ICLD AFRICA

Preserving knowledge. Advancing innovation. Strengthening local democracy across Africa.

Knowledge. Innovation. Partnerships. Action.

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Strategic pillars guiding our work

03
Phased stages, virtual to continental

06
Countries in our founding network

A platform for knowledge, innovation, learning and collaboration in support of stronger local democracy across Africa.

NAIROBI COORDINATING SECRETARIAT

ABOUT ICLD AFRICA

A platform built on experience, working toward what comes next

ICLD Africa is a platform for knowledge, innovation, learning and collaboration that supports stronger local democracy, responsive institutions and sustainable development across Africa.

We bring together experience, evidence, practical tools and new ideas to help institutions and communities address the challenges they face — and to turn knowledge into practical action.

Our work builds on valuable experience and knowledge generated through ICLD programmes and networks, while looking firmly towards the future. We preserve what is useful, adapt it to new contexts, and develop new approaches in collaboration with African and international partners.

We believe that innovation does not come from one institution or one sector. It emerges when practitioners, local governments, communities, researchers, civil society, development organisations, businesses and other partners learn and work together.

> *Not a replacement for what came before — an African-owned platform building forward from it.*

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Nairobi Coordinating Secretariat

OUR PURPOSE

Stronger institutions. More informed citizens. Better local solutions.

ICLD Africa works to strengthen the capacity of institutions and people to understand challenges, generate solutions, participate in decision-making and translate knowledge into action.



Knowledge with practice

Turning research, experience and evidence into practical tools and approaches.



Local experience with wider learning

Documenting innovations and lessons so they can be adapted and shared across contexts.



Institutions with people

Creating spaces for local governments, communities, civil society, researchers and other actors to work together.



Ideas with action

Supporting experimentation, learning and the practical application of innovative approaches.

OUR AREAS OF WORK

Four strategic pillars, one shared purpose

PILLAR ONE

Democratic Governance & Accountability

Participation, accountability, transparency, decentralisation, inclusive governance and responsive local government — strengthening the systems that connect citizens to the institutions that serve them.

PILLAR TWO

Inclusive Leadership & Gender Equality

Expanding the participation of women, youth and marginalised groups in local leadership and decision-making, and building institutions that reflect the communities they serve.

PILLAR THREE

Innovation for Service Delivery & Economic Transformation

Supporting local governments to design practical, innovative approaches to service delivery, local economic development and community resilience.

PILLAR FOUR

Knowledge Preservation, Research & Scaling

Capturing evidence and lessons from local democracy programming, and turning them into tools, research and approaches that can be adapted and scaled across contexts.

HOW WE WORK

A four-part framework for African-owned knowledge

ICLD Africa operates as custodian, connector, laboratory and multiplier — a single framework for turning a decade of local democracy programming into a living, growing platform.

01

Custodian

Safeguarding the knowledge, tools and relationships built through more than a decade of ICLD-supported partnerships across Africa, so valuable experience is not lost as individual programmes end.

02

Dissemination Hub

Sharing lessons, research and practical tools across countries and institutions, so that what works in one place can inform practice elsewhere.

03

Innovation Platform

Creating space for local governments, practitioners and partners to test new approaches to persistent local governance challenges.

04

Scaling Mechanism

Helping successful local innovations grow beyond a single municipality or country, through partnerships, networks and structured learning.

Together, these four functions let ICLD Africa hold on to what already works while continuing to test, adapt and grow — a platform designed to keep learning rather than stand still.

OUR DELIVERY MODEL

Growing the platform in three deliberate phases

ICLD Africa is being built step by step — starting light, testing what works, and expanding as the network and evidence base grow.

1

Virtual-First

Building the platform's knowledge base, network and digital infrastructure, with virtual convenings, online resources and remote collaboration across countries.

2

Hybrid

Combining virtual collaboration with in-person convenings, regional workshops and pilot activities in selected countries.

3

Continental

Establishing ICLD Africa as a fully continental platform, with active engagement, programming and partnerships across the region.

Each phase is designed to be tested and adapted before the next begins — building a platform that is evidence-led at every stage, rather than assumed into place.

MEASURING IMPACT

Results, measurement and learning

ICLD Africa tracks change across three horizons — from what the platform produces early on, to the local democracy outcomes it is ultimately working toward.

SHORT-TERM **Outputs**	Knowledge captured, networks activated, and tools and resources made accessible to local governments and partners.
MEDIUM-TERM **Uptake**	Local governments applying new tools and approaches; strengthened peer learning across countries; emerging innovations documented.
LONG-TERM **Outcomes**	More responsive and accountable local institutions; stronger local democracy outcomes for citizens across Africa; a self-sustaining, African-owned platform.

Each horizon builds on the last: outputs make uptake possible, and sustained uptake is what eventually shows up as change in how local institutions govern.



Outputs Uptake Outcomes

OUR NETWORK

Coordinated from Nairobi, built across the region

Nairobi Coordinating Secretariat

The Secretariat anchors ICLD Africa's day-to-day coordination. It is headed by John Gitonga, Regional Director – Africa, who currently coordinates the ICLD East Africa regional alumni network and is one of ICLD's longest-serving mentors. The Secretariat is supported by a Board and an Advisory Board.

Country Champions

ICLD Africa is supported by voluntary Country Champions drawn from ICLD Alumni, Local Government Associations and practitioners, who help coordinate engagement at country level. This is a voluntary role, not an employment or staff position.

A growing regional footprint

ICLD Africa's work builds on partnerships, alumni and case experience across local governments in East, Southern and Central Africa.

Kenya | Tanzania | Uganda | Zambia | South Africa | Botswana

GET INVOLVED

Local democracy across Africa moves forward together.

Whether you're a local government, a researcher, a civil society partner or a development organisation, there is a place for you in ICLD Africa's growing network.

- → Join the network as an alumnus, practitioner or Country Champion.
- → Partner with us on research, programming or knowledge exchange.
- → Share a case study or local innovation worth documenting and scaling.
- → Access tools, research and learning resources from the Knowledge Hub.

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Nairobi Coordinating Secretariat

