynamics between cities and people. Previously in charge of two SymbioCity pilots in Indonesia and with considerable experience from preparation of urban infrastructure projects, his role in the programme is to contribute with SymbioCity specific methodology and to gather and analyse experiences made in Kenya. Mats is also Managing Director for Living Cities, a non-profit platform for urban innovation and social sustainability.

Putting the SymbioCity approach into practice

An important part of the SymbioCity Kenya programme involves implementing the SymbioCity approach in seven counties. They are called pilots, not because they are test beds for the approach itself, but because they are to be seen as models for how the approach can be used in a Kenyan urban development context.

By introducing the SymbioCity Approach in seven counties, capacity will be built to plan, manage and develop urban areas in a sustainable manner - with support provided through local and international expertise, practical work, training and peer learning.

Political representatives in the seven counties will be strengthened in their recognition of participatory practices, and communities will have a better understanding of urban planning process and how to influence it. County staff will have knowledge and tools to implement inclusive, innovative and sustainable solutions.

The application of SymbioCity will have visible results to the immediate benefit of the communities in the seven pilot counties. Sustainable and participatory urban plans and urban improvement projects will be prepared and innovative and participatory approaches to urban development will be implemented and showcased.

So what will happen?

The SymbioCity Approach is based on six steps. These six steps are the same whether you are planning specific improvements to an area or a sector, or if you are preparing a master plan or for the city as a whole.

1. Get organized. Good planning of the SymbioCity activity is crucial to success, and involving the right stakeholders is critical. Make a plan and communicate it.

2. Understand the needs and resources of the city. To find the solution you need to know what the problem is. And to find the synergies you need to widen your perspective. Look at the city as a system, and try to understand how issues interlink. Focus on the assets as well as the problems.

3. Set the goal. Formulate a vision for the city and objectives for addressing specific challenges. Focus on the root of the problem and not on the symptom.

4. Find a solution. There is more than one! The best solution may often be found where you least expect it. Search for solutions outside the immediate sphere of the problem, and collaborate with others. Weigh different options against each other.

5. Maximize the impact. What will the proposal result in? Does this solve the problem? What could be done to maximize the impact? Test and compare different alternatives.

6. Make it happen. Develop a plan for implementation. You will need political support, financing and stakeholders willing to take the issues forward. Make a plan for the key steps forward and how you intend to take them. Don't put all your eggs in one basket. Many things can be done quickly and without much money to get things moving!

How to become one of seven SymbioCity Pilot counties

If your county is "willing and able" to partner with SymbioCity – meaning having capacity and political support to explore the SymbioCity approach as a means towards urban transformation - this is what you do:

01. Study this magazine and in particular the Frequently Asked Questions

02. Get the application form (on the CoG website or through the SymbioCity contacts at the end of this magazine)

03. Complete it in consultation with the political and technical leadership of the county (consult with the SymbioCity Kenya team if necessary)

04. Submit the application by end of application period

The selection process will be;

→ **You apply, with supporting documents**

→ **A technical Pilot Assessment Committee will scrutinise the applications according to predetermined criteria**

→ **The Pilot Assessment Committee will produce a recommendation to the Joint Steering Committee**

→ **The Joint Steering Committee will make a decision, which will be presented to the Embassy of Sweden**

The assessment criteria for the potential SymbioCity Pilot Counties are to demonstrate/confirm:

→ **Fulfilment of intergovernmental responsibility (county membership fee to CoG paid)**

→ **Political support and will**

→ **Functional urban institutions/ capacity**

→ **Existing relationship between civil society and the County Government**

→ **Active commitment to sustainability**

→ **Allocation of resources to the pilot activities (human and financial)**

→ **Entering into a partnership with another county during the pilots, to share and learn across county borders**

→ **Previous experiences of sustainability measures**

The joint project criteria which will be applied by the Pilot Assessment Committee are:

→ **Geographic contiguity: the counties should be clustered 2+2+2+1 for efficiency, budget and cooperation purposes**

→ **County issues described in the application should be relevant for other counties, making sharing of experiences useful for all 47 counties**

→ **Geographical balance**

→ **Budget and time boundaries for the programme**

The SymbioCity Kenya programme will be able to partner with seven counties.

The Frequently Asked Questions provide further details on the application and selection process.

You are also welcome to contact the SymbioCity Kenya team, contact details to be found at the end of this magazine.

Frequently Asked Questions

Everlyne Otieno, Julius C'Oredo and Maureen Njoga closely will be the node for all pilot activities – from the application to the implementation and monitoring. As a first step, they have gathered the key questions they believe will be raised during the application phase and crafted short responses. For more information, you can contact the pilot team as indicated at the end of the magazine.

01/ What is SymbioCity?

SymbioCity is a holistic approach to sustainable urban development that integrates economic, environmental and socio-cultural dimensions and promotes synergistic relations.

02/ What is SymbioCity Kenya?

SymbioCity Kenya is a partnership between Council of Governors and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and regions, focusing on Urban Development in Kenya. It´s funded by the Embassy of Sweden and will be in operation until the end of 2018. It has four key focus areas;

→ Development of Council of Governors

→ Implementation of SymbioCity Approach in seven pilot counties

→ Intergovernmental Urban Cooperation

→ Networking and sharing of experiences

03/ What is a SymbioCity Pilot?

By introducing the SymbioCity Approach in seven counties, capacity will be built to plan, manage and develop urban areas in a sustainable manner - with support provided through local and international expertise, practical work, training and peer learning.

Political representatives in the seven counties will be strengthened in their recognition of participatory practices, and communities will have a better understanding of urban planning process and how to influence it.

County staff will have knowledge and tools to implement inclusive, innovative and sustainable solutions.

The application of SymbioCity will have visible results to the immediate benefit of the communities in the seven pilot counties. Sustainable and participatory urban plans and urban improvement projects will be prepared and innovative and participatory approaches to urban development will be implemented and showcased.

04/ What kind of change can a Pilot County expect?

→ Better interdisciplinary working procedures

→ More inclusive and open engagement with urban stakeholders

→ Decision makers using sustainable and participatory approaches to urban development

→ Vibrant public participation platforms that are well known and accepted by the local community and civil society participating in urban planning, development and management

→ Strategies towards a shared urban vision and having spatial plans for urban improvement projects

→ Staff have enhanced capacity to plan, develop and manage urban areas in a more integrated manner using the a three dimension lens of economic, social-cultural environmental aspects

→ New and innovative solutions for urban improvements implemented

05/ Who should be involved?

The pilots will be highly participatory and will target a broad set of local stakeholders involved in urban development, including:

→ Politicians and decision-makers

→ Citizens, with focus on women and youth

→ County technical staff

→ Non-Government and Community Based Organizations

→ Private sector

→ Academia

06/ What kind of support can a Pilot County expect?

SymbioCity presents an opportunity for counties to enhance their capacity in terms urban governance, focusing on on-the-job training. ▶

EVERLYNE OTIENO, MAUREEN NJOGA AND JULIUS C'OREDO ARE THE CORE TEAM FOR THE SYMBIOCITY PILOTS.

The programme will also support integrated urban planning processes and some of the interventions recommended in the plan will be implemented within the programme. Implementation of the various phases of the projects and interventions will however be done entirely by the local stakeholders in the pilot counties for purposes of real ownership and continuous commitment.

Expertise on specific issues, e.g. community participation, strategic planning, urban service delivery, solid waste etc. can be drawn from the SymbioCity expert pool, both through international and national consultants or staff from Swedish municipalities. Business opportunities will be published through procurement notices.

07/ What will happen in the pilots?

The development of pilots will be done in four key phases, some of which are implemented in parallel:

7.1. Organizing the county pilots

A Steering Committee and a Working Group will be established in each pilot county. The pilot organization should represent all key stakeholders in urban development, including the political level and representatives of the public including the urban poor, and will be responsible for steering, implementing and advising the project.

7.2. Integrated Urban Planning

The initial step of the pilots will strengthen the urban planning capacity through a participatory Urban Sustainability Review (USR). The USR will provide rapid systems assessment and assets mapping, identifying the key challenges and the key opportunities in the urban area. Based on this, the stakeholders will jointly agree on priorities for the future project.

