

Let's Talk Garbage in the Intelligent City

It came with a lot of jubilation; Kenya's busy capital city of Nairobi has been named the most intelligent city in Africa according to the Intelligent Community Forum. Well, I must say I was impressed, and glad to be a resident of this great city.

Deep down though, was an urge to identify the reason Nairobi emerged top in Africa. The mobile payment revolution, that is M-Pesa has grown the economy tremendously creating jobs and number of transactions circulating money in the system, incubation innovation with establishments such as I-hub, advancing technology and innovation from young people, vision 2030 as a government flagship has improved I.C.T in the education sector, and finally, Nairobi is said to be growing at a fast rate and will be among the world's 40 fastest growing cities between 2010- 2016, according to a report commissioned by Citigroup in 2012. Having digested that, I could not agree more.

However, something bothers me about my intelligent city, why is there too much garbage in the streets?

An intelligent city should be well equipped with an equally intelligent garbage collection system. Or is the population not as intelligent? A short stroll in downtown Nairobi will leave you horrified, mesmerized, and perplexed. Heaps of rotting organic waste, plastic bags all over, and all sorts of litter, from plastic bottles, beer cans, used pampers, name it all on display, in our intelligent city. An initiative by the city council to put dustbins in town at strategic places leaves a lot to be desired. Most people in the city will be disgusted by the site of all these, but do nothing about it. We end up being as much the problem, when we go littering aimlessly, not conscious of the aftermath. Uptown Nairobi is a little bit different; you will see cleaners sweeping the road, sets of dustbins after few meters, for recyclable and non-recyclable, this should be replicated all over the city.

Waste management in the city has been quite a challenge. Nairobi produces 2,000 tons of solid waste daily. Garbage collection trucks end up littering more than end this menace, as they go dropping filth on the road, since they overload more than the carrying capacity, leaving a trail of foul smell since they are not closed. This is however set to change as the county government contract garbage collection companies .They came up with operation standards: 'closed vehicles with a minimum capacity of 10 tons, branded with the company

logo so that incase of illegal dumping the company can be traced, provide their clients with liner bags, which are branded with names and logos to curb illegal dumping,”

How do you manage your waste? I believe it starts with me and you, for a cleaner “intelligent city”.

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