



AAK Annual Convention 2020

COVID-19: The Built Environment
in Africa Amidst a Global Pandemic
Lessons and the Way Forward

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Editor's Message



In recent history there has not been any other period, aside from this one, when the entire world has collectively gone into deep reflection. The AAK Annual Convention 2020 comes right in the midst of a period of deep reflection by players in the built environment, not only at a national level but also at a continental level.

It is no surprise then that in this year's convention magazine we have put together an array of articles whose aim is to further extend this state of deep reflection. While the geographical context of some of the articles is localized, the lessons and applications of the ideas therein are not. For instance, it is no doubt that tenements are a characteristic feature in most cities in developing countries of Africa; and that the COVID-19 pandemic has, in the words of the author, exposed the underbelly of neglect of our urban living conditions.

Further, learning has been interrupted globally and within the continent and therefore embracing innovation and technology in the delivery of training within the built environment sector is a cross-cutting issue that will inevitably have to be embraced by every country.

As you immerse yourself into the articles that we have prepared for you, bear in mind that you have a role to play in finding solutions to the challenges currently being faced as a result of the pandemic. Moreover, since it isn't all dark and gloom, you have what it takes to harness the numerous opportunities being presented. So, what lessons will you carry with you from this magazine? I will borrow the words of a wise person who said, 'painful things teach us lessons we did not know we needed to learn'.

I would like to thank the article contributors for without you, we would not have much to ponder over. I am also grateful to the editorial committee, the publishing team, AAK secretariat, sponsors & partners, AAK Executive Committee and Governing Council, as well as our valued AAK members. Each of you has contributed in making this publication a success.

Do have a reflective read, won't you?

Patricia Karamuta Baariu

Editor, Convention Magazine
Corporate and Council Member, Landscape
Architects' Chapter



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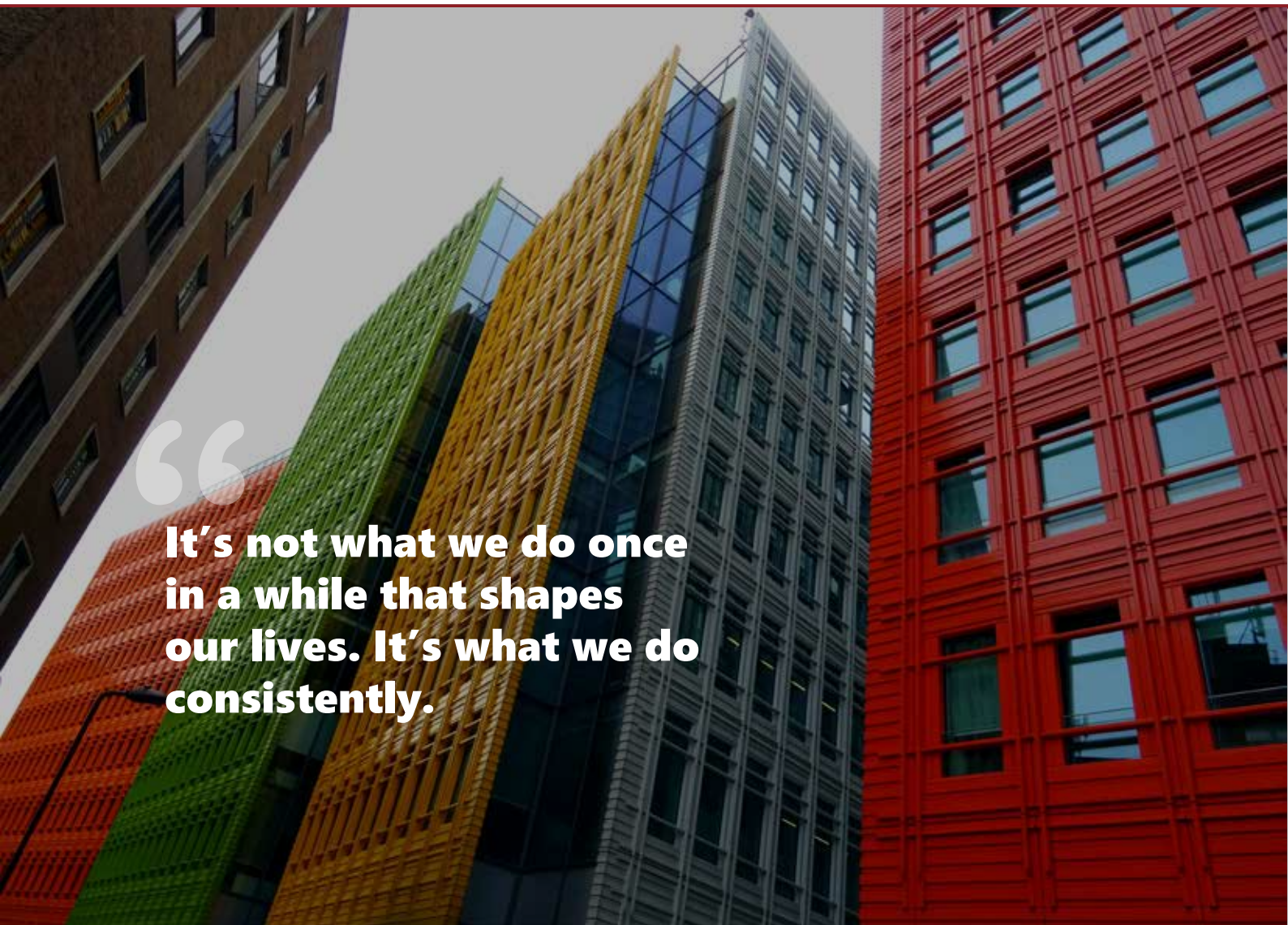
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**It's not what we do once
in a while that shapes
our lives. It's what we do
consistently.**





Convenor's Message



In the years since the AAK convention has been held, we have witnessed terror attacks in various regions, the crash of SARS, MERS and the Global Financial Crisis. Yet the impact of COVID-19 dwarfs all of these events. In the past 9 or so months many built environment practitioners have borne the brunt of the cumulative impacts of terror attacks, global financial crises and COVID-19.

Although it may seem counter-intuitive at first glance, this is the year, more than any other, to attend the AAK Annual Convention since its inception because it has inevitably come at a critical time for the industry. There has never been a more important time to come together, draw on our collective strengths and once again spearhead the future complexion of our built environment industry.

For the first time in history, this year's AAK Annual Convention will be convened physically at the Great Rift Valley Lodge, Naivasha, Kenya as well as an online; as a live-streamed event. With the uncertainty of border closures, live-streaming will provide access to a remarkable group of speakers despite them not being able to travel to Kenya.

This year, our efforts as a Convention Committee have been directed at bringing together speakers, panellists and moderators who can engage in thought provoking discussions, empathetic to the scale of the task and with new perspectives on how we go forward as an industry. More importantly, the convention is an opportunity to take stock and look for new opportunities for alliances and partnerships.

The Convention Committee welcomes you to this year's event and we look forward to very interactive and informative sessions.

Arch. Mwaniki

Convenor,
AAK Annual Convention 2020



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Whatever good things we build end up building us

- Jim Rohn





CEO's Message



I take this opportunity to welcome all our members and partners to the Architectural Association of Kenya Annual Convention 2020. This is a hybrid event, with the participants attending on both physical and virtual platforms. The COVID-19 pandemic has been calamitous to humankind, and as an association, we are joining hands with other stakeholders to develop response interventions aimed at flattening the curve.

This year's convention shall pivot on the impact of COVID-19 on the built environment in Africa, since it is undeniable that the pandemic has shaken the construction industry profoundly. Therefore, we have invited speakers who will focus on a range of topics based on the invaluable lessons learnt from the pandemic and the strategic decisions to be adopted going forward.

In addition, the convention will shed light on the extent to which the healthcare infrastructure was prepared in dealing with the pandemic and how this has impacted the built environment.

In the past year, the Association has been on the forefront in adapting to the *new normal* where it has hosted a series of virtual events through webinars and equally encouraged its members to embrace technology through remote working.

During this period we have endeavoured to consistently improve our members' experience by continuing to offer professional services through effective channels of communication. It is important to point out that the new way of doing things has also come with exciting possibilities and networking opportunities that we hope you will take full advantage of.

I wish you all fruitful interactions as you network and learn.

Jacob W. Mwangi

Chief Executive Officer,
The Architectural Association of Kenya



President's Message



It is my honour to welcome you to the Architectural Association of Kenya Annual Convention 2020, aptly themed, **'COVID-19: The Built Environment in Africa Amidst a Global Pandemic. Lessons Learned and the Way Forward'**. This year's Convention is being held against the backdrop of an event that last occurred 100 years ago. A global pandemic. With over 40 million confirmed cases worldwide and more than one million deaths, the pandemic has ravaged the world and caused unprecedented changes in behaviour and businesses.

In Kenya, we have adapted to a new normal of wearing masks, social distancing, curfews, as well as travel and movement restrictions.

This year's convention embraces this new normal, with the safety and health of our members being of utmost importance as we plan to congregate physically for the first time in seven months. The first case of COVID-19 in Kenya was announced on March 13th 2020, two weeks before our Annual General Meeting (AGM). Prior to that, we had watched the impact of the disease in Asian and European countries, and we collectively held our breath as a Nation waiting for when it would land on our shores.