The USR can serve as a basis for developing a Vision and Strategic Plans for the urban area, and will result in concrete input to the County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) and the Integrated Urban Development Plan (IUDP).

The development of the USR is also an important tool for mobilizing and capacitating Citizens Forums alternatively Local Urban Forums.

7.3. Integrated Project Development

The SymbioCity approach will be used to develop integrated proposals for urban improvements and drawing on synergies between urban systems. Collaboration between stakeholders, and an active participation of civil society, is a prerequisite for identifying participatory solutions.
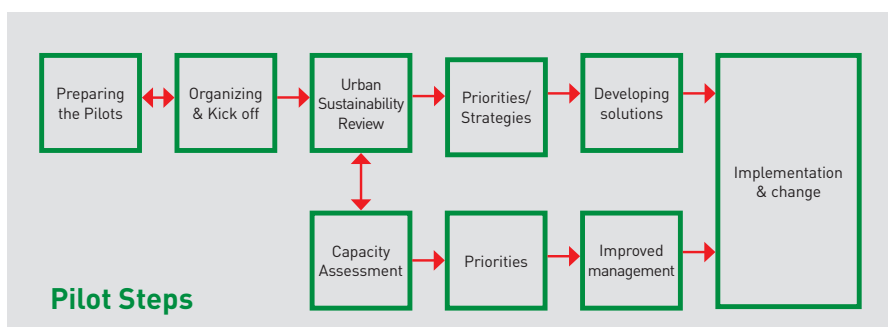
The process will result in an integrated package for urban improvements. This will provide improvements through both governance and management, as well as physical improvements, and will be based on input from a wide set of stakeholders.

7.4. Support to Urban Improvements (including seed financing)

Seed financing will be made available through SymbioCity Kenya for small-scale demonstration projects, with focus on poverty reduction and environmental improvements. The seed financing can also be used to add a sustainability perspective to a larger project. In either case, the funding is to be considered as a complement to existing funding and not as a fundament.

Throughout the four phases, the pilots will provide support to strengthening urban management, for example in terms of operations and maintenance of urban infrastructure. Based on the gaps identified through the USR, support will be given to optimizing the capacity of stakeholders to manage urban systems, and introducing improvements through best practices and thereby also contributing to improved service delivery.

Partnerships between Kenyan counties and municipalities of Sweden and potentially other countries with relevant experiences and/or previous experience from the SymbioCity approach will be facilitated through the programme.

Pilot Steps

Preparing the Pilots → Organizing & Kick off → Urban Sustainability Review → Priorities/Strategies → Developing solutions → Implementation & change

Capacity Assessment → Priorities → Improved management

Enhancing the capacity of urban development stakeholders is a key emphasis of the program, and closely linked with the county pilots. The program aims to build both human capacity (e.g. strengthened individual competencies in relation to planning, developing and managing urban areas) and organizational capacity (e.g. strengthening processes and systems for urban development), mainly at county level.

On-the-job training through projects has proven to be an efficient way of building capacity in earlier SymbioCity projects. The pilots will be structured in a way that exposes working group members and project stakeholders to experiences of implementing the SymbioCity approach, with significant capacity development activities.

08/ **Who is eligible to apply?**

All Kenyan counties can apply to become one of the seven pilot counties, as long as they have fulfilled their intergovernmental obligation towards Council of Governors (payment of membership fee).

09/ **When and how can a county apply?**

The application process will be launched during the third Devolution Conference in April 2016. The application period will be open for a period of one month. Application forms together with other SymbioCity documents will be distributed to county officials and will be available on the Council of Governors website.

10/ **What kind of support will be provided during the application process?**

Counties will be required to register their official contact address such as email and phone number with the project team; personal emails will not be accepted. During the application period the SymbioCity team will be readily available to offer support to any applying county upon their request.

Weekly feedback sessions will be conducted to review the frequently asked questions from the counties and in the event of any modification or clarification; all counties will be notified accordingly through the Council of Governors website.

11/ **How will pilot counties be selected?**

Counties will be selected following a predetermined process and criteria agreed by the SymbioCity Kenya Joint Steering Committee and approved by the donor. Eligibility criteria will include political support, commitment to sustainability and willingness to provide co-financing as well as adequate geographical spread.

The application consists of an application form, submitted together with various supporting documentation.

The technical assessment of the applications will be made by a pilot assessment committee, consisting of representatives from SymbioCity secretariat in Sweden, Kenyan academia, Kenyan private sector, professional bodies and Kenyan civil society. CoG and SALAR will not participate in the pilot assessment committee, however the Joint Steering Committee will make the final approval based on recommendations made by the pilot assessment committee. ▶

12/ What are the assessment criteria?

For the counties that can confirm that they are eligible, the assessment criteria to be applied are divided in three parts:

Assessment of:

→ Political will and support

→ Having functional urban institutions/capacity

→ Existing relationship between civil society and the County Government

→ Active commitment to sustainability

Assessment of commitment in terms of:

→ Willingness to cost share (human resources, meeting venues while at the County, County staff salaries and subsistence allowances while in Kenya, transport costs while in Kenya and other related costs)

→ Entering into a partnership with another county during the pilots, to share and learn across county borders

Joint project criteria to be applied by the pilot assessment committee:

→ Geographic contiguity: the counties should be clustered for efficiency, budget and cooperation purposes

→ County challenges, described in the application, should be relevant for other counties, making sharing of experiences useful for all counties

→ Regional balance

→ Budget and time boundaries for the programme

13/ Is it a competition?

The selection process is not a competition where counties with more or less financial capability, more staff or not or best or worst managed urban areas are selected, but rather it is a process to identify counties that have demonstrated ability and willingness to engage with the program, to share their key lessons and experiences with other counties and ability to become model counties in promoting and scaling up the SymbioCity approach.
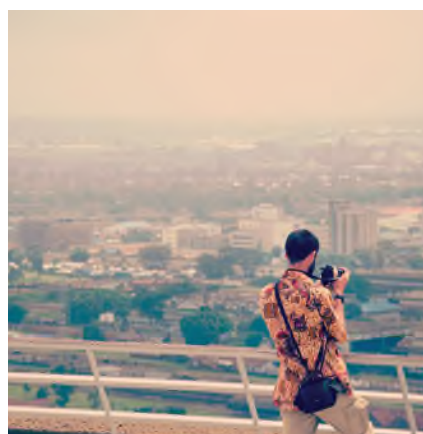
14/ What is the timeframe for applications?

LAUNCH OF CALL FOR PROPOSALS	April 21 2016
FINAL DAY FOR SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS	June 5 2016
ASSESSMENT BY PILOT ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE AND APPROVAL BY JOINT STEERING COMMITTEE	June 2016
SIGNING OF LETTER OF ENGAGEMENT BETWEEN SEVEN COUNTIES AND SYMBIOCITY KENYA	July 2016

15/ What is the timeframe for implementation?

The pilot activities will be divided in four main phases and a final stock-taking period:

ORGANIZING THE COUNTY PILOTS (INCLUDING BASELINE COLLECTION)	4 months
INTEGRATED URBAN PLANNING (URBAN SUSTAINABILITY REVIEW)	7 months (overlapping)
INTEGRATED PROJECT DEVELOPMENT	9 months (overlapping)
URBAN IMPROVEMENTS	8 months
STOCK-TAKING, LESSONS LEARNED	2 months
TOTAL	**2,5 years**

16/ What is required from the county?

The SymbioCity pilots should be of benefit for the citizens of the respective county, but being pilots they must also create a value to other stakeholders in Kenya. It´s therefore vital for the selected counties to understand and accept that their respective pilots will be shared as examples to other counties, as good practice, in recognising challenges, in sharing good (and bad) experiences. Openness to reflection and internal review is therefore fundamental.

The selected counties must be prepared to engage fully in the pilots, as agents of change on behalf of all counties in Kenya.

Most of the work in the pilots will take place within the county itself. The project will provide a structure and technical

assistance, but without full engagement of the county to drive the work, the pilots will inevitably fail.

