

URBAN NATURAL ASSETS FOR AFRICA

Building a framework for integrating nature into urban planning

Using lessons from Africa

The African context provides room for flexibility and innovation – it's therefore an ideal platform for experimentation and the implementation of novel approaches to service delivery, safeguarding urban natural assets and resilience building. This makes Africa a good base for the testing of new solutions that could potentially have global significance.

PROBLEM STATEMENT:

Growing evidence points towards the fact that producing information and searching for “entry points” in decision making into which this information should be inserted is not adequate enough to facilitate change on the ground, especially when considering the nuanced complexity surrounding decision making as well as financial and political influences. Instead, a fundamental shift in planning and decision making is required by cities; one that incorporates ongoing learning and knowledge construction, reflection and relationship building.

This is the foundation that the Urban Natural Assets for Africa (UNA) programme has established across partner cities across Africa, grounded in both practical experience and experimentation in co-production.

In line with this a seed session was run at The Nature of Cities summit in 2019.

SESSION OVERVIEW/AIM:

This session provided the opportunity for stakeholders from various backgrounds to, through a process of co-development, develop a “framework” that can support cities with a more effective methodology for integrating nature into planning.

This session followed a “solution room” format whereby participants discussed solutions to three different “problems” or aspects of ecological planning. These aspects were 1) processes and method/approaches; 2) tools and products; and 3) ways of thinking.

OUTCOMES:

Processes and method/approaches:

- Processes should also be centered around monitoring i.e. not just mainstreaming
- Fun, interactive and enjoyable – processes need to facilitate conversations/improve communications (and be ACCESSIBLE) – spaces need to be language tailored
- Must be participatory and interdisciplinary
- Processes should lean towards assembling an inventory of assets (natural and other)
- There is a need to focus on changing power structures i.e. break silos, eliminate barriers, all stakeholder knowledge equally considered
- Processes should aim to inherently focus on changing city/other structures to have integrated planning instead of planners who are not seen as conveners

Tools and products:

- Mapping of natural assets (for all layers and perspectives). Examples: map natural assets, map of bottom-up/top down programs, artefacts (books, visuals etc.)
- New ways of engaging key – i.e. data capture, games, technology improvements, citizen science
- Participatory workshops are crucial – getting citizens to listen, building the case

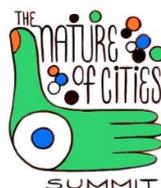
Ways of thinking:

- Be humble – ensure trust and respect
- Acknowledge that it takes time, the correct language, space, money, education and platforms to effectively facilitate mind-set shifts
- Role reversals are key (tipping people and situations on their heads)
- Seek catalytic spaces

About ICLEI Africa

ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability is a global network of more than 1,750 local and regional governments committed to sustainable urban development. Active in 100+ countries, we influence sustainability policy and drive local action for low emission, nature-based, equitable, resilient and circular development. Our Members and team of experts work together through peer exchange, partnerships and capacity building to create systemic change for urban sustainability.

At ICLEI Africa, we serve our African members, working with cities and regions in more than 25 countries across the continent. We offer a variety of urban sustainability solutions through our dynamic and passionate team of skilled professionals.



A programme at Stockholm Resilience Centre



This programme is funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) through SwedBio at the Stockholm Resilience Centre, Stockholm University