Despite being faced with the question of how to execute our mandate as an Association under business unusual circumstances, the secretariat, leadership and membership of the Association rose to the occasion, moved forward with resilience and embraced technology. This resulted in hosting our first ever digital AGM, with over 100 members logging in for the meeting.

One of the key highlights of that uncertain period is that AAK formed the COVID-19 Rapid Response Task Force in collaboration with the Health Sector, to respond to the built environment needs in the face of a global pandemic.

During this Convention, we are launching two publications as an output of that taskforce, and a second taskforce that sought to respond to the future of education amidst a global pandemic.

In addition, the Association has worked collaboratively with government bodies, including the National Construction Authority in production of guidelines for managing sites safely during a global pandemic. We have further also advocated for government to put in place various economic incentives and initiatives to support the sector during this turbulent time. We were pleased to see many of our proposals adopted including lower tax rates, moratoriums on loans, among others.

In May 2020 we proceeded with our *Je Una Mjengo* campaign, primarily undertaken digitally, and as a result attracted the highest level of participation since its inception, both among members of the Association and the general public.

In August 2020, continuing with our spirit of resilience, we released our *Status of the Built Environment Report* for the first half of 2020. The lockdown on international travel and closure of businesses had caused a disruption in the construction industry supply chain particularly with supplies coming in from China. The report highlighted that the cost of construction inputs including labour and materials had recorded a significant increase. During the launch of this report, we constantly asked ourselves, **what is this pandemic teaching us about the construction industry?**

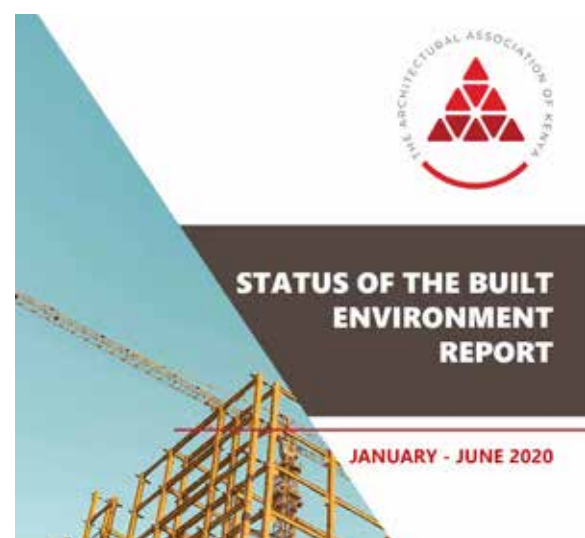
It is interesting to note that the residential sector remained relatively stable and that single family detached homes seemed to generate increased interest, perhaps

now that more people are working from home. Moving forward, it is possible that the same trajectory may be experienced post-COVID.

The residential apartment rental market remained relatively strong in light of the prevailing circumstances. This has provided an opportunity in the market for local suppliers and manufacturers to fill.

Additionally, in the Health Sector, due to the pandemic we have seen the emergence of a number of home-grown solutions ranging from hand washing and related sanitary facilities, to retrofitting of existing infrastructure to help manage the effects of the pandemic. For instance, the Aga Khan University Hospital in Nairobi set up a field hospital at the Gymkhana Club in Parklands.

The Machakos County converted the stadium into a field hospital for COVID-19 patients. In Murang'a, the county government launched a 35-bed capacity ICU facility that was constructed in a record 21 days. An opportunity presented itself as an urgent need to address the gaps that have long been in existence in the healthcare sector.





In this Convention's presentations and discussions, we shall delve further into this topic, taking a more in-depth look at the various sectors and their responses to the global pandemic; healthcare, education, urban planning, residential real estate as well as commercial real estate. We shall also be discussing what lessons can be learnt in the built environment and the way forward.

As we meet for the first time in 7 months, I want to appreciate what it has taken for us to get here. Our partners, who despite their own challenges, have continued to walk with us and are here today, we appreciate you. The AAK leadership, who have adapted, stepped up to the plate, and ensured that the Association has remained vibrant and solution oriented, I honour each and every one of you. The secretariat, who faced with the pandemic and having to adapt to a new way of working have continued to address members' needs and ensure we continue running, thank you. And most of all.



To each of you. The Membership. For being resilient and adaptive, and for continuing in strength and in embodying AAK's vision amidst turbulence, 'To be the leading professional organization in the built and natural environment in the region.'



During this convention, I urge you to catch up with your colleagues (keep 6 feet distance apart as you do), learn and lean into the lessons. And lastly, in the year 2020 of our Lord, the year of COVID-19, to lean into this quote by Robert Shuller, "Problems are not stop signs, they are guidelines."

Mugure Njendu

President,
The Architectural Association of Kenya



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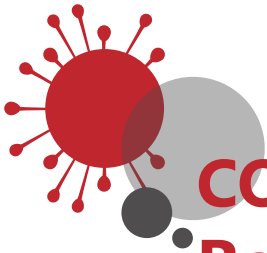
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COVID-19: Road to Recovery, Step by Step

Rachel Patience Mulondo



CHALLENGES

When the year 2020 began, most businesses had ambitious projections, some spanning the next decade, then just within the first quarter, boom! COVID-19 happened! While its full impact on businesses will take long to quantify, one sure thing is that most companies will need to re-engineer their models. The built environment was already starting to take a hit pre COVID-19 and following the outbreak, nearly everyone along the construction supply chain has been affected in one way or another.

Some of the effects include:

- Reduced employee productivity due to anxiety over possible jobs losses.
- Businesses now have to work for fewer hours to allow staff to get home in time because of the dusk to dawn curfew.
- Owners are currently unable to make long term plans owing to the uncertainty of the pandemic
- Delayed payments and cash flow problems.

So, is there hope? A saying goes that every cloud has a silver lining. What this means is that all is not lost. Practitioners in the built environment must quickly find new ways of doing business. Therefore, even as firms think of significant changes, here are simple actions that may make the difference between companies going out of business or re-bounding to new heights:

INTERVENTIONS AND ROAD TO RECOVERY

1. Re-Work Supply Chains

The modern customer has acquired an extremely refined taste, thanks to the internet. Today, customers want to use exotic raw materials for their high-end projects. Owing to the interruptions on international trade caused by COVID-19, there could be projects that are already experiencing cost overruns due to the increased cost of transporting cargo internationally, not to mention the long lead times.

Suppose practitioners sourced locally for most construction materials and equipment that could still achieve the same effect as imported materials? Just for an analogy, consider the rapid change that has occurred in Kenya's health sector following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hitherto, Kenya imported most surgical masks and ventilators with nobody giving thought to the fact that Kenya could produce these items. Today, thanks to adaptability and sheer ingenuity, Kitui Textiles (KICOTEC) is manufacturing surgical masks in bulk, Dedan Kimathi University is mass fabricating personal protective equipment (PPE) and JKUAT is producing ventilators in sizeable quantities!

2. Re-look at Force Majeure Clauses in Contracts

One of the worst nightmares for construction sector professionals, particularly project managers, is to be slapped with penalties due to delayed projects. Yet, in the case of COVID-19, nobody would have possibly foreseen the current situation where almost the whole world is on lockdown. While practically all contracts have a force majeure clause, it may be necessary to specify what exactly constitutes an unavoidable circumstance. Lack of clarity could lead to a barrage of legal suits and claims that could easily strangle construction sector businesses. So, how about engaging your legal counsel to re-look at the force majeure clauses in all your contracts and sub-contracts to help safeguard construction projects that could face similar emergencies in future?

3. Re-Think an Enhanced Insurance Package

In addition to the contractors' all risks (CAR) insurance and professional indemnity insurance covers, players in the construction industry value chain need to think of enhancing their insurance. Take, for instance, the Work Injury Benefits Insurance, popularly referred to as WIBA. Currently, employees are working from home, yet the majority of employers may have taken a plain WIBA cover that only caters for injuries at the workplace. What happens if, God forbid, an employee gets injured while working from home? Are they covered under WIBA?

Businesses may, therefore, need to quickly upgrade to WIBA plus to ensure that their employees are covered 24/7. That way, they avoid having to compensate employees using their own resources should an injury happen remotely. Additionally, as a sector, AAK can consider working with the insurance industry to develop a tailor-made product to cushion the construction sector in case of similar future eventualities. They can borrow a leaf from the agricultural sector that now has a crop failure cover or even the newly introduced anti-terrorism cover.

“Suppose what we sourced locally could achieve the same effect as imported materials?”

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4. Re-Negotiate With Financiers and Customers

Rather than cross fingers hoping that financiers will not ask for loan repayment instalments when they fall due, it is prudent to begin official negotiations right away. Using their persuasion skills, contractors can talk with their bankers and other financiers for extensions. Likewise, similar negotiations with clients are necessary to agree on new completion timelines. Remember to document these negotiations. Additionally, the construction sector could consider presenting a memorandum to the government for a stimulus package to help cushion the industry from some of the effects of COVID-19.

5. Re-Assess Customer Experience Strategy

Customers are the lifeblood of any business. Due to a busy schedule, many companies may not have had time to undertake customer journey mapping to understand customer needs at each touch point, but with the lockdown, now is the opportunity. After mapping all the touch points, develop or strengthen your customer experience strategy to ensure that every employee exceeds customer expectations and creates memorable customer experiences. Another way to enhance customer experience is to engage in low-cost digital marketing. For instance, writing regular blog articles or sending e-newsletters to your customers will keep them connected with your business. Connection means more business during and post COVID-19 hence frequent communication with your stakeholders, employees, suppliers, creditors and government regulators. Ensure you are vibrant on many social media platforms - Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn and many such other platforms. You may also need to revamp your website to ensure that it communicates clearly.



6. Re-Organize Your Team

After COVID-19, it may not be possible for your business to operate as usual. You may have to re-organize your workforce or re-assign duties. Here collaborative communication will come in handy. Take the first few days after resuming full operations to engage openly with your employees and ask them for ideas. Explore future options together. Once agreed, get down to work. Such a consultative exercise will not only yield valuable information but will also ensure everyone's buy-in and support. You may also need to enlarge the team's skillset to help them cope with the new normal and prepare for future eventualities. Skills like negotiation skills, work ethic, emotional intelligence, communication skills and stress management are vital in helping the team start over again with renewed optimism.

**Explore
future options
together with
your team**

7. Change or Venture into Alternative Construction Related Business

This is already happening with people going into manufacturing of PPE. There is a lot of supply potential for quality construction materials in Kenya and there is enough research out there to link proposed suppliers to manufacturers or even enable stakeholders go into production. The government should also be encouraged to support local manufacturing as much as possible to create opportunities for the built environment to stay afloat. Practitioners need to explore new sources of raw materials and encourage their clients to consider alternative supply chain options that embrace locally available materials.

Conclusion

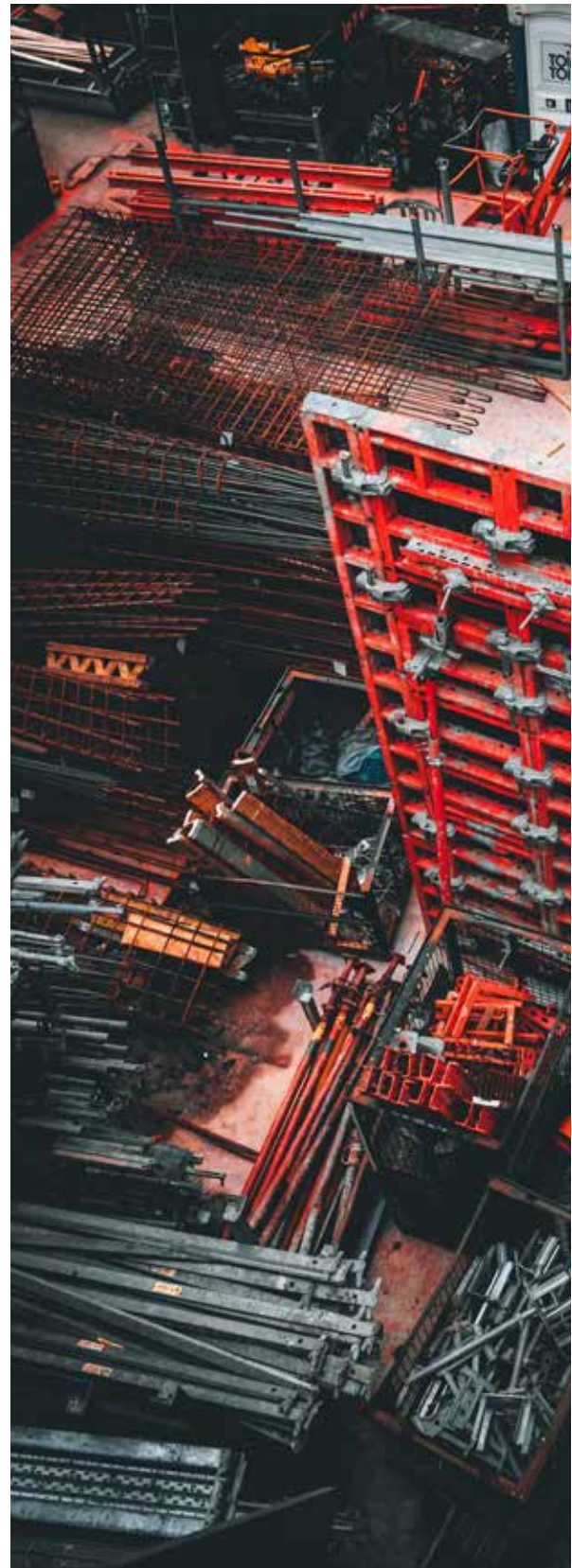
We can come out of this a stronger and reinvented sector so that in future our contribution is more appreciated, cutting across various industries and earning us an undisputed spot in the “essential providers’ category”.



Rachel Patience Mulondo

Associate Director, Amazon Consultants Limited
Registered Quantity Surveyor

Corporate Member of the Architectural
Association of Kenya (AAK), Quantity Surveyors’
Chapter Treasurer
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Architects: Where are the Post COVID-19 Opportunities?

Felix Lati
Tom Sitati



The world of business is about to change. Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, some businesses are going to shut down, some are going to slow down, others shall experience tremendous growth while new ones shall sprout, as it were, from nowhere. This is just the way it is when there is a seismic shift in the macro environment.

Moody's, the global ratings agency, recently published a Global COVID-19 Impact-Heat Map. The document divides industries into three, based on the relative impact that the pandemic shall have on their performance. The green zone is for those facing low exposure, orange for moderate exposure and red for high exposure.

Construction sits in the low exposure zone. Architecture, while related to construction, is one of those disciplines that is involved in virtually all sectors. For purposes of this article, we shall focus on architectural design work.

Based on Moody's heat map, we decipher where the opportunities for architectural work shall emerge post COVID-19. Moody's takes a long term view, while in the developing world, the view is more likely to be no more than six to twelve months.

Medical and Pharmaceuticals:

We have always known that the medical field was critical. It is no wonder Moody's has this in the green zone of low exposure. After coming out of a situation where we shall have had a loss of life akin to a military war, we'll need to do everything to prevent this from happening again. Prior to that however, we need to deal with the immediate situation. This may require architects to be part of the solution by helping design and set up quick facilities or retrofit existing ones to act as quarantine centres or isolation wards.

The Food Industry:

After nearing COVID-19 inflicted starvation, food shall have somehow moved to an even more prominent place on Maslow’s hierarchy. Inspired or misguided, more entrepreneurs and opportunists shall flock the food industry at all levels, right from primary production to consolidation, wholesaling and retailing.

The “discovery” of the farm to table model that is currently delivering so many food baskets to families shall mean the opportunity is in warehousing and processing facilities. As architects, we shall come in to design these facilities, working with the logistics experts to make sure they work efficiently and are flexible enough to be scaled.



Hospitality:

The strange thing about hospitality is that, according to Moody’s, it sits quite high up among the industries hard hit by the pandemic. It is also one which offers most opportunity to architects after the pandemic. Let’s get back to that in a bit.

Physical distancing has made socializing, having meals together, corporate meetings and conventions impossible. What is left is the food and beverage delivery business. Countries closing borders means virtually no international travel and countries locking down means even no internal travel that grows demand for accommodation. “Stay at Home” also means “Don’t stay in hotels”.

For these reasons, hospitality has virtually ground to a halt. Getting back to our earlier point, the question is: what is the opportunity post- COVID-19 for architects? Well, the huge hospitality facilities are right there costing the owners money every day in rents, rates and maintenance costs. The fear of going through another expensive period like this one shall mean owners thinking twice about what they own and what it can do for them. Does this expensive real estate require repurposing? Does it require flexibility in-built into the design? Do hospitality industry players need to downscale to ensure a return on investment? Whichever way the respective owner decides to go, architectural intervention is required.

Residential Real Estate: Did you work from home during the lockdown period? Were the spaces in your home conducive? Home owners are asking themselves these questions during the crisis and shall want to take action as soon as the crisis is over.

Real estate sits in the green zone as it is usually fairly stable in nature, being a long term game that is not immediately affected by blips in the macro environment.

Where the opportunity lies for architects is in serving clients who may wish to go as far as moving away from cities as the reality of the old urbanity stops being appealing, to building in a new neighborhood, to just repurposing existing spaces ready for the next lockdown. Many live in spaces where they don't actually "live" due to their busy lifestyles. COVID-19 gave them the "opportunity" to actually live in and experience their homes. Some shall be "shocked" into the action of engaging an architect to help them make their spaces more suitable to work in.

Discerning developers may also now do more mixed use developments to ensure that where people can live, work, go to school and shop are within close proximity. This would make lockdowns less disruptive to existing lifestyles.

Commercial Real Estate: This sector is likely to suffer from the developer's point of view, but from the architect's point of view, opportunities shall abound. Working from home has become a new reality that shall be incorporated into how we work post COVID-19. That means offices may need to shrink or be repurposed. That is where the architect comes in, ensuring a return on investment for the space businesses occupy for their operations.

Architects shall need new skills around auditing businesses and their optimized needs or partner with experts in the area so as to come up with the best solutions for clients. Commercial real estate may need to be convertible to other uses such as residential. That calls for different flexible architectural designs going forward.

Retail Real Estate: The "amazonification" of retail space means brick and mortar shops are in danger. We don't think they shall go away but they shall have to shrink, they shall need to change, they shall need to be adaptable. So, enter the architect to reorganise space to enhance the retail experience while also shrinking or repurposing the space probably for more storage as more customers move to ordering online. With shopping going both online and to neighborhoods, malls are at risk. Existing ones may need architects to redesign them for purposes such as logistics hubs, so as to take advantage of their suitable locations.



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Convention Speakers



Arch. Fiifi Y. Sam-Awortwi

Deputy Project Manager/Member,
Architectural Team, Ghana Infectious Disease Centre

**SESSION 2:
WAS HEALTHCARE INFRASTRUCTURE UNPREPARED?
HOW GHANA RESPONDED?**



Prof. Alfred Omenya

Principal Researcher and CEO,
Eco-Build Africa

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THE URBAN AND RURAL ROLE IN TRANSMISSION
Not Hard Hit: Pandemic resilience of rural areas**



Dr. Nkatha Gichuyia

Lecturer, Architecture and Building Science Department,
University of Nairobi

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Urko Sanchez

Principal Architect,
Urko Sanchez Architects

**SESSION 5:
THE FUTURE OF WORK:
RETHINKING OUR WORK ENVIRONMENTS POST COVID-19
WHAT WILL THE FUTURE OF WORKING TOGETHER LOOK LIKE?**



Hitesh Mehta

Eco-Landscape Architect, Eco-Architect,
Interior Architect, Urban Designer

**SESSION 5:
THE FUTURE OF WORK:
RETHINKING OUR WORK ENVIRONMENTS POST COVID-19
The Art of Remote Working**



ADR for Construction Disputes During COVID-19: Much to Consider After the Dust Settles

Dr. Ken Wyne Mutuma



INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has unleashed a plethora of effects across the construction industry. While the immediate attention of the pandemic has focused on the dire health consequences, more and more countries are becoming aware of its impact on the economy – both at a macro and micro level. Many of the measures taken by governments, including imposing lockdowns, social distancing etc., have had a direct impact on the welfare of sectors across the world. The construction industry is not immune and has hence not been spared. Travel restrictions have impacted global supply chains and markets. More specifically at a domestic level, government directives outlining strict health measures such as requirements for PPE (Personal Protective Equipment)

and restraining the movement of persons have directly impacted the operational costs of individual projects, leading to or potentially threatening their closure. Amidst this uncertainty and turmoil, the stage has been set for the rise of many disputes within the industry.

COVID-19 and Construction Disputes

Disputes are likely to be as numerous as the dilemmas imposed upon parties as a result of the crisis. For example, many disputes will emanate from decisions to lockdown sites and the impact that this might have on the contract, workforce and supply chain. In such situations, a party will have to prepare for claims that may arise thereafter.

Claims are likely to emerge in view of the increased attention on health and safety measures, and the need for contractors to pay paramount attention by reorganising how sites are managed and adequate equipment provided. This in itself is likely to become a ground for disputes among parties, and between local regulatory authorities and contractors. Furthermore, we are likely to see disputes in connection with insurance contracts.



Claims are likely to emerge in view of attention on health and safety measures...

Indeed, across all contract, a major question around which disputes will revolve is the question of whether the cumulative impact of all these disruptions could potentially amount to a 'force majeure'. Here the wording of the contract will be crucial as there is no established meaning under the law for the term. However, in the context of many construction agreements, a force majeure arises where an unforeseeable event – one beyond the control of a party – arises and makes it impossible for that party to perform its obligation. Each of these elements is the subject of interpretation, and thus a fertile ground for disputes.

Rethinking Dispute Resolution

Clearly, the pandemic has paved the way for a multiplicity of disputes. To this end, and foremost for the industry, is the question of whether existing traditional dispute resolution mechanisms are suitable to address this escalation of disputes. During this period, parties will be looking for effective and expeditious dispute resolution platforms. It has long been established that courts are not ideal for these purposes for various reasons such as: their costs, timelines and general adversarial character (which in contrast to mediation, results in a winner takes it all approach). This has seen a greater shift towards alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms such as mediation, adjudication, conciliation and arbitration.

However, it is likely that in the present context, even these mechanisms may have to adapt to the unique pressures brought to bear by the present crisis. Many of the conventional face-face platforms through which such disputes are held have been disrupted by government directives such as travel restrictions, limitations on gatherings, curfews etc.

In these circumstances, parties and their representatives find it difficult to physically meet to address disputes requiring urgent attention. It is therefore important to develop, in the present conditions, new processes and platforms that can serve disputants appropriately.

For example, disputants may need to rely upon document-only processes e.g. in the context of arbitration, where the need for a hearing is waived. While this may not be appropriate for complex arbitrations where inherent need for cross-examination is key, a documents-only procedure will go a long way towards resolving many claims that are industry specific and relate to issues such as specification of products, intellectual property and small claims in general. Indeed, if one borrows a leaf from the large number of construction dispute adjudications concluded by documents only, it is clear that many arbitrations can be addressed through a documents-only procedure.

Disputes that do not lend themselves to a documents-only procedure can still be handled feasibly by employing some innovation. Much of this innovation is pegged upon developments in the ICT industry and their bearing upon how business is done generally. Much discussion is already taking cognisance of how to employ such technology in the overall operations of a project to reduce costs and increase efficiency.

“**Technology has been acknowledged as a critical add on to the world of ADR**”

Equally, technology has been acknowledged as a critical add on to the world of dispute resolution from the earliest days of globalisation that saw Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) systems gain currency amidst the new paradigm of a borderless world of finance and capital. It is worth noting that the restrictions of the present times are already seeing an accelerated reliance on technologically aided dispute resolution platforms. Using virtual platforms and online processes, parties need not be constrained any longer by physical proximity.

They can proceed to initiate, hear and conclude a dispute – and as some may argue – faster and cheaper than previously. Needless to say, the ability to do this will depend on the existence of rules within institutions under which disputes are brought (such as the Architectural Association of Kenya, Chartered Institute of Arbitrators etc.), and the extent that they are able to accommodate this kind of innovation.





Furthermore, given that such processes are grounded upon party autonomy, an agreement amongst disputants should be sought, where the necessary consent to the use of virtual platforms has been granted.

Even in the absence of such consent by a party (e.g. in the context of arbitration) and bearing in mind the uncertainty surrounding the end of this crisis, an adjudicating tribunal may opt to rule in favour of such mechanisms in line with its overall objective to ensure expeditious proceedings.

As one observes the recent willingness of courts to incorporate technology in their procedures in the face of this new reality, there is no doubt that its incorporation is likely to be even more pervasive in the circles of ADR.

Conclusion

Some have suggested that while the COVID-19 pandemic may disappear in the near future, its impact is likely to remain with us for several decades. This calls for careful reflection by the construction industry as it moves forward both in the present and into a post-COVID future. Several experts are urging practitioners to increasingly modify their business operations by relying on technology at different points of their systems, procedures and structures. Similarly, the emerging field of dispute resolution will require the industry to recalibrate itself in line with the emerging technological advancements. As with all change, adapting may be fraught with initial challenges, but the costs of failing to do so is likely to exceed attempts to preserve the status quo. A new norm has been established upon which dispute resolution process must now fall in line.



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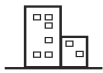
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Best Practices for School Design Post COVID-19



Revitalizing Our Public Spaces Post COVID-19

Fiona Penina Nyadero



It would be at least a year before the first vaccine against the novel SARS-Corona Virus is released. A government official warns that even if the vaccine was to be produced by 2021, Kenya, a developing country, still has a long way before actually getting our hands on it. Where am I going with this? COVID-19 will be with us for some time to come.

I am walking down a path at Uhuru gardens in Mombasa. A thought crossed my mind; how will this city park cope if we were to live with COVID-19 over an extended period? What about the beaches, and many other similar parks, playgrounds among other social public places scattered all over the country? As we make plans to re-open the economy, schools and religious places, how will public parks and gardens fare?

Granted, some of these spaces were not shut down per se, but most of the public shied away from public spaces in a desperate bid to practice social distancing and avoid crowds.

Most of the neighborhood playgrounds remained empty as responsible parents forbade their children from leaving the safety of their compounds or flats. Even the most basic public spaces; the streets, remain relatively empty as people opt to stay safe behind closed gates and doors, only heading out when it is necessary.

Since the dawn of civilization, people have gathered in what was considered a public space to trade and barter, discuss important issues affecting their communities, meet friends and even forge new relationships. Public spaces not only create spaces for rest and relaxation but also socialization. The social networks created from such interactions generate social capital. Communities with sufficient social capital are stable and often thrive.

How do we react to this?

While Landscape Architects strive to encourage bio-diversity to flourish within our public spaces, the main purpose remains serving human needs. Human beings are a crucial part of the public space landscape. Thus, we need to see how our public spaces can spring back to life during and most especially, after this pandemic.

Below are some ideas on how these vital spaces can remain social, despite the pandemic, and more importantly, post COVID-19:

Let Us Have a Seat.



With numbers rising, we are told to assume that the person next to you has fallen victim to the virus. Paranoia is the new normal. Consequently, people shy away from sharing benches fearing infection. As Landscape Architects and designers, how do we react to this? Provide more than adequate seating facilities. The good news is this can take any form. As a lecturer used to tell us, "I don't want to see four-legged seats in your designs!" Take this and run with it! Ledges, planters, walls, steps, grassed slopes and the list goes on.

Visual Access.

Public spaces need to have visual connectivity within and with their immediate surroundings. This not only creates passive surveillance within the spaces but also creates the feeling of belonging.

The feeling of belonging is very important for people who might not be ready to immerse themselves fully into such a setting. Visual access into the sub-spaces encourages a feeling of connectedness even if we are not physically together.

Pocket Public Spaces

We need to revisit our spatial planning policies. In addition to the major public spaces such as city parks, beaches and state-owned lavish theme parks, which we only visit during vacations and holidays, there is need for smaller pocket parks or plazas. These intimate spaces will go a long way as we try to repair our torn social fabric. Imagine a centrally located plaza or square with houses or storefronts looking on to it. People who will use this space will identify themselves as a community. Building communities around places instead of the other way around is a good strategy as we restore our public places. Additionally, these can also be multifunctional destinations.

Aesthetic and Functional Attraction:

We are revitalizing our public spaces and restoring their glory as social spaces. What better way to achieve this than to provide a variety of attractions to bring in the numbers. Human beings need stimulation. A number of aesthetics such as waterworks, or ingenious native or exotic planting, stimulating artworks and murals will create this. Providing activities to undertake in such areas would also go a long way into ensuring that people engage. Since public gatherings are currently banned, introduce solo but social activities such as bike riding, art making or even mobile libraries fully equipped with short-term loan-books and a proper surveillance strategy. Throw in a subsidized or even free Wi-Fi spot and these spaces would never lack in youth audience.

Exposure to the Elements

With months or even years of the restrictions, lockdowns and cessation of movement, curfews, isolation and quarantine, there will be an appreciation of the freedom that public spaces represent and so willingly provide. Let us get people to enjoy the great outdoors. Provide spaces for basking in the sun or feeling the breeze through one's hair. Imagine someone in the iconic titanic pose, enjoying what your designed spaces have to offer. They immediately get the sense of freedom in 'I am the King of the World' kind of way. The weather contributes significantly to people's enjoyment of a space. Nonetheless, remember that balance is key.

Inject Life into the Streets

Now more than ever, our streets need to be safe and secure complete streets. Imagine the next time you feel the stress levels rising; you don your facemask and go for a walk, stroll or run. While on it, you pick up your groceries from your local vendor who is not selling them from a gunnysack on the ground but a decent stall dedicated for that purpose. Traffic and cars do not mingle but people do. Let our streets not be only traffic-minded, but also for the children and the elderly, the exhausted teacher or laborer coming home from work, the hawker trying to make ends meet and the athletes training for their 10K marathon.

The Proper Sanitation Agenda

So far, proper sanitation has been the only effective way of prevention. Long before the outbreak, UN-Habitat recommended adding a public health agenda into every public space.

Let our streets not be only traffic-minded

It is time we heed this call. We are nothing if we do not learn from history. If adding sanitation services is not plausible then at the least, educate the public on the proper hygiene and sanitation. The human race is resilient. We shall move past this pandemic just like countless others before it. We shall go back to our friendly, social selves. Even so, our public spaces need to come alive once more. Social distancing does not have to be the end of social connectivity. This is a challenge to think outside the box as we breathe life into these neglected but vital spaces.

Well thought out spaces have the power to attract people and make them stay, consequently encouraging spontaneous interaction. It is up to us to come up with ingenious ways of bringing people together as we stay apart. Think away, you may surprise yourself with the exceptional ideas you'll come up with. More importantly, let us build a discussion around this.

Additional information has been sourced from Shafer, C & Jacob, J. (2006). Urban Parks: The Value of Small Urban Parks, Plazas and Other Outdoor Spaces. and Project for Public Spaces (2012). Placemaking and the Future of Cities.



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Fighting the COVID-19 Pandemic in Nairobi's Tenements: An Uphill Task

Dr. Edwin Oyaro



Public health authorities have given guidelines for the control of the spread of the COVID-19, which include regular washing of hands with soap and running water and wearing facemasks to cover the nose and mouth as well as avoiding touching the eyes, nose and mouth. In addition, they have recommended social distancing, staying at home and regular disinfection of areas that are prone to contamination.

Nairobi is loosely described as a tenement city. And this definition is not far-fetched when it comes to the many low and middle-income settlements dotted with tenements that fall below acceptable standards for human occupation.

The highest concentration of tenement is in Mathare North and Huruma, Kayole, Dandora, Kahawa, Mwiki, Pipeline, Tassia and sections of Kawangware and Kangemi, among others. These are the most populous places in Nairobi.

The public health status of these settlements have been put to question and the interventions have been lukewarm and at best, feeble. The outbreak of the novel coronavirus has brought to fore the folly of mismanaging urban settlements over time. The country is likely to pay dearly for this mismanagement. It will be a daunting task to control and manage the virus in these settlements because the morphology of the tenements and lifestyle of residents is highly receptive to the spread of infectious vectors.

Pipeline is the most densely populated area in Kenya

According to the 2019 Census

Morphology of tenements

Tenements are multi-storey residential blocks, some as high as nine floors. The dwelling rooms are arranged in two rows along the length of the plot and face inwards to a corridor and sometimes light-wells, depending on the width of the plot. Room windows face inwards too because the tenements' outer wall abuts the plot boundary. Room sizes average about 10 square metres. The floor layout does not allow natural light and cross ventilation except for the rooms on the top floor and those fronting the road, which is along the narrow side of the plot. Vertical movement is via staircases with a metal balustrade or stone wall barrier. Toilet facilities are located at different places and occupy space equivalent to one room. The provision is usually one or two water closets and one shower on each floor, which are shared among the households on that floor.

Tenements bear certain common characteristics. The tenements have an overall built plinth area that far exceeds provisions of planning law and are therefore overdeveloped. They maximize on room provisions per floor, thus accommodating many households that create high levels of crowding. From the estimates of the 2019 national census, average household size for these single rooms is three persons. This puts the tenements at high risk of contamination.

They maximize on room provisions per floor, thus accommodating many households that create high levels of crowding. From the estimates of the 2019 national census, average household size for these single rooms is three persons. This puts the tenements at high risk of contamination. In Pipeline estate for example, each floor in a typical tenement has 14 rooms accommodating 14 households.

Taking an average of three persons per household, each floor could accommodate about 42 persons.

The entire tenement with nine floors would accommodate 126 households with 378 persons occupying a plot that measures 247 square metres on the ground.

It is no wonder that Pipeline is the most densely populated area in Kenya according to the 2019 census. The movement of such a big number of people within the tenement and settlement will defeat the social distancing requirement.



The overcrowding that finds expression in the tenements extends to the streets of the settlements. These settlements are more than residential areas; they are also major commercial centres with many economic activities, which are a means of livelihood to many families in and outside the settlement. Some of these businesses are carried out in the evening until late at night. This explains the enhanced business activity and congestion in the evenings when most residents are returning home from work. Formal businesses are mostly carried out in premises located on the ground floor of tenements while informal ones are carried out on the sides of the street in makeshift structures and from the ground where merchandise is spread out on pedestrian walkways. These force pedestrians to jostle for space not only among themselves but also with cars, handcarts and motorcyclists on the street. Thus, along these streets, the idea of social distance is unworkable. The streets therefore present the greatest challenge in the control of the spread of the new coronavirus in the settlements.

Infrastructure and social amenities are poor; there are no formal markets and open spaces are non-existent, garbage collection is irregular, the drainage systems clogged by dumping, roads are in a poor state of maintenance and water supply is unreliable. The standards of hygiene in tenement settlements is very poor and it is even worse during the rainy season. These conditions highlight the characteristics that an infectious disease such as the coronavirus would readily proliferate. Washing hands under running water therefore is a mirage for these tenants.

The main provider of water in Nairobi is the Nairobi Water and Sewerage Company (NWSC).



It supplies water through a rationing schedule because it does not have sufficient water for continuous supply across the city. Water supply in the settlements is insufficient and its rationing schedule unreliable. According to some landlords, the scheduling of supply has been politicized and favours certain areas perceived as more important, to the disadvantage of low-income settlements. There is also interference of water supply by the water vendor cartels that profit from water sales, hence compounding the water supply challenge. As a result, residents regularly purchase water from vendors whose water quality cannot be guaranteed.

Residents' lifestyle

Rental income for single rooms in a tenement in Nairobi averages sh. 3500. In Pipeline for example, the median wage was sh. 10,000-15,000. Thus, the rent paid by households is less than 30% of their gross income, which falls within acceptable limits for sustainable living. However, when incomes are low, like in Kenya, this guideline loses meaning because 30% of household income is too little to afford housing with adequate space and amenities.

Accordingly, living in a tenement entails acceptance of communal living, for which sharing of limited space and amenities is a prerequisite. A number of domestic activities are carried out in the corridor and balconies and sometimes on the roof terrace. These activities include; airing of clothes, some cooking-especially with a 'jiko', laundry washing, informal meetings and a play area for children. Accordingly, the use of common spaces in the tenement is intense and cross contact cannot be avoided.

The demographics of tenement settlement indicate that households are of young people mostly engaged in gainful employment and small business. Tenements, unlike the low-rise slums, have more adults than children in the ratio of about 70:30. Most children are toddlers and school going. Very few households have teenage children. The care of toddlers is a weighty issue. Medical research has shown that young children are most susceptible to diseases when living in poor quality built environments. Mothers of toddlers spend a lot of time indoors and their young ones rarely sunbathe. The options that they have is the common frontage verandas that face the street or on upper floors, when the sun direction is right. A few leave the tenement to search for spaces where they sit and sunbathe.

In all these places, the mothers congregate closely because space is limited thus exposing themselves and their toddlers to contamination and in the case of Covid-19, infection.

Further, children play alone along the corridors, balcony and stairs. The balustrading is made of metal and plain concrete surfaces, which can keep the coronavirus for days. Since parents hardly watch over them, the older children play with and guide the younger ones, but they occasionally abandon them for more intense activities. There is no way any household would keep children indoors. Children will always be in contact and if one contracts a virus, all the others in the tenement block will be infected.

Preparation, cooking and selling of food is a common phenomenon along the main roads of settlements. Most food vendors use charcoal braziers (jiko) and firewood stoves in makeshift kitchens either covered with umbrellas or just open. Much of the food is sold as take-away service because there is limited sitting space. Many households rely on this food, which they say is much cheaper than when they prepare their own.



The risk of contamination of food sold by vendors is very high. They operate on the roadside under unhygienic conditions. Dust generated from vehicles and pedestrian movement is sometimes overwhelming. The food gets contaminated and reports of frequency of related medical conditions like amoeba, supports this observation. Water used for preparation and cooking is purchased from water vendors whose sources and handling is doubtful. The manner in which the food is handled is likely to escalate the spread of disease, including the COVID-19 pandemic. To control such spread, households must be encouraged to prepare their own food while enforcing closure of these makeshift kitchens irrespective of its socioeconomic impact.

As noted earlier, a household occupies a room that is averagely 10 square meters. From a physiological position, occupancy of such a room by more than one person, especially when all other household activities are carried out in it, is considered unhealthy. However, the conditions of domestic life in the tenements is different and such a room can be occupied by a household of seven as observed in one of the dwellings. Such a room could be very hot and suffocating at night mainly because the openings are closed. It is a common practice to close the windows in the tenements to prevent opportunistic thefts, as well as being a measure to prevent neighbours and passers-by from listening in on private conversations and activities.

Privacy and security takes precedence over comfort. This kind of living increases incidences of respiratory diseases and the hence coronavirus will propagate under such conditions.

The remedy would be to reduce household size and increase ventilation but this can only be a mid-term measure. In the short term, households that have alternative accommodation, mainly in the rural areas can be encouraged to move some of the members out and only those in gainful employment to stay behind.

Hygiene and health of households

Households in tenements are supplied water by the caretaker on a pre-arranged schedule and on a floor-by-floor basis. After they fetch water, households store it in their dwellings and next to their doors in the corridors. They use all sorts of containers but the most common are the 20 litre plastic jerricans. While the responsibility of cleaning the common areas is the caretaker's, the tenants clean their dwellings and the areas that they use when doing laundry. The procedures of water handling, storage and cleaning do not meet the protocol of hygiene and are susceptible to contamination.

From the observation of tenement layouts in various settlements, those with less than 15 households per floor generally provide one shower cubicle, which is an under provision. It is standard across tenements not to have plumbing fixture in the showers mainly because they are shared and landlords cannot equitably apportion water charges to households, they also have experience that tenants waste water when they do not directly pay for it.

Tenants bring in water in basins to take a bath and because they are always conscious about scarcity, they use very little water. This means that once the shower is cleaned by the caretaker, the first few tenants that use it, gradually leave it dirty and all the others use it in that condition until the following day. One is supposed to leave a shower clean and rejuvenated but in the tenements, you might leave the shower contaminated.

There is usually one or two eastern squatting type water closets per floor, all without flushing cisterns. Tenants use a five-litre bucket (modified cooking oil plastic container) to splash the water closet once they have used it. There are 100-litre water drums placed in the toilet lobby for this specific purpose and caretakers refill them. Handling of water during the splashing process can easily lead to contamination of tenants because the water closet is intensely used.

Toilet facilities require running water to maintain high levels of hygiene. Without water, installation of plumbing fixtures such as cisterns, showerheads, sinks and hand washbasins or the use of the splash tops will remain a mirage and continue to expose households in tenements to infectious diseases.

The tenements designs are a major influence on health status

The coronavirus is exposing the underbelly of neglect

There is usually one or two eastern squatting. Settlements cannot expect to have sufficient water supply from both the formal and informal systems in the short term.

However in the mid to long term, tenement owners need to develop innovative ways, individually and collectively, to provide water sufficient water. Nairobi receives between 850mm and 1,050mm of rainfall per annum. A lot of the water drains away as surface runoff. Tenements have large roof surfaces from which rainwater can be harvested and directed to underground tanks. Such water can be used for cleaning and flushing toilets. There are very few government health facilities in the tenement settlements and equally NGO's shy away from these settlements because they do not consider the residents poor enough to require their services. Households rely mainly on private clinics for medical care services.

This is flourishing business in the settlements. Inquiries from these establishments in Pipeline, about the common ailments they treat and the frequency, indicate that upper and lower respiratory infections were second to malaria. Tenants affirmed this position and added that coughs, cold and difficulties in breathing were frequent especially among children. This was attributed to poor ventilation in dwelling rooms and a dusty environment.

The tenement designs and poor environmental condition are a major influence on the health status of residents. Immediate reduction of air pollution, improved supply of clean water and waste disposal followed by spraying the settlement is the short-term strategy to control the spread of the coronavirus. However in the mid to long-term, a review of house designs and enforcement of planning and building laws should follow.

The advent of the coronavirus may just be a precursor to future challenges from infectious diseases. Public health laws were purposely enacted to forestall such epidemics and should be enforced strictly.

Conclusion

The overview of the morphology of tenements and lifestyle of residents in the settlements in relation to the spread of the coronavirus reveals many challenges. Tenement settlements are the densest living spaces in Kenya. The use of common amenities and space is possibly the most intense of any residential place in the country. Unfortunately, tenement settlements are among the least supported in terms of infrastructure and social services such as health care because they are regarded as illegal and there is a wish that they will fade away. The coronavirus is exposing the underbelly of this neglect and the effects of this pandemic would be astounding and a public shame.

There is no quick fix to the impending spread of the new coronavirus in settlements that is concrete in the short term. The coronavirus is exposing the underbelly of this neglect and the effects of this pandemic would be astounding and a public shame. There is no quick fix to the impending spread of the new coronavirus in settlements that is concrete in the short term.

However, quick action to ameliorate immediate effects should start with ensuring sufficient water supply and enforcement of a strict cleaning regime for all tenements. This should be followed by enhancing refuse disposal, clearing and opening up of drainage systems and cleaning the streets. Further, regular spraying and disinfecting of streets and tenements should commence. Finally, cooking of food in make-shift kitchens should be stopped so that households can prepare their own food. All these actions can be achieved through administrative action; centrally coordinated collaboration between various state and non-state agencies and community based organizations. The other interventions include enhancing local publicity campaigns that strongly advise residents to follow the Ministry of Health's instructions on hand washing, social distancing, wearing of face masks and keeping good personal hygiene.



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Learning Management Systems (LMS) for Architectural Training Institutions

Waburiri Wycliffe J.T.



Education as a public policy could yet be the best tool available to impart and enhance skill. Higher education in Kenya, as is in most parts of the world, is mainly conducted through structured on-campus interactions. The pedagogy of most education programmes is designed around a trainer who in most cases must be physically present to guide learners. Expectedly so, any form of disruption to this structure could have adverse ramifications. The novel coronavirus global pandemic has halted operations in most learning institutions; rendering some moribund. Suffice to say the education sector is the worst hit if the level of activity or inactivity is anything to go by. Parents and learners alike have had to contend with the cancellation of the 2020-2021 academic year and could well be in for a rude shock if learning institutions do not adapt to the changing times.

But even as the pandemic continues to ravage, various players in the education sector are beginning to rethink their approach to teaching. Some of the learning management systems that hitherto this pandemic were superfluous to most institutions are becoming assets that could possibly define the education sector.

As learning shifts to online platforms, it is important to think about how learning in design studios will be conducted. Design studios are incubation laboratories that provide flexible spaces for experimentation and exploration.

Learning in these spaces goes beyond rigid lesson plans and involves cross-pollination of ideas through both formal and informal engagements. Continued interactions between various members of cohorts around these spaces and faculty incubates free thought and idea development. This space intimacy, thinking and learning constitute the nexus of design disciplines like graphics, fashion, and architecture. It is on this premise that design educators must evaluate what really constitutes the spirit of design learning as they adopt new technologies. In this article we look at selected e-learning authoring tools available right now and review their convenience for architectural training in Kenyan universities and colleges. We also look at the opportunities created by the pandemic.

Google Classroom

Google Classroom is part of the online G Suite available for Education and it offers a great interface for interaction between tutors and students. On Google Classroom one is able to directly teach and have an online repository for teaching materials enabling students who are unable to attend real-time classes to access catch-up works, notes and take home assignments.

Google Classroom uses the standard G Suite office software tools including Google Docs, spreadsheet and presentation applications, audio and video conferencing, while Google Drive is available for online storage. It is also bundled with administrative tools that instructors could use to manage their classes. G Suite for Education comes into two forms - the free platform and the premium G Suite Enterprise for Education which comes with a nominal cost for extending the features to include larger meetings, streaming capacity and additional administrative functions. According to Luke Edwards, a reviewer on techlearning.com, Google Classroom might not be a full LMS but it does meet Learning Tool Interoperability (LTI) standards meaning it can be used with another LMS as an add-on.

From an architectural point of view, this tool offers a great experience in learning management but falls short in providing a great design studio environment as it neither enables the learner nor the tutor to adequately assess and or critique physical models as would be the case in an interactive physical design studio. Students at The University of Nairobi have been using it and admit that their learning experience falls short as compared with interactive physical design studios.

Canvas

The Canvas Learning Management Platform allows schools to build the digital learning environment that meets unique challenges. According to Instructure.com, Canvas simplifies teaching, elevates learning, and eliminates the headaches of supporting and growing traditional learning technologies.

Rio Hondo College in Whittier, California notes on its official website that Canvas offers discussion boards for asynchronous discussions, chat rooms for live discussions and centralized emails. It also provides a password-protected online classroom in which learners submit work and communicate with instructors and classmates.

In Kenya, Riara and Kenya Methodist Universities (which do not offer architectural courses), run on this platform while Nairobi Institute of Technology recently trained its faculty on onboarding with a view to rolling it out in August 2020. Mr. Fredrick Laibon of Riara University contends that the greatest challenge with this as with other platforms available is the inherent challenge of authenticating the originality of practical design models as well as summative assessments.

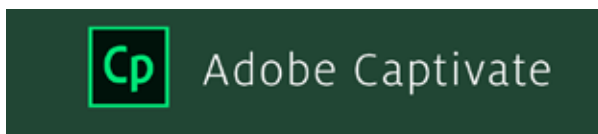
“**Learning involves cross-pollination of ideas**”



MOODLE (Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment)

Moodle is an Open Source LMS designed to provide educators, administrators and learners with a single integrated system to create customized learning environments. Anyone can adapt, extend or modify Moodle for both commercial and non-commercial projects without any licensing fees and benefit from the cost-efficiencies and flexibility. Giovanni B's review on elearningindustry.com indicates that the integration of modules on the platform is amazing

while its community support is incredible. Mr Frankline Mwango of Kenyatta University observes that this platform was successfully used by instructors of theoretical units at the university although its potential in design studios is yet to be put to the test. The platform however provides flexibility given that it is open source enabling developers to create plugins that could in the long run make it more versatile and fully optimized for design studios.



Adobe Captivate

Adobe Captivate Prime is an LMS platform from the computing behemoth, Adobe. Courses can be rolled out on this platform in less than 90 minutes. An online help center, in-product videos and round the clock support makes user experience all the fun. Adobe Captivate features tools to enable the tutor to auto-assign learning plans, schedule reports and synchronize users.

Catherine W. on capterra.com while reviewing this LMS observes that Adobe Captivate 2019 is a fantastic authoring tool for the right user. She notes that the user must be competent on various computer applications and willing to spend some extra time learning. She adds that it is not easy, but when you learn to set it up correctly, the functionality is amazing. Tracking tools allow instructors to monitor the progress and certifications obtained by users, while insights show the performance of individuals, departments and partners with regards to learning objectives. It also features a flat user interface for easy control and navigation without opening multiple pages; a recurring certifications feature that ensures organizations stay up-to-date on compliance; the ability to customize the learning experience for individual users, and gamification tools like leaderboard races and achievement badges.

This LMS is untested in Kenyan universities or colleges offering architectural training. Its complex nature may be a drawback in the context of managing architectural training although the same could be a blessing in disguise just as is the case with Adobe Creative Suite.

Blackboard Learn

Blackboard Learn is aimed at higher education training and learning, with a cloud-based system that is designed to be responsive to the needs of different devices, and can work with content from third-party providers. Dr. Ng'eno Chelang'at of Sheffield School of Architecture opines that in spite of the need for physical contact in architectural training, Blackboard Collaborate Ultra provides a great teaching and learning experience. She adds that at Sheffield, the same has been complemented with Google Hangout.

Design studios have been conducted using these two platforms to great success. She adds that at Sheffield, the same has been complemented with Google Hangout. Design studios have been conducted using these two platforms to great success. Blackboard Learn's in-built real-time video conferencing capability lets instructors add files, share applications, and use a virtual whiteboard to interact.

Collaborate with the Ultra experience opens right in your browser, so you don't have to install any software to join a session. As well as being used in colleges and universities to educate students, it is also used for staff training and collaboration between departments. United States International University-Africa (USIU-Africa) is one of the universities whose LMS system has been set on this platform although it does not have design faculties.

KENET Web Conference Platform

The KENET web conference runs on the BigBlueButton platform. This interactive platform is an open source software and it supports real-time sharing of audio, video, slides (with whiteboard controls), chat, and the screen. The platform allows instructors to engage remotely with students using polls, multi-user whiteboard, and breakout rooms. It can also be used for group collaboration and remote teaching according to the KENET website. Dr. Muchelule, a lecturer at Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT), observes that the platform has many features that are amazingly effective for learning in a virtual classroom.

This platform is popular among public universities in Kenya. JKUAT, Technical University of Kenya, Kenyatta University and Technical University of Mombasa have all signed up and used this platform for most of their non-architectural courses.

There is however no real evidence of its application in design studios in their schools of architecture as most students were not learning at the time of doing this article. It is however noteworthy that departments of architecture in these institutions were making plans to use the platform going forward.



Elucidat

Elucidat provides simple methods of designing effective online courses due to its in-built templates and themes. The user only inputs data and makes minor modifications to the templates to suit their preference or the needs of the target learners.

It also provides custom themes for the experienced professionals. Elucidat gives the user freedom to modify their course design using the effective HTML editor. It also has multiple effective localization tools and supports XLIFF translation which helps the user to localize content especially for international audience. It also allows the user to update and modify the content through a master course making it easy to manage all localized versions. This web-based platform is untested in Kenyan universities or colleges offering courses in architecture.



Articulate 360

Unlike most e-learning authoring tools with responsive capabilities catering for different screen sizes, Articulate 360 has been created specifically for mobile phones. This LMS platform lets you create highly interactive and visual courses for every device, without having to tweak anything. You simply click publish. Articulate through its Storyline and Rise features automatically ensures your course is mobile-ready. All courses support touchscreen, and the in-built player hides sidebar menus and the like so that all the focus is on the multimedia content. The package comes with a library of themes, which have been tailored for different use cases. This platform is not in use in architectural training institutions in Kenya yet.

Convenient Social Media Tools (Zoom, WhatsApp, Instagram and Facebook Live)

Most tutors have been using these social media platforms for communication and training due to their ubiquitous nature. Zoom was the default tool for virtual meetings until Google Meet was launched. Mr. Onesmus Mwatu of the Department of Architecture at Technical University of Mombasa indicated that he had completed his theoretical units on this video conferencing tool.

In spite of this he intimated that learning materials had to be shared through emails and WhatsApp groups. This makes the platform unreliable as it lacks the convenience that comes with bespoke learning management systems. Zoom however has a unique and interesting feature in its Remote Control Tool which allows interaction between instructors and learners and could come in handy when reviewing Computer Aided Design assignments.

As institutions continue to invest in learning management systems, it is likely that these tools will remain as complementary communication platforms and not the main platforms for management.

“**It is likely these tools will remain as complementary communication platforms**”

Conclusion

Disruption is important in any progressive society or system. Just like MPESA, e-Mjengo, Uber and Jumia changed the way we do business, it is time to embrace change in the way we conduct architectural training. Professor Alfred Omenya quips that a hybrid system would be the most appropriate approach. Design studios on online platforms could work perfectly if augmented with thorough industrial attachment.

Industry and academia should foster symbiotic relationships going forward if the former is to benefit from extensive research and development synonymous with the latter. Students getting practical training in architectural practices could replace the need for physical design studios at the university. Students could meet their peers on virtual learning platforms and take part in a Masterclass conducted by various industry players.

There is however no real evidence of Design studios have been conducted using The assessment process could be reviewed to allow students to make digital pin ups.

Considering that documentation of studio work is invariably done using computer applications, it may be prudent to allow students to submit their work in digital formats. Research thesis reports that have traditionally been printed could be submitted in digital formats as well.

Storage space required for printed copies will no longer be needed. It will also create convenience in transfer as digital formats are easy to share. Assessors will be provided with more time for review and costs associated with getting foreign external examiners will be greatly reduced.

Finally, as curation of teaching resources goes on in universities and colleges, more reference materials will be available thereby building stock for online resources. The hitherto undocumented studio projects that are normally discarded as soon as the semester is done will be available for future reference. Social and physical distancing as well as proper hygiene are disruptions that are not bad after all. Architectural training could build on these positives.

Disruption is important in any progressive society or system.



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Registrar of AAK Architect's Chapter



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Urban Spaces and Public Health in the COVID-19 Era

Juliet Rita



The right to good health is entrenched in international treaties as well as The Constitution of Kenya. Health is more than the physical state of the body. It also encapsulates the mental and social well-being of an individual. It is this new realization that led to the need for a closer examination of public health matters, especially in our modern day cities. Urban Planning is critical as it determines the physical, as well as socio-economic settings of urban areas in terms of how buildings are placed, sanitation facilities are provided, open spaces and greenery is designated, densities are controlled; among other key factors.

While urban residents enjoy better services than their rural counterparts, they also face more public health threats and the risks of outbreaks of infectious diseases.

If there is something that COVID-19 has brought to light, it is the need to have properly planned urban spaces. In most of our cities we lack proper housing, sanitation, open spaces for recreation and proper public transport systems. While other countries are restricting the use of their urban spaces and transport systems with coloured tape and markings, in Kenya we have realized we don't have these spaces. The house has been rated as a safe place to be during this pandemic, yet it hides other negative aspects of staying at home. We have forgotten that some don't have homes.

In fact, majority of urban residents lack proper homes with basic services such as running water, not to forget the tragedy of those we send home to 'difficult' domestic situations and with no space to keep safe, and those with small children who have no space to safely play outdoors. The deprivation of an organized public transport system during this period has put everyone on high alert with matatus recording losses and struggling to keep afloat while observing the public health directives and reduced travel demand.

We have realized it is safe to walk and cycle but then we have no infrastructure to facilitate this. In as much as we are happy as middle income earners to hop into our cars, we forget those essential workers serving us in the supermarkets and hospitals use our 'unsafe' public transport. To be safe we all need safe transportation. We are on high alert with cases being recorded in slums areas where there are high densities and no space to practice social distancing.

We forget those essential workers serving us use our “unsafe” public transport.

In essence, we need to rethink our urban planning culture. Let us embrace building set-backs to create more room for the pedestrian and cyclist, let us share our roads equitably, let us plan for adequate water and sanitation facilities and embrace new technologies in the market for building construction. Let us support initiatives that offer sanitation services in crowded areas. Let us be our neighbor's keeper and detest from the culture of beacon to beacon construction so that we can have natural lighting in our houses. Let us appreciate that our house is only good enough if our neighbours are observing the zoning regulations and ordinances and agree as neighbourhoods to collectively leave more open space in front of our buildings for us to enjoy a morning run.

Let us push for organized public transport that will ensure our safe travel after this pandemic and to wade off future risks. Let us not only make noise on social media but also actively participate in the National and County Planning and development consultative forums. In this era most of these plans and proposals are on your County Government website. Interrogate the County Spatial Plans, County Investment Plans and most importantly the Municipalities Annual Investment Plans. Nairobians, you should now know 'the NIUPLAN', the envisioned railway city among other plans as well as the back of your palms so that you can question development decisions that are contrary to these plans.

With no implementation of urban plans, we are planning to fail when the next pandemic strikes.

Our Government can consider the measures we proposed in the AAK Guidelines on Planning and Design of COVID-19 Quarantine and treatment facilities where we also proposed measures such as use of temporary public facilities to decongest our slums to better cope with the COVID-19 pandemic.



Plan. Juliet Rita

Registered Physical and Transport Planner
Chair, Town Planners Chapter, Architectural
Association of Kenya (AAK)



Convention Programme



SESSION ONE

0900 - 1000	OFFICIAL OPENING Moderator: Wilson Mugambi, Vice President, AAK Rapporteur: Brenda Nyawara
0900 - 0905	Welcome remarks by John Mwaniki, Convenor
0905 - 0915	Message by Mugure Njendu, President, AAK
0915 - 0925	Message by Arch. Victor Leonel Miguel, President of the African union of Architects
0925 - 0935	Message by Hon. Lee Kinyanjui, Governor, Nakuru County
0935 - 0950	Keynote Speech: Chief Guest: Dr. Kevit Desai, Principal Secretary for East African Community (EAC)
0950 - 1000	Platinum Sponsor Presentation - MABATI ROLLING MILLS
1000 - 1030	Health Break

SESSION TWO: WAS HEALTHCARE INFRASTRUCTURE UNPREPARED?

	Moderator: Florence Nyole Rapporteur: Mary Odhiambo
1030 - 1040	Gold Sponsor Presentation by Jumbochem Kenya Ltd
1040 - 1100	Presentation by Arch Fiifi Sam-Awortwi: The Ghana Infectious Diseases Centre: A Public and Private sector joint response
1100 - 1110	Q & A Session
1110 - 1150	PANEL DISCUSSION: 1. Dr. Amit Thakker - Chair, Kenya HealthCare Federation 2. Dr. Majid Twahir – Chief of Staff and Associate Dean, Clinical Services at The Aga Khan University Hospital, Nairobi 3. Arch. Caleb Mutali – Resident Architect, Aga Khan University Hospital 4. Dr. Mercy Mwangangi - CAS, Ministry of Health
1150 - 1230	Q & A Session
1230 - 1400	Lunch Break



SESSION THREE: THE URBAN AND RURAL ROLE IN TRANSMISSION

Moderator: **Juliet Rita**
 Rapporteur: **Cyrus Mbisi**

- 1400 - 1410 Gold Sponsor Presentation by **Bayer East Africa**
- 1410 - 1430 Presentation by **Prof. Alfred Omenya**: Not Hard Hit: Pandemic resilience of rural areas
- 1430 - 1440 **Q & A Session**
- 1440 - 1520 **PANEL DISCUSSION:**
 The future of African Cities post Covid 19:
 A look at Johannesburg, Nairobi and Lagos
 1. **Tanzeem Razak**, Architect, Lemon Pebble Architects and Urban Planners, South Africa
 2. **Dr. Abdul Husaini**, Permanent Secretary, Niger State Ministry of Lands and Housing, Nigeria
 3. **Herman Jean Pienaar**, Senior Program Manager – Lead: Urban Lab, UN Habitat
 4. **Peninah Ndegwa** - Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP) Kenya
- 1520 - 1540 **Q & A Session**

SESSION FOUR: THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION IN AFRICA

Moderator: **Marilyn Musyimi**
 Rapporteur: **Etta Madete**

- 1610 - 1630 Presentation by **Dr. Linda Nkatha**: What can we learn from the traditional learning structures?
- 1630 - 1640 **Q & A Session**
- 1640 - 1720 **PANEL DISCUSSION: Looking forward: Education Post Covid-19**
 1. **Bethel Abate**- Architect, MASS Design, Rwanda
 2. **Chris Naicca** – Architect, Design Source Ltd, Kenya
 3. **Gorata Kgafela**- President, Architects Association of Botswana
 4. **Mutheu Kasanga**- Chair, Kenya Private Sector Alliance: Education Sector Board Chair
- 1720 - 1740 **Q & A Session**
- 1740 - 1800 Presentation by **Hitesh Mehta**: The Art of Remote Working
- 1800 - 1810 **Q & A Session**
- 1810 - 1900 **Health Break**
Networking Session / Fun activities and Sports



SESSION FIVE: PUBLIC SECTOR RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Moderator: **Alex Nyagah**
 Rapporteur: **Brenda Nyawara**

- 0900 - 0910 Gold Sponsor Presentation by **Plascon**
- 0910 - 0920 Welcome remarks by **Alex Nyagah**, Hon. Registrar, AAK
- 0920 - 0930 Message by **Jacob Mwangi**, CEO, AAK
- 0930 - 0940 Message by **Mugure Njendu**, President, AAK
- 0940 - 0950 Presentation by **Sen. Sylvia Kasanga**, Chair of the Ad hoc Committee on the Covid-19, Kenya
- 0950 - 1000 Presentation by **Prof. Paul M. Maringa**, Permanent Secretary, State Department of Public Works
- 1000 - 1030 Health Break

SESSION SIX: THE FUTURE OF WORK: RETHINKING OUR WORK ENVIRONMENTS POST COVID

Moderator: **Ambrose Ofafa**
 Rapporteur: **Brenda Nyawara**

- 1030 - 1040 Gold Sponsor Presentation by **Kenya Builders**
- 1040 - 1100 Presentation by **Urko Sanchez**: What will the future of working together look like?
- 1100 - 1110 Q & A Session
- HEALTHY HOMES**
- 1110 - 1200 **PANEL DISCUSSION:**
 1. **Dr. Susan Kibue**, Architect, Kenya
 2. **Omar Degan**, Architect, Somalia
 3. **Jacinta Kabarungi**, Architect, Uganda
 4. **Kunmi Odufuye** - Regional Operations Officer, Shelter Afrique, East and Southern Africa
 5. **Miranda Nkunica Mlagha**, Architect, Malawi
- 1200 - 1220 Q & A Session
- 1220 - 1230 Conclusion:
 Rapporteur General's Summary: **Brenda Nyawara**
- 1230 - 1240 Vote of Thanks: **Olivia Sally**, Hon. Treasurer, AAK
- 1240 - 1900 Networking Session, Viewing of Exhibits, Golf
- 1900 - 2100 **Closing Gala Dinner** Dress Code: African Royalty
 Chief Guest: **Hon. Lee Kinyanjui**, Governor, Nakuru County



MT. LONGONOT HIKE/BIKE WITH AAK

- 0930 - 1400 Mt. Longonot Hike, Bike Riding, Golf
 Mt Longonot Hike Lead - **Ambrose Ofafa**
 Biking Lead - **Diana Musyoka**



More To Do

Golf Tournament

-  **4th November**
-  **9:00am**
-  **GRVL Golf Course**






Mt. Longonot Climb

-  **7th November**
-  **Early morning**
-  **GRVL Departure Point**



Bike with AAK

-  **7th November**
-  **Early morning**
-  **GRVL Departure Point**





Join The Golfer **Wilson Mugambi**

Father to Princesses;
Architect;
Car enthusiast;
Most importantly...
'born to golf, forced to work.'



Golf Tournament

📅 4th November

🕒 9:00am

📍 GRVL Golf Course

18 holes (Self-catering Guests): **Ksh. 3,500**



Join The Hiker **Ambrose Ofafa**

Father of Two,
Hiker,
Landscape Architect

Best place to see the landscape is
from right at the top of the mountain!



Mt. Longonot Hike

📅 7th November

🕒 Early morning

📍 GRVL Departure

Charges: **Ksh. 3000**



Join The Biker **Diana Musyoka**

Mother of Two Beautiful Girls,
A cyclist,
A Quantity Surveyor

My bike has taken me places
my car has never seen



Bike with AAK

📅 7th November

🕒 Early morning

📍 GRVL

Charges: **Free***



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