



2025 AAK ANNUAL CONVENTION

RAPPOREUR GENERAL'S REPORT

1ST - 3RD OCTOBER 2025,
CIALA RESORT HOTEL, KISUMU

THEME:

Shaping the Urban Future

**“Towards Sustainable, Equitable, Resilient,
and Smart Cities for All”**

SUBTHEMES:



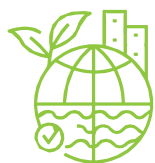
From Plans to Reality:

Delivering Effective Urban
Systems through Data,
Policy, and Finance.



Building Climate- Resilient Cities:

Advancing Sustainable
Transformation and Green
Growth.



Designing Spaces for Life:

Integrating Homes,
Workplaces, Public Spaces,
and Communities for Safe,
Inclusive, and High-Quality
Living.



Driving Urban Innovation:

Harnessing
Cross-Disciplinary
Collaboration for Next-
Generation Cities.



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DAY 01- WEDNESDAY, 1st OCTOBER 2025

SESSION ONE: OPENING SESSION



Speakers

Arch. George A. Ndege- President, Architectural Association of Kenya (AAK)

H.E. Prof. Anyang' Nyong'o – Governor, County Government of Kisumu

Ms Anacláudia Rossbach – Executive Director of UN-Habitat

Session Chair: Arch. Bernard Segecha- Assistant Hon. Secretary, AAK

Rapporteur: Mr. Paul Adesa- Quantity Surveyor

1.1. Session Objectives

- Officially open the AAK 2025 Annual Convention and set the tone for the theme "Shaping the Urban Future: Towards Sustainable, Equitable, Resilient, and Smart Cities for All."
- Highlight partnerships between professional bodies, county governments, and UN-Habitat in advancing sustainable urban development.
- Emphasise the role of the built environment in achieving inclusive and climate-responsive cities.
- Present Kisumu's Urban Transformation Agenda and its alignment with the New Urban Agenda and SDG 11.
- Reinforce the importance of collaboration, local action, and professional engagement in shaping Kenya's urban future.

1.2. Key Discussion Points and Major Takeaways

- Urban transformation requires partnerships. No single actor can achieve sustainable cities alone.
- Kisumu's progress shows that devolution can drive tangible improvements in housing, transport, and green spaces. Kisumu's Urban Renewal Lessons should be documented for replication in other counties
- UN-Habitat emphasizes data-driven planning and local implementation as key to realizing global urban goals.
- Professionals must lead climate-responsive design and push for resilience in infrastructure and housing. There is a need to support capacity-building for local authorities and built-environment professionals in sustainable urban development.
- Community inclusion and equity are central to shaping livable and future-ready cities.
- Ongoing and future projects should align with the New Urban Agenda and National Urban Policy priorities.

1.3. Action Points, Policy, Practice, and Research Implications

- Strengthen national-county partnerships to implement the New Urban Agenda and SDG 11.
- Embed sustainability, inclusivity, and resilience into all urban development projects.
- Promote evidence-based urban planning through local data collection and city-level innovation hubs.
- Encourage professional bodies to actively shape urban policy and regulatory frameworks.

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SESSION TWO: FROM PLANS TO REALITY

EFFECTIVE URBAN SYSTEMS THROUGH DATA, POLICY, AND FINANCE

2.1. INTERNATIONAL DELEGATES PANEL



Panelists

Arch. Nenpin Dimka- Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) council member, co-chair of the AI expert group

Arch. Mecky T'Chawi- President, East Africa Institute of Architects (EAIA) and Architectural Association of Tanzania (AAT)

Mr. Tom Oyier- Head of Construction Sector and Projects, Crown Paints Kenya PLC

Moderator: Arch. Brenda Nyawara- Vice President, AAK

Rapporteur: Ms. Michelle Ouma- Research and Advocacy Manager, AAK

2.1.1. Session Objectives

- Deliberate on the application of AI and technology for ethical practice and planetary stewardship
- Champion the harmonisation of regional practice, regulation, and documentation.
- Counter the "grey concrete jungle syndrome" through smart, culturally integrated design.

2.1.2. Key Discussion Points and Major Takeaways

Arch. Nenpin Dimka: AI and Data in Architecture

- AI can enhance decision-making and integration, but cannot replace professional judgment. Built environment experts must actively shape and contextualise how AI tools are trained and applied to avoid bias and misrepresentation, since they are not involved in the creation of the technology and



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AI tools.

- Change of perspective towards AI and technology as tools that enable attainment of the solution, and in some instances as part of the solution, as opposed to the conception that AI replaces professionals, their roles, and responsibilities.
- Use of data-driven insights, AI, and technology to make decisions is more effective when interrogated from a wholesome perspective as opposed to isolated technological fixes. A good example is the EV case study in Canada, which shows that, by embracing sustainable mobility as a whole, with decentralising economic activity as one example, greater environmental benefits are achieved in reducing mobility-related emissions than by embracing E-Mobility as the only solution. That's because while E-Mobility reduces emissions, it does not reduce car dependence, and EV components, such as batteries and brake pads, still pollute the environment.
- Emphasis on using a bottom-up approach to collect and curate data sets that accurately inform societal needs and project future trends through a participatory process.
- Built environment professionals must remain responsible for decision-making and ethical liability because AI is a tool that supports their work, but does not replace them.
- Professionals must thus actively engage by providing evidence-based applications to counteract the inherent bias in global technology datasets.

Arch. Mecky T'Chawi: Regional Harmonisation

- There is a need for harmonising East African building codes, highlighting cross-border cooperation between Kenya and Tanzania. This aims to achieve synergy between documentation and policies, to ensure regional applicability. The Tanzania National Building Code, for example, is applicable in the East African context and not just in Tanzania.
- East Africa should advance toward **a unified building regulatory framework**, aligning standards and education systems to improve professional mobility and service quality.
- The EAIA president indicated the delay in the Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) by Tanzania was due to delays by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and confirmed his commitment to finalising this soon, emphasising the importance of architects being able to work freely regionally. This will require professionals to pay only an annual subscription fee.

Mr Tom Oyier: Innovation in Materials and Urban Identity

- There needs to be an urgency in addressing rapid urbanisation and the importance of colour psychology, cultural identity, and smart coatings in shaping sustainable African cities
- Africa's urban population is doubling every five years, presenting both opportunities and risks. Cities are expanding faster than they are being planned, which threatens their liveability and sustainability.
- Technological advancements in paints, such as air-purifying, self-cleaning, reflective, and UV-resistant coatings, can significantly reduce **maintenance costs (up to 70%)** and improve **energy efficiency** and **durability**.
- Colour can influence social behaviour (e.g., **blue reduces aggression by 30%**) and should be leveraged to reflect **African heritage** and **local identity**.

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2.1.3. Action Points, Policy, Practice, and Research Implications

- Professionals must integrate AI responsibly, ensure data relevance, and collaborate with manufacturers early in the design process to enhance project outcomes and sustainability.
- Engage in AI ethics and data governance dialogues to shape localised applications.
- Contribute to the RIBA AI Expert Group's global consultations on planetary stewardship.
- There is a need for regional policy alignment in building codes and professional accreditation across East Africa to facilitate cross-border practice and shared standards.
- Promote the African "15-minute city" concept, emphasising accessibility, aesthetics, and environmental performance.
- Expand advocacy for sustainable materials and low-carbon construction through professional associations and industry partnerships.
- More studies are needed on localised data sets and urban material performance in African contexts, including how colour, coatings, and design affect human behaviour, thermal comfort, and urban health.
- Governments should incentivise the use of sustainable building materials such as low-VOC and reflective materials in construction through green building certification frameworks.
- Professionals should resolve the cultural identity crisis by incorporating African colour stories and palettes, and think beyond aesthetics by strategically specifying innovative smart coating solutions early in the design process.

2.2. PRESENTATIONS



Speakers

Arch. Martin Tairo – CECM Public Works, Infrastructure, Housing, and Energy, County Government of Taita

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Taveta

[Rural Urbanism: The Role of County Governments in Shaping Livable Urban Areas in Kenya's Rural Landscape. A Case Study of Taita Taveta County](#)

Eng. Fanuel Kalugendo – Regional Manager – Lindi, Tanzania Rural and Urban Road Agency (TARURA)

[Transport Systems that Move Cities Forward: Urban Mobility & Integrated Transport in African Cities with the Dar es Salaam BRT as a case study](#)

Session Chair- Eng. Muguru Wairimu- Chairperson, AAK Engineers Chapter

Rapporteurs: Ms. Brenda Waruinu, Landscape Architect, and Ms. Mercy Ateka, Town Planner

2.2.1. Session Objectives

- Strengthen county-led planning and governance by presenting lessons from rural–urban contexts in Kenya and beyond.
- Showcase practical solutions and best practices through county initiatives and city case studies.
- Address structural and implementation challenges affecting urban development and mobility.
- Advance integrated, inclusive urban mobility and development approaches to support sustainable African cities.

2.2.2. Key Discussion Points and Major Takeaways

Arch. Martin Tairo: Rural Urbanism: The Role of County Governments in Shaping Livable Urban Areas in Kenya's Rural Landscape. A Case Study of Taita Taveta County

- **Rural urbanism** is the emerging centres away from major cities that are not entirely urban or rural. There is a need to cater to the unique needs of urban and rural communities in such centres. If well implemented, devolution will significantly ease pressure on overstretched major cities and urban centres. Rural towns can evolve into key economic hubs when supported by transport corridors, mining, agriculture, and trade.
- Rural counties are experiencing growth in County HQs and intermediate towns. Need to balance growth, conservation, and culture.
- Urbanisation is spreading beyond major cities. Densification through urbanisation makes it more efficient for counties to provide services to the people.
- Role of Community and Civil Society
 - o Citizen participation, as mandated by the Constitution, is key in planning and service delivery, as it ensures plans reflect local needs and gain community support.
 - o Forums at the ward level shape county priorities: Public participation ensures plans reflect local needs and gain community support.
- Counties play a central role in urban growth but face a **funding gap: 70% of functions, only ~15% national revenue share.**
- Innovative planning tools (CIDPs, energy/job plans) and Public Private Partnerships are vital for service delivery.
- Devolution Benefits to Planning
 - o Devolution ensured that planning efforts are responding to the needs of the people
 - o Empowers counties to shape liveable urban areas

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- Challenges facing devolution
 - o Financial challenges: The county experiences limited budgets
 - o Skill gaps in planning
 - o Limited enforcement of laws and policies
 - o Managing environmental conservation amidst urban expansion pressures
 - o Natural resources, such as national park management, that offer limited direct benefits to county governments.
 - o Multiple cross-border levies, clearance bottlenecks, inconsistent regulations, harassment and confiscation, and infrastructure
 - o Informal growth, land tenure issues, and climate vulnerabilities (droughts and floods)
 - o Internal opposition due to misunderstanding and political alignments.
 - o Legal and institutional bottlenecks, capacity gaps, creditworthiness, political and governance risks, and policy gaps

Taita Taveta as a Case Study

- 60% of Taita Taveta County is covered by Tsavo East and Tsavo West National Parks; 15% is occupied by the residents and communities of the county, and conservancies cover the rest.
- The population is 400,000 according to the 2019 census.
- Urban centres and market centres have shifted to a new area, which happened organically. There was a 2 – 3 year adjustment period after devolution
- Taita Taveta is the breadbasket of the coastal region, with other economic activities being: mining, agriculture, trade, and tourism.
- Four sub-counties: Mwatate, Wundanyi, Voi, and Taveta. Mwatate (County HQ) and Voi (Highway Town) are the emerging urban centres. Mwatate's key economic activities are trade and mining, while Voi has the potential of being an industrial and tourism hub.



Mwatate Town



Wundanyi Town

- **County Interventions:**
 - o Planning: Preparation of County Integrated Development Plan (CIDPs), Annual Development Plans (ADPs), County Energy Plan, and County Spatial Plans to guide planning for urbanisation.
 - o Development within counties: All developments, no matter how small, require approval. There is hope that this will continue with future leadership to avoid the Kilimani situation.
 - o Infrastructure: Routine maintenance and upgrade of roads, pedestrian paths, and drainage

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- Housing: Affordable housing projects have been launched in Voi and Taveta Mbela Estate.
- Water & Energy: The County is in the process of solarising 20 boreholes to ensure access to water and power reticulation.
- Waste management. Taita Taveta is among the first counties with a material recovery facility. Regarding collaboration with neighbouring counties, the Material Recovery Facility (MRF) is not yet efficient, and those in neighbouring counties have not yet been developed. They are relying on Taita Taveta to develop theirs fully. They are also working together as the Jumuiya ya Pwani Counties to develop regional solutions to this.

Eng. Fanuel Kalugendo: Transport Systems that Move Cities Forward: Urban Mobility & Integrated Transport in African Cities with the Dar es Salaam Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) as a Case study

- Africa is experiencing rapid urban growth with limited infrastructure to cater to the increasing mobility needs, leading to cities experiencing severe congestion and long commutes in both private and public transport.
- Walking and cycling remain dominant in most African Cities, yet they are unsafe modes due to insufficient provision of infrastructure for the same. High road accident rates, with pedestrians being the most vulnerable.
- A larger portion of the population relies on informal transport, e.g., matatus or daladala, bodabodas, and tuk-tuks. There is debate over whether bodabodas and tuk-tuks are public transport, given the number of people they ferry per trip.
- Management issues in public transport in African cities - Implementation of Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) systems, with the BRT in Dar es Salaam being a good example
- **Integration of Public Transport System and Services**
 - Integration of multimodal transportation, such as road, rail, sea, MRT, and non-motorised transport, is essential.
 - Incorporation of fare collection in public transit, such as using one card to access all transport services
 - Integration of land use and transport

Major Lessons on Urban Mobility

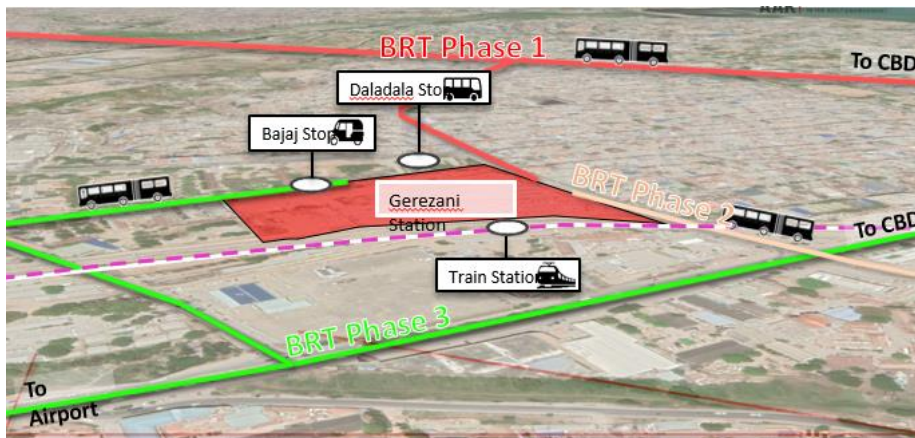
- **Integrated Transport Planning**
 - Cities need coordinated transport modes (road, rail, air, Public Transport, and active modes systems) instead of fragmented modes for more efficient mobility.
 - Need for multimodal connectivity.
 - Well-integrated and universally accessible **last-mile connectivity** is important for efficient accessibility.
- **Technology & Management**
 - Use of technology and AI, like the Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS), for traffic management and service coordination.
 - Unified ticketing/fare system across all modes to simplify user experience.
- **Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)**
 - Encouraging mixed-use, high-density development around transit corridors.
 - The linking of land use and transport planning creates compact, accessible, and efficient

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cities.

- **Financing & Partnerships**
 - o Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) have a significant role in funding and operating modern public transport systems.
 - o Sustainable financing models must be used to reduce strain on public budgets.
- **Sustainability & Inclusivity:**
 - o Well-planned, multimodal, people-centred transport is a backbone for liveable and economically vibrant cities. Transport systems must prioritise green mobility, that is, majorly public transport and active modes of green mobility, and inclusivity for all users.
 - o Emphasis should be on green mobility, public transport, and active transport modes to promote equity and reduce carbon emissions.

Dar Rapid Transit (DART) as a Case Study



Dar Rapid Transit

- **Why BRT for Dar es Salaam?**
 - o Cost-effective: BRT is far cheaper than Light Rail Transit (LRT) or Metro; it is quicker to implement than heavy rail; it is scalable, and it is better aligned to ferry capacity.
- **DART Project Goals**
 - o 6 BRT lines ~ 130Kms of BRT constructed in operation by 2035
 - o 1,975 buses by 2025 and 3,290 buses by 2030.
 - o Transport 2,596,000 persons per day (PPD) by 2025 and 3,050,000 PPD by 2030.
 - o A total of 14 depots
 - o 80 routes by 2025 and 129 routes by 2030
- **DART Successes and Challenges**
 - o The dedicated BRT lines have improved travel time for commuters by over 60+ minutes and reduced traffic on main roads.
 - o Other modes of transport have been formally integrated into the system, such as daladala (mini vans), walking, and cycling.
 - o Modern stations and e-ticketing platforms have been developed to cater to the integrated system and are paving the way for innovation for more integrated solutions.

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- One of the main challenges was coordinating the various transport agencies in charge of the various modes of transport, i.e., road, rail, and water, and this should be addressed at the onset. DART (the NAMATA equivalent in Dar es Salaam) received final approval for what should be implemented in the system integration.
- It is also necessary to densify along the corridors (compact), to bring services closer to the people as you increase ridership.
- Overcrowding during peak hours.
- Limited coverage of lines.
- Delays in land acquisition and in the automation of the system.

2.2.3. Action Points, Policy, Practice, and Research Implications

- Increase equitable revenue allocation to counties to match devolved functions.
- Clarify mandates between national and county road agencies to avoid duplication and underfunding.
- Strengthen legal frameworks for land management and urban planning at the county level.
- Promote **rural urbanism** by investing in mid-sized towns to balance growth and ease pressure on major cities.
- Expand PPPs in housing, water, and energy to bridge funding gaps.
- Scale up waste management innovations (material recovery facilities, separation at source) as models for other counties.
- Study long-term impacts of transport corridors (highways, border towns) on rural-urban growth.
- Assess the effectiveness of county development plans (CIDPs, ADPs) in shaping sustainable urban areas.
- Explore community participation models that improve inclusivity in urban planning.
- Develop a comprehensive multimodal transport masterplan linking MRT systems like BRT, road, rail, sea, cycling, and pedestrian networks.
- Pilot a unified ticketing system to integrate fares across public transport modes.
- Scale up adoption of Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) for traffic flow management and data collection.
- Prioritise Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) in upcoming urban projects and zoning policies.
- Establish stronger PPP frameworks to attract private investment in transport infrastructure.
- Launch studies on last-mile connectivity to improve accessibility, especially for vulnerable groups.

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SESSION THREE: DESIGNING SPACES FOR LIFE

3.1. INTEGRATING HOMES, WORKPLACES, PUBLIC SPACES, AND COMMUNITIES FOR SAFE, INCLUSIVE, AND HIGH-QUALITY LIVING



Panelists

Arch. Mumbi Maina – Vice President, Women in Real Estate Kenya

[Rethinking Public Space through a Gendered Lens County](#)

Eng. Lawrence Njue – Municipal Engineer & Former Resident Engineer, Tatu City Infrastructure Project

[Compact and Mixed-Use Development: Live, Work, and Play in One Place](#)

Plan. Joseph Wahome – Planning Consultant, Kounkuey Design Initiative (KDI)

[Harmonising Adaptation Knowledge and Inclusion \(H.A.K.I\)](#)

Moderator: LArch. Ruth Wanjiku- President, International Federation of Landscape Architects- Africa

Rapporteurs: Ms. Brenda Waruinu, Landscape Architect, and Ms. Mercy Ateka, Town Planner

2.2.4. Session Objectives

- Explore design approaches that integrate work, life, and play.
- Highlight community involvement in shaping public spaces.
- Examine strategies for inclusive and accessible urban design.
- Discuss challenges in creating vibrant, equitable public spaces.
- Share practical ideas for designing for public life.

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2.2.5. Key Discussion Points and Major Takeaways

Gendered approach

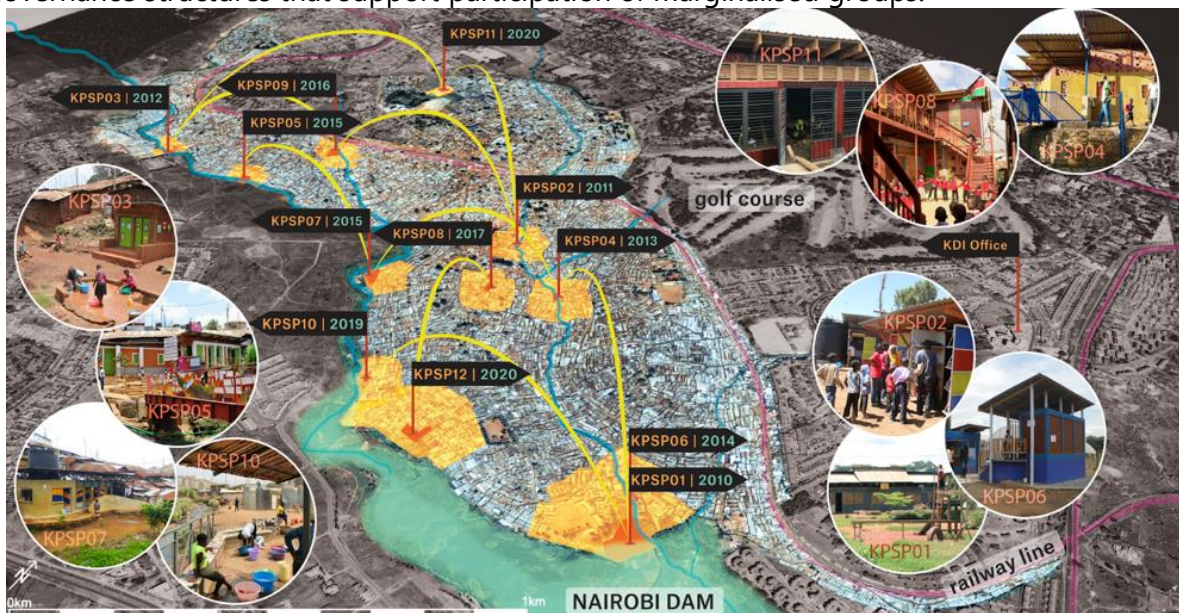
- Built environment professionals have the power and responsibility towards just spaces in consideration of gender, disability, and culture.
- Access to key amenities and safety, particularly for women, children, and the elderly, is critical.

Compact Cities: '15 – minute neighbourhoods'

- Safety, time, space, and economic flow through enhancing a holistic design approach must be prioritized, as a just public realm is inclusive, resilient, and complete.
- Provision of auxiliary supporting infrastructure on upcoming development, including roads, storm water management, water supply, power, and telecom, alongside Live, work, and Play Spaces.
- Development control authorities and city management, and the national and county governments have a central role.

Harmonising Adaptation Knowledge and Inclusion (H.A.K.I)

- Strengthening climate and livelihood resilience by promoting inclusive and integrated urban governance structures that support participation of marginalised groups.



Key Takeaways: Policies, Practice & Research

- Community participation
 - o The road to impact is community manifesto implementation, negotiated future, and international programs.
 - o Meaningful public participation involves designing with the community and facilitates the implementation of solutions from initial stages to completion and successful handing over to the community when commissioning.
- Planning liveable cities:
 - o Stimulation of the space between buildings and deemed crucial for mental health, like public

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spaces that have been neglected and ignored a lot lately.

- There are three crucial trio factors in design thinking when dealing with space transformation, including: safety, visibility, and shape, considering no dead space.
- Spaces need to be highly interactive, well-utilised, and engage communities.

2.2.6. Action Points, Policy, Practice, and Research Implications

- Municipal councils, county governments, and the National Government should work in harmony on the approval of national projects of strategic importance, including Tatu City.
- Road designs should enforce the design speed limits, which promotes compliance with speed limits without overreliance on speed cameras and traffic marshals that could feel more intrusive.
- Transit from the traditional conventional street scope as solutions are changing to cater for the circulation of vehicles, cyclists and pedestrian interactions.
- Enhance local customisation on foreign infrastructure investment.
- Pitching projects to attract investment from different organisations.
- Institutions ought to actualise the archived plans and enforce them responsibly.
- Deliberate on the intention and strategies to develop low-income areas.
- Craft models that foster durability and economic sustainability.
- There is a need to institutionalise policy -gender planning and localise compliance in the regulation of public spaces, which are all inclusive.
- Cross-sector alignment of private developments and organisation developments with laws will ensure performance and compliance.
- Crucial need to dedicate funding and adequate timing to the delivery of projects.

3.2. BREAKOUT SESSION 1: ADAPTING SUSTAINABLE TRANSFORMATION AND GREEN GROWTH



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Panelists

Eng. Elam Babu- Water and Sanitation Engineer

[Increasing Urban Resilience to Water Scarcity and Flood Control](#)

Dr. Joan Nyagwalla- Lecturer, Technical University of Kenya

[Incorporating Nature-based Solutions and Green Infrastructure in Planning](#)

Arch. Yassir Brek- Founder, Morphosis Limited

[Architecture of Dignity: A Comparative Study of Buxton Point and Parkroad AHP](#)

Moderator: Eng. Nashon Tambo, Hon. Registrar, AAK

Rapporteur: Arch. Michael Mathenge, Director, ArchiDatum

3.2.1. Session Objectives

- Explore approaches for strengthening urban resilience in the face of water scarcity and flooding.
- Examine the role of nature-based solutions and green infrastructure in shaping sustainable urban planning outcomes.
- Reflect on the concept of architecture of dignity, and how human-centred design can transform the built environment.

3.2.2. Key Discussion Points and Major Takeaways

- Water scarcity, flood control, and pressure on infrastructure are due to urban sprawl in modern informal settlements like Kilimani.
- Funding constraints on infrastructure can be addressed through tariffs, but the government needs to engage the public and address issues in data collection and decision-making.
- Resilience can be achieved by tackling water security, as shown by the Case study of the Northern Collector Tunnel.
- Professionals should actively protect, manage, and restore biodiversity with their projects. Data policy to operationalize nature-based solutions.
- Building codes, environmental solutions, and funding will support developers through incentives such as climate and development-based incentives. Case Study of Sand Dam Projects.
- People are concerned with the quality of public spaces and the attractiveness of the Affordable Housing Program (AHP) developments.
- The public wants projects to be accorded respect and dignity. Case Study of Buxton Project in Mombasa vs Park Road Apartments.
- The design principles include a) Spatial Justice, b) Materials and Aesthetics, c) Cultural Resonance, d) Procedural Inclusion.

3.2.3. Action Points, Policy, Practice, and Research Implications

- Flooding is always a time bomb. In the Northern Collector Tunnel, excess water is channeled to the main water supply or ecological flow with retention basins upstream.
- Implementation of water safeguards would prevent issues of the tunnel of death, and inform people on safety and how to live with the Tunnel.
- Ensure the sustainability of water infrastructure by replicating good operational practices in other counties and supplying water-scarce areas with water collected from floodplains.
- Transformation of the built environment to include natural ecosystems by involving climate

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science and Green design growth. An ideal situation for sustainable growth would include public participation.

- Debate on AHP having Perimeter walls vs putting stalls that are open to the public. One alienates; the other changes passersby's behaviour but ensures security as well. Taking density into consideration vs human scale.
- Density is only limited by infrastructure, utilities, and proximity of schools, hospitals, and other amenities.

3.3. BREAKOUT SESSION 2: INTEGRATING HOMES, WORKPLACES, PUBLIC SPACES, AND COMMUNITIES FOR SAFE, INCLUSIVE, AND HIGH-QUALITY LIVING.



Panelists

Mr. Samuel Thuo- The Senses Architect

[Designing Cities for Life through the Senses](#)

Mr. Steven Nyagaya – Research Associate at Nuvoni Research/ICFI

[The Social Design Approach in the Co-Creation of Digital Hubs in Marginalised Urban Areas](#)

Ms. Maryam Wangechi – Coordinator, UrbanBetter Nairobi Cityzens Hub

[Urban Better: Healthy Cities](#)

Moderator: Michelle Ouma, Research and Advocacy Manager, AAK

Rapporteurs: Mr. Paul Adesa, Quantity Surveyor, and Mary Ngaruiya, Advocacy Officer, AAK

3.3.1. Session Objectives

- Explore social design approaches in creating digital hubs in marginalised settlements to bridge



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digital inequality.

- Highlight how multisensory urban design can enhance liveability, health, and inclusivity beyond visual aesthetics.
- Share experiences from Urban Better on youth-led, citizen-driven initiatives for healthier cities, especially clean air advocacy.
- Promote design strategies that link environment, health, technology, and everyday lived experiences in building cities where people can thrive.

3.3.2. Key Discussion Points and Major Takeaways

- Digital hubs in informal settlements can reduce inequality and expand opportunities.
- Urban design should be **multisensory**, not just visual, to support inclusivity and well-being.
- Youth and citizens play a central role in driving healthier, cleaner, and more liveable cities.
- Participatory planning and co-creation ensure urban spaces reflect community needs.
- Linking health, environment, and technology strengthens the quality of life in cities.
- **Digital equity matters** – hubs in informal areas can narrow the gap in access to technology and opportunities.
- **Multisensory design** (sound, touch, smell, and air quality) improves inclusivity, health, and overall liveability.
- **Youth-driven initiatives** (like Urban Better) show that citizen action can influence cleaner air and healthier urban environments.
- **Co-creation with communities** builds ownership, ensures relevance, and strengthens the sustainability of urban projects.
- **Lesson** – Quality urban living goes beyond housing and infrastructure – it requires inclusive design, citizen participation, and integration of health and environment in planning.

3.3.3. Action Points, Policy, Practice, and Research Implications

- Expand digital hubs in underserved communities to bridge digital divides.
- Integrate multisensory design principles into future urban projects.
- Strengthen youth and citizen engagement platforms for clean air and healthier cities.
- Promote co-creation frameworks to embed community voices in planning.
- Commission research on urban health impacts of inclusive design and technology access.
- Support digital hubs and inclusive planning frameworks in informal settlements.
- Apply multisensory design in public spaces to improve health and accessibility.
- Study impacts of youth- and citizen-led initiatives on urban health and inclusivity.

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SESSION FOUR: BUILDING CLIMATE-RESILIENT CITIES: ADVANCING SUSTAINABLE TRANSFORMATION AND GREEN GROWTH



Speakers

QS. Charles Wambua – Director, Trimax Project Management

[Unlocking Urban Growth through the utilisation of alternative financing models](#)

Prof. Alfred Omenya – CEO Eco-Build Africa & Adjunct Prof. University of Canberra

[Evaluation of Thermal Comfort in Institutional Buildings in Nairobi: A Case Study of Britam Towers and KCB Towers in Upper Hill](#)

Session Chair: Arch. Oscar Ogunde, Director, Symbion Kenya, Symbion Uganda, and Development Management Advisory Group (DMAG)

Rapporteurs: Mr. Paul Adesa, quantity surveyor and Arch. Michael Mathenge, Director, ArchiDatum

4.1.1. Session Objectives

- Explore climate-responsive and context-sensitive building design approaches that enhance thermal comfort, well-being, and urban resilience.
- Examine alternative and sustainable urban financing mechanisms for enabling long-term infrastructure investment.
- Discuss policy, governance, and professional practice reforms that support ethical, inclusive, and sustainable urban development.
- Consider ways of bridging research, policy, and practice through data-driven decision-making and performance-based urban solutions.

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4.1.2. Key Discussion Points and Major Takeaways

Prof. Alfred Omenya: Evaluation of Thermal Comfort in Institutional Buildings in Nairobi: A Case Study of Britam Towers and KCB Towers in Upper Hill

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LOCAL CASE STUDIES

2. KCB Towers-Upper Hill, PLANNING Architects

- 120m high-rise, commercial building.
- Façade: Solar fins, low e-glass

Strategies

1. Vertical solar fins + horizontal sun shading elements.
2. Non-frontal triangular shape to reduce direct solar exposure; building faces NE, NW, S
3. Indoor gardens and triple volumes for air circulation.

- Principles for thermal comfort models should be aligned with local Kenyan standards, away from American standards.
- Adaptive models for natural ventilation protect the indoor temperature against heat, ensuring human comfort. Using technology for accurate data collection, e.g., data loggers with simulation software. Façade design with double skin.
- Triangular floor plan layouts for KCB Tower vs orthogonal facing East-West orientation for Britam Tower. Perception study within both towers revealed some discomfort for people in the Western façade in Britam, but none in KCB Tower.
- Complaints were raised about the obscure views within the KCB Tower due to the vertical fins & horizontal sunshading elements. At the same time, the Britam Tower features a double-skin glass façade system that reduces solar heat while providing panoramic views.
- Average indoor air quality over 6 weeks of data collection was 24°C in Britam Tower, with KCB Tower recording only 0.6degrees above. This is within the median of the human comfort range.
- KCB Tower has stronger air movement, but flow rates are higher than recommended due to the open plan and sky gardens. There's hardly any air movement in Britam Tower.
- Design simulations would be advised to verify building forms, heat exposure, natural sunlight, solar envelope design, and passive ventilation strategies that affect indoor air quality.

QS. Charles Wambua: Unlocking Urban Growth through the utilisation of alternative financing models

- Financing models like Public Private Partnerships are long-term agreements that take up to 30 years, with possible changes in government officials. Suitable for infrastructure & sustainability projects by private companies under SPV to operate the utility with BOT models, e.g., Nairobi Expressway.

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- With **Land Value Capture**, the facility is built in areas without infrastructure for the investor to offload once land value appreciates with betterment levies by new roads and utilities, e.g., Mwatate town projects, Taita. It also happens in urban neighbourhoods like Kilimani, with large-scale over-10-floor apartment/MUD developments arising from single-dwelling residential zones.
 - **Green Bonds** are an alternative financing model with a template to review facilities adopting sustainable strategies, e.g., reduced water and power consumption. Acorn Developers is one beneficiary of this model.
 - Under **Real Estate Investment Trusts**, there is the option of Green Investment Trusts, which rely on companies renting out residential-industrial properties and money shared out as dividends to Shareholders at intervals. The income rate is Sharia-compliant, and properties have no bars.
 - **Municipal bonds** are issued in the Nairobi Stock Exchange to be paid back by the National government. The county collects from the sale of bonds, e.g., the Laikipia County Bond, which has raised KShs 1.2 million.
- ILAM – Fahari I-REIT is an example of an investment to make money in the Green Fund Bond.

4.1.3. Action Points, Policy, Policies, Practice & Research

- Accelerate adoption of alternative and sustainable financing instruments-including green bonds, municipal bonds, PPPs, and land value capture- to reduce reliance on short-term public funding.
 - Shift investment appraisal toward life-cycle costing to unlock financing for sustainable urban and building projects and improve long-term value for money.
 - Align county planning and financing horizons to 10-30 years, while formalising community revenue systems and participation mechanisms to de-risk investments and enhance social acceptance.
 - Reaffirm government leadership in sustainable urban development through long-term, coordinated infrastructure and economic planning that extends beyond electoral cycles.
 - Leverage existing policy frameworks, particularly the PPP Act (2021), to safeguard financing mechanisms and future-proof urban projects against political transitions.
 - Strengthen enforcement of constitutional public participation and formalise community-based management and financing structures, including cooperatives, as part of inclusive urban governance.
 - Encourage planners, developers, and the private sector to adopt sustainable urban models that prioritise green job creation, environmental performance, and people-centred development.
 - Commit to evidence-based design and performance evaluation by integrating measurable thermal comfort and building performance data into planning, design, and policy decision-making.
 - Develop and apply standardised methodologies for assessing thermal comfort that go beyond temperature to include air velocity and physiological indicators linked to productivity and well-being.
 - Advance applied and interdisciplinary research on indoor environmental quality, integrating thermal, visual, acoustic, and olfactory comfort using locally relevant climatic data.
 - Translate thermal comfort research into architectural practice by promoting climate-responsive, first-principles design approaches and reducing reliance on energy-intensive, imported architectural models.
- Promote building performance simulations and post-occupancy evaluations to improve comfort, operational efficiency, and long-term performance.

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SESSION FIVE: BREAKOUT SESSIONS

5.1. BREAKOUT SESSION 3: URBAN THINKERS CAMPUS



Panelists

Eng. Lawrence Njue – Municipal Engineer & Former Resident Engineer, Tatu City Infrastructure Project
[Infrastructure as the Backbone of Resilient Urban Futures: Lessons from Tatu City](#)

Ms Estlynn Okabi – Graduate Architect

[Smart Cities, Smarter Systems: Leveraging AI To Transform Urban Kenya](#)

LArch. Dempsey Murage – CEO Eco-Build Africa & Adjunct Prof. University of Canberra

[Designing with Nature – Landscape Architecture and Nature-Based Solutions for Climate-Resilient Cities](#)

Moderator: Plan. Cyrus Mbisi, Past Chair, AAK Town Planners Chapter

Rapporteurs: Ms. Brenda Waruinu, Landscape Architect and Mercy Ateka, Town Planner

5.1.1. Session Objectives

- Foster cross-disciplinary collaboration in driving urban innovation for next-generation cities.
- Showcase scalable solutions for sustainable, resilient, and smart urban development.
- Generate actionable recommendations that can inform practice and policy at both the national and county levels.
- Empower young professionals and students as co-creators of a sustainable urban future.

5.1.2. Key Discussion Points and Major Takeaways

Eng. Lawrence Njue: Infrastructure as the Backbone of Resilient Urban Futures: Lessons from Tatu City

- Tatu City demonstrates how planned infrastructure can catalyse urban resilience, with mixed-use

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development, industrial parks, residential zones, education facilities, and commercial centres.

- Challenges included early planning gaps (deep sewer lines and lack of coordination), highlighting the need for cross-disciplinary collaboration.
- Infrastructure planning now integrates feedback from landscape architects and other professionals, ensuring accessibility, sustainability, and long-term functionality.

Ms Estlynn Okabi: Smart Cities, Smarter Systems: Leveraging AI To Transform Urban Kenya

- AI is already shaping urban futures; the opportunity lies in localising AI models with Kenyan data for relevance.
- Applications include traffic management, housing, equitable service delivery, and waste management.
- Ethical and regulatory safeguards are vital – Kenya’s Data Protection Act is a start, but continuous refinement is needed.
- AI should be integrated incrementally; young professionals should embrace continuous learning, upskilling through short courses, and leveraging AI in the design process.


L.Arch. Dempsey Murage: Nature-based Solutions & Landscape Architecture

- Landscape architecture contributes to liveability, inclusivity, and climate resilience by integrating cultural identity, heritage, and public space design.

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DESIGNING PUBLIC SPACES FOR ALL

- Universal design: ramps, tactile paving, shaded seating.
- Safe, pedestrian & cycle networks.
- Inclusive spaces for children, elderly & PWDs.
- Railway City Example: Accessible civic plazas & cultural squares.



- Green and blue infrastructure (forests, wetlands, bioswales, green corridors) mitigate floods, urban heat, and climate risks while enhancing health, recreation, and urban identity.
- Public spaces must balance beauty, function, safety, accessibility, and long-term maintenance – ensuring ownership by users.

5.1.3. Action Points, Policy, Policies, Practice & Research

- Resilient cities require early, multi-professional involvement to avoid costly mistakes and enhance livability.
- AI will not replace professionals but must be guided, trained, and contextualised by them.

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- Landscape architecture is often misunderstood as beautification. Advocacy and early involvement are essential to mainstream nature-based solutions in urban development. Landscape architecture must be recognised as an essential component of planning.
- Stronger collaboration among built environment professionals is necessary to address rapid urbanisation and climate change.
- Participants emphasised moving beyond repeated conversations, calling for clear action points, frameworks, and policy integration.
- The need for education, advocacy, and creating the right channels for influencing decision-makers was underscored.
- Young professionals must be empowered as innovators and co-creators, bringing fresh approaches into infrastructure, smart systems, and green design.

5.2. BREAKOUT SESSION 4: DELIVERING COMPLEX PROJECTS: WHAT IT TAKES TO GET FROM PLAN TO COMPLETION



Panelists

Eng. Shammah Kiteme, CE – President, Institution of Engineers of Kenya (IEK)

QS. Charles Wambua – Director, Trimax Project Management

[What it Takes to Get from Plan to Completion](#)

Prof. Alfred Omenya – CEO Eco-Build Africa & Adjunct Prof. University of Canberra

[Implementing the Partnership for the New Urban Agenda](#)

CPM Nashon Okowa – Managing Director, Beacon Africa Consultants

Moderator: CPM Ndindiri Waweru- Chairperson, AAK Construction Project Managers Chapter

Rapporteurs: Mr. Paul Adesa, quantity surveyor and Arch. Michael Mathenge, Director, ArchiDatum

5.2.1. Session Objectives

- Explore innovative models such as cooperative social rental housing, incremental housing, and blended finance for affordable housing delivery.
- Discuss challenges in Kenya's construction industry, including poor project conception, delays, cost overruns, and lack of trust in local capacity.
- Identify strategies to align policy, practice, and academia for climate-resilient, inclusive, and well-managed infrastructure projects.
- Share practical approaches for risk management, pre-construction planning, and client-consultant alignment to ensure timely, cost-effective delivery.

5.2.2. Key Discussion Points and Major Takeaways

- Cooperative housing models (Huruma, Kibuye, Muhoroni) show pathways for affordable, inclusive housing.
- Blended finance (loans, impact capital, cooperative contributions) reduces risk and supports scale.
- Stronger integration of academia, practitioners, and policymakers is critical for effective project delivery.
- Kenya's construction sector struggles with poor project conception, unrealistic timelines, and weak planning.
- Local capacity is underutilized, with overreliance on foreign contractors.
- Pre-construction planning and client discipline are key to avoiding delays, cost overruns, and scope creep.
- Need for climate-responsive and resilient designs that stand the test of time.

5.2.3. Action Points, Policy, Policies, Practice & Research

- Cooperative models keep housing affordable through shared ownership and diverse tenure pathways.
- Blended finance unlocks large-scale housing by sharing risks between public, private, and community actors.
- Success depends on early, proper project conception; most delays and overruns stem from skipping this phase.
- Local professional capacity exists but is sidelined; strengthening trust and self-regulation is essential.
- Multidisciplinary collaboration (academia + practitioners + government) is the only way to manage complex projects.
- Climate-resilient design must be integrated to ensure long-term durability and adaptability.

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SESSION SIX: DRIVING URBAN INNOVATION: HARNESSING CROSS-DISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION FOR NEXT-GENERATION CITIES



Speakers:

Plan. Judy Balla – Municipal Manager, Maseno Municipality

[Designing our Kenyan Urban Areas as Sustainable Cities: A Case Study of the Kisumu Sustainable Mobility Plan \(KSUMP\)](#)

Arch. Mumbua Musyimi – Kenya Program Manager, Global Buildings Performance Network (GBPN)

[Building Kenya's Net-Zero Future: From Baseline to Action in the Buildings & Construction Sector](#)

QS. Francis Muriithi – Projects Lead, Lolacom Group

[Exploring Construction Cost Overruns in the Pursuit of Sustainable, Equitable, Resilient, and Smart Urban Futures](#)

Session Chair: Arch. Brenda Nyawara- Vice President, AAK

Rapporteurs: Donald Oluouch

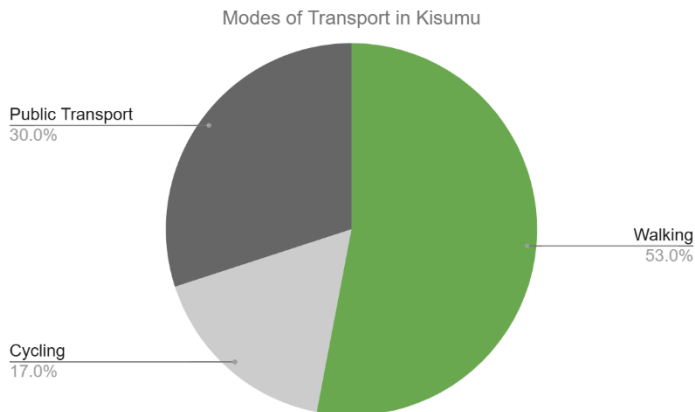
6.1.1. Session Objectives

- Promote integrated, people-centred mobility as social infrastructure that improves access, equity, and opportunity, informed by Kisumu's Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan.
- Advance built environment decarbonisation by embedding green building and resilience strategies into policy, regulation, and professional practice.
- Strengthen cost discipline and delivery governance to reduce project overruns and enable affordable, well-coordinated, and implementable urban solutions.
- Enable cross-disciplinary, youth-focused urban innovation by closing implementation gaps and positioning Kenya's young population as central beneficiaries of urban transformation.

6.1.2. Key Discussion Points and Major Takeaways

Plan. Judy Balla: Designing our Kenyan Urban Areas as Sustainable Cities: A Case Study of the Kisumu Sustainable Mobility Plan (KSUMP)

- Kisumu's pioneering KSUMP (Kenya's first county-level mobility framework) demonstrates integrated transport as equitable access to opportunity.



KSUMP Integration with Spatial and Legal Frameworks

Aligning with Urban Plans

- KSUMP complements Kisumu's **ISUD Plan & LPLUDP**.
- Reinforces a **compact, transit-oriented urban form**.
- Supports densifying housing near transit corridors.
- Preserves right-of-way for future **BRT lines**.


- Through community consultations, PPP models, and the establishment of a mobility coordination unit, the plan successfully integrated all transport modes. However, Kisumu acknowledged missing past opportunities to coordinate water, rail, and road systems, which are now being corrected.
- Only 6 Km of the 336 Km of Kisumu roads have proper sidewalks, revealing infrastructure equity gaps.
- Integration over isolation: Kisumu's acknowledgment that missing past opportunities to coordinate water/rail/road transport now requires corrective integration in current planning
- Informal sector as partner: Matatus, bodabodas, and informal construction are urban realities to integrate, not obstacles to eliminate.
- What Kisumu is doing regarding water transport- Kisumu missed integrating water, rail, and road transport in the past, but a new plan corrects this oversight through an integrated mobility strategy.

Arch. Mumbua Musyimi: Building Kenya's Net-Zero Future: From Baseline to Action in the Buildings & Construction Sector Decarbonization Imperative

- Kenya's built environment emits 10 million tonnes of CO₂ annually, projected to increase 13% by 2030 without intervention.
- With most Kenyans expected to live in urban areas by 2050, GBPN's roadmap positions green building as a necessity, not a luxury: "Resilience is an investment, not a cost."
- Multi-sector working groups are integrating incremental green strategies into NBC 2024 while addressing enforcement gaps from county to national levels. Critical need identified to "invite the informal sector to the table" rather than excluding them.
- Counties must own roadmap/plan implementation; professionals guide clients to align projects with existing frameworks. This suggests that the obstacles are enforcement, not a policy absence.
- How to reduce the 13% increase of carbon emissions by 2030: Review the necessity of emitting plants; explore alternatives. This demonstrates the need for fundamental rethinking of standard


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practices, not just incremental improvements.




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AAK PROMOTING EXCELLENCE IN THE BUILDING INDUSTRY




Well-governed decarbonization requires:

1. clear roles,
2. shared accountability, and
3. sustained political commitment.

Effective Decarbonization Coordination

<p>Uncoordinated Decarbonization</p> <p>Siloed efforts, limited impact</p>	<p>Establish Taskforce</p> <p>Form national buildings decarbonization taskforce</p>	<p>Enhance Alignment</p> <p>Align national and county planning</p>	<p>Create Platforms</p> <p>Harmonize data across institutions</p>	<p>Coordinated Decarbonization</p> <p>Unified efforts, maximized impact</p>
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QS. Francis Muriithi: Exploring Construction Cost Overruns in the Pursuit of Sustainable, Equitable, Resilient, and Smart Urban Futures

- 98% of large construction projects suffer cost overruns- representing not mere accounting errors but structural governance failures that divert resources from essential services, lower affordability, worsen inequality, and prevent smart design adoption.
- Solutions include evidence-based risk pricing, reference class forecasting, and design-to-cost ring-fenced approaches treating coordination as a structural requirement.
- Without discipline, smart cities remain PowerPoint presentations.
- Identify land and development costs; engage all relevant professionals early to design and build within realistic budgets.

The Unified Innovation Story

- These three elements form a complete ecosystem.
 - o Sustainable mobility can't succeed without cost discipline.
 - o Decarbonization requires coordinated implementation across professions.
 - o Innovation emerges not from technical excellence in isolation but from cross-disciplinary collaboration that moves plans to executed realities.
- Implementation gaps exceed knowledge gaps: Counties, professionals, and institutions understand what sustainable cities require; the barrier is coordinating execution across disciplines and governance levels.
- Youth imperative: Urban innovations must serve Kenya's predominantly young population as active participants, not abstract beneficiaries.
- 90% of urban growth occurs in developing countries, growing 4 times faster than rural areas. Kenya's young population will inherit today's planning decisions.



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6.1.3. Action Points, Policy, Policies, Practice & Research

- Counties to lead roadmap implementation with support from professionals.
- Review industrial emission plants and explore alternatives.
- Strengthen coordination between planners, policymakers, and professionals.
- Engage the informal sector and crowdfunders in sustainable delivery.
- Scale Kisumu's integrated mobility plan lessons to other counties.
- Prioritise capacity building, policy reforms, and technical training for green building.
- Incrementally integrate green strategies into NBC 2024; address enforcement and coordination gaps; incentivize sustainable planning.
- Professionals should adopt evidence-based forecasting, coordinate across disciplines, and engage informal sectors in green building.
- Overruns are structural (not just accounting errors). Gaps exist in policy enforcement, terminal infrastructure, energy efficiency, and financial mechanisms for sustainability.

