

# STRING IT TOGETHER: WORKING WITHIN THE WEB OF COMPLEXITY TO COLLABORATIVELY BUILD CAPACITY IN CITIES

## WHY PLAY THIS GAME?

Multi-level governance systems, collaboration and coordination are vital cogs in the engine of policymaking, supporting the localisation of international climate targets and resilience. This exercise will help participants understand that it is essential to work together to build resilience and reach these international targets as no one sector or discipline holds all the solutions.

5

 **Time:** This game should take around 20 minutes. This is dependent on the level of engagement by participants. It is possible that players may want to engage in long discussions. It is at the discretion of the facilitator as to how long they let the discussions go on for, yet noting that it is important to make everyone feel like their perspective is valuable.

 **Number of players:** This exercise is best played in one large group game. However it can also be adapted to play with a small group. (Note: Cards should be developed for approximately 30 participants, cards can then be added or removed depending one number of participants).



### Your kit should contain the following materials:

- Stakeholder cards (see below for more information);
- Activity cards (see below for more information);
- Ball of string;
- Safety pins.



# THE GAME

The game requires the facilitator to explain that climate change is increasingly being acknowledged as a great concern for African cities, where the impacts of climate change overlay with current existing challenges of rapid urbanisation, poverty, inequality, lack of access and slow economic growth. As a result, government officials are increasingly required to deal with these complexities and uncertainties in decision making. Various spheres of government cannot deal with these challenges or harness solutions alone. The facilitator should then explain the exercise and subsequent actions required by the game participants. Instructions for how to do this are in the guidelines below.

## Preparation Process:

- **Stakeholder cards:**

Compile a list of stakeholders in the city, this should include both national and local government, civil society organisations; funding or development organisations; private sector; communities as well as research organisations. Taking your list, print each stakeholder onto an individual card, roughly 8 cm X 16 cm. The cards should be readable from a distance. Similar groups of stakeholders can be printed in the same colour text or backed onto the same colour card. For example all national government departments could be printed in blue and all civil society organisations could be printed in green. Once all your cards have been printed and laminated be sure to punch a hole in the top (in the centre) to attach a safety pin too.

- **Activity cards:**

Activity cards are cards describing a single activity that if implemented will contribute to climate resilient development. It is important that the successful implementation of the activity involves multiple stakeholders. Activities contributing to climate resilient development and involving multiple stakeholders can be found in a countries Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC). Activities for example could be as follows: Strengthening biodiversity conservation management and integrity of natural ecosystems to adapt to climate change. Activity cards can be printed onto the same size cards as those of the stakeholders (see above)

## Facilitation process:

1. **Set the scene by asking the participants to form a large circle.**

*Ask the participants to stand in a circle. Give each participant stakeholder card and ask them to pin it to their shirt so that everyone can see it. Explain that you have a set of activity cards with activities on that contribute towards building resilience. As the facilitator you will then read out one of the activity cards.*

*Note: If playing with fewer players select a few stakeholders from each of the government levels, private sector and civil society. Try also ensure that participants do not represent their own department or organisation.*

2. **Explain to the participants how the game will work.**

*Give the ball of string to one of the participants that represents a department or organisation. The participant with the ball of string should hold the end of the string and pass the ball to someone representing a department or organisation they believe is instrumental in the implementation of the described activity. They should then explain why they feel that stakeholder is needed/relevant/important. The person representing the second department or organisation selected should catch the ball of string and then select another stakeholder and explain why. They must hold onto the string with one hand and throw the ball of string to the next participant with the other hand.*

*The game will then follow the same steps, with the participants holding onto the string until a web is formed.*

*Note: It is important to set the scene and say that as the activity has to be started quickly due to tight deadlines and therefore they will only have a short amount of time to select those stakeholders they believe will be instrumental in the implementation of the activity. This aims to mimic the realities of decision making.*

### 3. Hand the ball of string to the participant representing a department or organisation and let them begin.

*The facilitator can stop the game at any point and move onto the reflection step.*

*Note: Allow participants to have quick discussions and learn from one another. Stop and ask questions (such as why did you chose that stakeholder? Why do you think that link is important?). There may be times that the ball of string is retracted and passed to someone else instead. The ball of string cannot be passed to the same stakeholder again.*

### 4. Reflection

*Ask the participants what they observed.*

*Reflections from participants could include "There are a few key stakeholders missing"; "Not sure we would accomplish the activity with these stakeholders"; or "The right stakeholders have been included"*

*Ask questions and provide your own technical input based on the observations.*

*Based on the observations you can ask who else should be included or who is not a key stakeholder? Remember to always ask "why".*

*Then ask the participants what would happen for example if a certain department or organization did not want to be part of the collaboration or there was conflict in the group. (Ask the participant representing that department or organization to drop their string).*

*End the game by explaining that governments are acknowledged as being central to the achievement of a multitude of international goals and agreements, often without adequate devolution of resources and mandates. Local governments are being called upon to plan and build thriving, inclusive, livable, safe and climate resilient cities in the wake of socio-economic challenges and climate change. To overcome the challenges faced and develop the necessary solutions, local governments need to find innovative ways to improve engagement with national government, research institutions, communities and private sector institutions in ways that harness the diversity of ideas that stakeholders with different backgrounds hold. Equally important is for other sectors and disciplines to unpack what they can do to ensure a more enabling condition for local governments to engage. Take this opportunity to also investigate:*

- *What collaboration mechanisms exist already and what impact have these mechanisms had?*
- *What are the barriers and enablers to the implementation and maintenance of these mechanisms?*

*recommendations etc. to be formulated/developed.*

**Note: You may want to play numerous rounds with participants swapping cards and using different activity cards.**

**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.

## Contact us: