

RISE AFRICA

Inspiring Action for Sustainable Cities

THEME

NEXT URBAN CHAMPIONS*

RISE Africa action festival 2021 will explore the following topics:

Africa is the 21st century changemaker – global outcomes of sustainable urban development
Our urban continent – exploring AU Agenda 2063
Covid-19 in the city – how a global pandemic realigns our priorities and visions for the future
Facilitate and demonstrate – the role of local government in shaping collaborative movements
Smarter cities for empowered citizens – behavioural science for wellbeing
Climate crisis and our cities – embracing a new normal of uncertainty
Urban intelligence for the discerning decision maker – using sound data and evidence
Looping our cities into the global circular economy – key principles for urban resource management
Good development is good business – private sector roles in urban wellbeing
African wisdom in the digital present – traditional knowledge for modern living
Shaping urban African narratives – using media, art and literature to rewrite the African city
Our nature, our city – enhancing the benefits of urban ecosystem services
Bouncing forward – crafting resilient societies
Financing the future – unlocking investment for transformative infrastructure and services
Collaborate Create Celebrate – promoting our individual and collective actions

WHAT & WHEN

RISE Africa's new action festival aims at highlighting urban innovation in African cities

The RISE Africa platform will host its first annual event that brings together Africa's urban thinkers, doers and enablers, from **24 to 28 May 2021**. The event is planned around celebrating Africa Day.

This RISE Africa 2021 Action Festival is structured around a series of intersecting themes and offers a collaborative platform for African actors engaged in the urban space to exchange ideas and promising practices, explore and foster interdisciplinary, cross-sector, Pan-African coalitions for exchange and support towards action.

JOIN THE MOVEMENT

Register for RISE Africa [here](#).
Follow RISE Africa on [Instagram](#) and participate in the upcoming creative showcases.
Submit a session proposal to our open call [here](#).
Submit a video provocation [here](#).
For more information, please contact riseafrica@iclei.org



OUR
FUTURE
CITIES



OPEN CALL

RISE Africa is calling all champions, advocates and actors for African-driven innovation whose work builds on our theme of **NEXT URBAN CHAMPIONS*** to apply to the Open Call. You may be a business, civil society organisation, civil servant, grassroots voice, student or academic body interested in applying to host a session at the virtual event. Please submit a detailed description of your session proposals at the link below, and our curatorial team will be in contact.

Submit session proposals [here](#).

Deadline extended: 6 April 2021

SESSION TYPES

RISE-Africa welcomes a diversity of session types in addition to those listed below. We encourage sessions and hosts to push the boundaries on the format, creativity and interactivity of the session where it would be valuable to forming new connections and inspiring actions from participants.

Dialogue & Performance Sessions: These include panel discussions, 1-1 dialogues or interviews and artistic performances, be it film screening, music, poetry, multimedia showcases or other forms of creative expression.

Action Sessions: These are active workshop-style sessions which aim to develop an idea; to draw people together (matchmaking); to produce something or shape an idea/project; to bring people together to produce a piece of art or creative output; to launch a programme or initiative and so forth.

Trainings: A focused training session on a specific idea/concept/methodology which can improve an aspect of urban development. All training sessions must have a contextual awareness of African cities and provide participants with a clear indication of what they will gain or learn.

Field Trips or Tours: These sessions will aim to give participants a city life in various contexts and places. This session leader may provide a live Instagram tour, lead a walking tour on a digital platform with narration, take participants through a project, building or place.

VIDEO PROVOCATIONS

As part of the RISE Africa 2021 Action Festival, we are calling on friends, colleagues and organisations to submit video provocations that can inspire, motivate and push the boundaries of those who watch them. We request that they focus on new concepts or ways of doing things to promote sustainable future African cities. Provocations should spark thought, debate or discussion. If struggling to answer what a provocation is, please think about how you might get the viewer to say 'ooooh' or 'huh' or 'wow' about your idea or initiative.

How to record your provocation:

- Provocateurs should record talks in a quiet place to avoid loud background noise and other sounds. If the video is of a project or activities, please ensure that the sound quality is good.
- Provocateurs should record in a 1080p (HD) resolution if possible or at the highest resolution available on the provocateur's smartphone. Any .mp4 or .mov video format is acceptable.
- Shoot horizontal videos (landscape).
- Provocateurs are encouraged to try their audio beforehand to ensure their voice is loud and clear.
- Provocateurs should ensure that they are centered in the frame with your shoulders and head in the frame, and also ensure there are no shadows over them.
- The length of each final video should not exceed 5 minutes. Longer videos will not be accepted.
- Please keep the videos no larger than 300MB

Disclaimer: ICLEI Africa reserves the right not to use submitted videos, if they do not align with event objectives or themes. By submitting a RISE Africa Provocation video, the provocateur(s) grants ICLEI Africa permission to use the video, or stills and audio from the video, in RISE Africa sessions and for promotional purposes.

Submit a video provocation [here](#).

Deadline: 30 April 2021

CURATOR STATEMENT FOR RISE AFRICA 2021 ACTION FESTIVAL

NEXT URBAN CHAMPIONS*

In 2009, Nigerian novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie presented a memorable TED talk entitled “The danger of a single story”. In it she spoke about the risk of reducing people and places to a single narrative and lens and the tangible impacts this can have on the futures they imagine, and the futures we imagine for them.

In her view, by reducing a person or place to a single story we lose the richness and complexity of the unique stories held by a space and its people. In this moment we also lose the opportunity to empower and humanise these individuals and groups to become change agents. We see this regularly in depictions of Africa and the African city, where the citizens of these spaces are represented only by the extremity and scale of problems faced in their daily lived experiences, and not by their capacity to overcome them.

Exalting the single story makes no space for those who work across disciplines, limiting people to their particular field or sector and purposefully excluding the voices of the informal trader, bus driver, healthcare worker and others as sources of knowledge for innovative African-driven solutions. Without cultivating the kinds of spaces that welcome multiple stories, we risk losing connections and collaborations that could be critical to the future of Africa’s cities.

Africa’s urban age has arrived and there can be no question about the urgency of collective action needed to make cities sustainable, resilient and liveable. It is estimated that an additional 1 billion people will move into urban areas on the continent in the coming 3 decades, but there is no guarantee that these urgent sustainability concerns will be enough to inspire the continent’s leadership and youth into tangible action, nor to galvanise in them the bold brand of leadership that is needed in order

to build lasting and large-scale urban change. Inequality continues to grow in many cities, amplified by the COVID-19 global pandemic which has made these realities apparent for all to see. Some best-intentioned new urban transport infrastructure projects are not nearly as viable as once thought. The impact of smart technology ideas and the smart city concepts are not making real inroads in poverty reduction or food security, and they have failed to meaningfully mitigate the impacts of climate change.

We need to write new stories for our cities, and we believe that building new, meaningful connections is now more important to voicing these new stories than ever before.

RISE Africa 2021 aims to be a platform for change-makers, disruptors and advocates from across the African continent to drive innovation in their own unique and powerful way. Through these multiple and diverse stories, the event aims to spark new initiatives and build a community of actors committed to positive and substantive change in the continent’s cities.

We want to discuss ways to actively dismantle barriers created by siloed-thinking, and explore the possibilities of reimagining collaboration systems in order to enable African local governments to partner swiftly and effectively with business, civil society and academia. Why do geographic and cultural barriers persist in this modern age? Which incentives and resources are absent in fostering and sustaining connections? What is the missing link in forming unusual but powerful collaborations, and how can they be deployed elsewhere?

RISE Africa 2021 seeks to bring urban champions together through a creative, interactive and immersive festival which will include performances, dialogue sessions, workshops, training, provocations and field trips.

By reaching for a collection of stories and accomplishments it will aim to catalyse and inspire new initiatives, projects, proposals, ideas and commitments. It will dare to set an African agenda for collective and individual action within this new-Normal world but will not steer clear from some of the tough conversations necessary to move towards sustainable, future cities.

How has the Covid-19 pandemic shaken or clarified our priorities and visions? Can we drive new energy into addressing the climate crisis? How can traditional knowledge be incorporated into city-making? Can “smarter cities” really improve wellbeing for the majority? What role does art, media and literature have in reframing the African city? How will future infrastructure and services be financed? How might improving urban food, water, energy and waste systems contribute to achieving other Sustainable Development Goals? What are we doing to regenerate the relationships between cities and nature? How might we make a case demonstrating the business value in improving the wellbeing of urban-dwellers?

We are trying to identify and accelerate a new generation of impactful actions rooted in their unique stories across the continent which will bring forth our new sustainable future city. This event has been conceived in the hope that the small and large actions of these African change-makers will contribute to writing a sustainable story of cities on our continent.

RISE-Africa 2021 is calling all urban champions*, advocates and actors for African-driven innovation, whose work builds on wide themes of sustainable, future African cities to submit session proposals or provocations to the Open Call.

***Champion (noun)**

- a champion of change: advocate, proponent, promoter, proposer, supporter, torch-bearer, defender, protector, upholder, entrepreneur, backer, exponent, patron, sponsor, prime mover, campaigner for, lobbyist for, activist.



**RISE
AFRICA**
Inspiring Action for Sustainable Cities