Political support throughout the pilot period is fundamental, support that cannot fluctuate depending on political winds. The County should therefore demonstrate that both majority and opposition have been involved in the application and continue sharing information across political affiliations.

Human resource must be readily available and encouraged to contribute.

17/ What will be expected structures to be set up in the county?

SymbioCity approach uses both local and external experts to engage the stakeholders, in an iterative way, through a Working Group modality, guided by a Steering Committee.

The Working Group and Steering Committee will ensure local ownership and guidance in the implementation of the urban interventions. The Steering Committee is composed of nominated leaders representing the various pilot county stakeholders concerned, while the Working Group is made up of a core membership of five to six local experts/practitioners in the area of urban sustainability, planning and management.

18/ Who will pay for what?

The Kenya SymbioCity programme will provide technical assistance. This means staff and technical expertise to support the Pilot County during the application of SymbioCity Approach.

The Pilot Counties are expected to allocate staff, venues, transportation in Kenya and all employee related costs.

The county will also appoint a project focal point referred to as Pilot Coordinator who should be a member of staff in the pilot county, with detailed working knowledge in one or more areas of urban development. The pilot coordinator will be expected to dedicate 25% of his/her time on pilot related activities.

More details in terms of cost sharing can be found in the model Memorandum of Understanding that forms part of the application material.

A "Seed fund" to support change projects identified during the SymbioCity process will be made available. The fund can under certain circumstances make a contribution to the change project; its release is dependent on co-financing from the pilot county.

19/ Can I appeal the decision on the selection of the seven pilot counties?

The selection criteria and process are designed to identify seven pilot counties. These are seven counties that can serve as interesting models or examples for the remaining 40 counties of Kenya. Knowledge sharing and identifying interesting models for urban development is the key objective for Council of Governors when engaging with SymbioCity.

By appointing a technical pilot assessment committee, focus for the selection process be on the replicability and model building aspects of the pilots.

The assessment of the two partners is therefore that the selection process will be as objective as possible and have therefore agreed not to not include an appeal process.

20/ What will be the contractual obligations?

The seven pilot counties will sign a Memorandum of Understanding with CoG and SALAR, for the joint implementation of SymbioCity Approach. In this MoU the roles and responsibilities of each party is described.

21/ Are there circumstances under which a County should NOT consider applying?

The main benefit of being a SymbioCity Pilot County is that the county will receive support to work that is already, or should be, going on in the county.

But, the support does not come in the form of consultants that arrive, draw up plans and then leave. The application of SymbioCity approach comes in the form of facilitation support, technical expertise and exposure to innovative solutions etc.

It is the pilot county itself that is the driver of the transformation, not the project.

Partnerships:
WHAT ARE THEY GOOD FOR?

BY MAUREEN NJOGA,
SYMBIOCITY KENYA
PROCESS CONTROLLER

People engage in partnerships for a variety of purposes. Partnerships allow for joining of forces, and at their best, they might provide access to knowledge, resources or decision makers that otherwise may not be at the disposal of an individual.

EVELYNE OTIENO, JULIUS C'OREDO AND MAUREEN NJOGA; THE PILOT TEAM AT SYMBIOCITY KENYA.

All organizations have standard ways in which they organise their activities. Often there is a shared vision. Then appropriate instruments are chosen, assessed for the necessary competences, then selected or if necessary, repackaged through additional training of people and resources. Performance indicators to allow for M&E are determined, and then we hope that the people involved are going to do what they are supposed to do…

Only then can the organisation expect to bring about the desired change.

The described process above assumes that the people involved share the ambition from the onset, and that the process of change can be controlled in a planned manner. In reality, partnership processes pan out quite differently. A shared ambition is not the start but the result of a good process, whereas ambitions, opinions and mutual trust can change over time.

Knowing your Partner

The partnership approach starts with the people. This approach shows what it takes to motivate people to engage in a process of change. When individuals with ambitions make connection, this generates energy. Informal networks emerge, looking for ways of joining forces, even at times proving more reliable than formal ones. When trust increases, ambitions grow further towards each other into a shared mission, making the focus of efforts more intense.

Partnerships can be seen as living organisms, with an identity, with task division and specialisation, and with a life cycle. Just like all living entities, partnerships reproduce themselves through patterns of interaction, as long as all essential components are connected. Every partner is a node in a larger network in which it has its function, and every node in a partnership is a network in itself again. In this perspective, networks are a way of conceptualising society. It is therefore impossible to dissociate partners from the broader working of human nature.

Living organisms can be healthy or sick. In a healthy partnership the interaction is rewarding. This makes people willing to make efforts and to align to others, making the interaction more rewarding.

The reverse can happen as well. When interaction is not rewarding, willingness to make efforts or to align decreases. This is a self-propelling process as well, that leads to either chaos or stagnation, and eventually the death of the partnership.

"In a healthy partnership the interaction is rewarding. This makes people willing to make efforts and to align to others, making the interaction more rewarding."

Our promise of partnerships within the SymbioCity Pilots

A successful partnership is hinged on equity and concern as well as respect for the other party brought about by trust. Engagement in pursuit of mutual benefit is more likely to sustain and build relationships over time only if the partnership is transparent.

Within the Pilot counties, SymbioCity Kenya will create an enabling environment for networks to develop and thrive. Our main goal will be to aid in the identification of county specific business sector, civil sector and others that will ensure success of the selected pilots. The programme will also be able to engage the national government and the Council of Governors through the Urban Development Committee in the formulation of policies and setup of technical support on urban development to the pilot counties.

The Counties will be the central node in the network, ensuring that all the partners' contribution are of benefit to them.

ABOUT THE WRITER

Maureen Njoga brings in over 8 years' experience in working for different projects dealing in diverse sectors, like education to health. With her knowledge and love for IT and processes, she will aid in the success of the SymbioCity Kenya Programme – as its Process Controller. Her experience includes working with ICIPE, Aga Khan Health Services and University of Manitoba. She believes in the quote that: "If you can't describe what you are doing as a process, you don't know what you're doing."

Q&A:
"Ask Everlyne"

Anna Backmann is the SALAR Technical Team Leader for SymbioCity in Kenya. A novice to the country, she has rare and highly appreciated access to practitioners to provide guidance and direction on complicated issues - as well as the very basic ones...

In this section Anna has initiated a dialogue with Everlyne Otieno, formerly Director City Planning in Kisumu and currently an Urban Development Specialist at SymbioCity Kenya on the realities of urban planning life in Kenya – from a Swedish perspective. The conversation will continue as the SymbioCity Kenya program develops.

Q: Anna
Wherever you come from and wherever you live, people tend to focus on concrete change – the here and now and a short term perspective. The SymbioCity approach has a focus on *process*es and *planning*, which means somewhat taking a step back and think before acting.

How do you think will this be received and accepted in Kenyan counties?

A: Everlyne
At the moment we are shy of two years to the next general elections. We can say that most county executives are in the last laps of the marathon race, where they want to sprint to the finish line to qualify for the next race. This means quick results at this moment would be ideal.

The beauty of SymbioCity Approach is that it allows you to have low hanging fruits as you work toward the bigger goal. I am positive that this kind of approach will resonate gradually with Kenyan counties since it improves efficiency in the way we do things.

Q: Anna
When you were recruited to the programme, one of the things that impressed the panel the most was your sincerity. I remember asking you detailed questions on your experience

> *"Buildings are coming up, urban areas are growing, roads are being constructed, streets are being cleaned"*

EVERLYNE OTIENO, URBAN DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST AT SYMBIOCITY KENYA

of the Kenyan leadership´s willingness to be open and honest about its successes **as well as** its struggles.

How would you assess the readiness of County Governments to be up front about the realities related to Urban Development?

A: Everlyne
All over the country we always hear the trendy word "capacity" insufficient or lack capacity in counties, yet the amusing bit is that things are still happening! Buildings are coming up, urban areas are growing, roads are being constructed, streets are being cleaned, maybe not to the satisfaction of many but yes someone somewhere is carrying out their duties.

When we focus so much on the ideal, no county will be ready in the near future but in reality, we have local champions in these counties that can promote the

EVERLYNE OTIENO AND ANNA BACKMANN, DELIBERATING ON THE REALITIES OF
URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN KENYA AT THE URBAN EATERY.

> *"Good leadership encourages horizontal departmental coordination and consultation - in work planning, budgeting and day-to-day operations."*

urban development agenda. They act as gateways to the counties when trying out the "3rd way" in improving urban areas.

The realisation that urban areas are the main source of revenue in our counties supports the rational of putting more resources that will spur urban development, and as one urban manager once said "we cannot keep milking the cow without feeding it, the milk will run dry and cow will die". Urban areas have to be managed well to ensure sustainability.

Q: Anna
In Sweden we use the term "samsyn", meaning basically having a joint understanding ("same view") on where we are heading. This means (apart from many and very long meetings...) that sector departments are not just encouraged but also *expected* to work together.

How does this correspond to your experiences in Kenya?

A: Everlyne
My experience is that "when the top cannot hold, the bottom crumbles".

Good leadership encourages horizontal departmental coordination and consultation - in work planning, budgeting and day-to-day operations.

Since 2008, I worked with more than 4 town clerks and an urban manager, each displaying unique or different style of leadership but one common aspect is that those that promoted departmental synergies were the most successful in my view.

Departmental heads, as professional as they may be may not be all rounded specialists or practical generalists. Sharing different ideas, opinions and forging a common vision is key to any successful organization

TOP TIPS *for the beginner*

After working with SymbioCity projects in Macedonia and Indonesia and contributing to several SymbioCity publications, Swedish architect Tor Eriksson knows the approach better than most. Here, he offers his best advice for people heading into a SymbioCity process – what you need to make it work and where you might find yourself stumbling.

What's unique about the SymbioCity approach?

The SymbioCity approach can be a fantastic eye-opener as long as you apply an integrated, strategic and holistic approach. It's flexible in its nature and can be adapted to many different situations and contexts. It does, quite often, pick up institutional issues as main causes of weaknesses in sustainability.

Why do we need an approach like SymbioCity in striving for sustainability?

Our societies are quite complex in their structures. Their various systems – social, cultural, economic, institutional and environmental – are closely interlinked. This fact needs to be ever-present when we try to understand the challenges in sustainable development, and in The SymbioCity approach, it is.

If you could offer three pieces of advice to Kenyan county just about to embark on a SymbioCity journey, what would they be?

First, I'd advise them to be clear about what they want to achieve with the sustainability review. *Secondly*, I'd say they should apply an integrated and holistic approach embracing the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainability. Don't stop when you've identified the symptoms you're experiencing; continue and ask yourself what is causing them.

Only then you make a correct diagnosis and prescribe the right "medicine". And *thirdly*, I'd propose they think and act strategically with an open mind and towards a vision for the municipality.

What needs to be in place in order to make a SymbioCity process successful?

Three things strike me as especially important: support from the local political leadership, the engagement and broad involvement of parties outside the municipal sphere, and someone who can guide the process in a structured and pedagogical way.

What mistakes are easily made in the beginning of the process?

Many go into unnecessary depth when mapping the current situation. Try instead to be broad in the beginning and go deeper in the analysis later on. And don't think you can act on all identified issues at once. Try to identify the action or actions that create the best leverage, and start there.

A common misconception about the SymbioCity approach is …

… That it replaces other established mechanisms for planning and assessments, like Strategic Environmental Assessments and Environmental Impact Analyses. It doesn't. It's better to see it as a complement to other, more formal assessment processes, or a free-standing tool that makes development planning easier and more fruitful.

> *"It's better to see it as a complement to other, more formal assessment processes, or a free-standing tool that makes development planning easier and more fruitful."*

MEMBERS OF THE WORKING GROUP IN PALU, INDONESIA DURING A SYMBIOCITY VISIONING WORKSHOP.

Stay in touch!

The SymbioCity team at the Urban Development Secretariat at Council of Governors consists of local and international experts and support staff, with short term consultants providing input to the programme on needs basis.

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SymbioCity

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