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**Kounkuey Design Initiative launches WATSAN Portal: Kibera
watsanportal.co.ke**

Over the last 14 months Kounkuey Design Initiative (KDI), a Los Angeles and Nairobi-based non-profit design firm that partners with residents of impoverished areas to improve quality of life, has developed a map-based tool that will accelerate the implementation of high quality water and sanitation projects in Kibera, the largest informal settlement in Nairobi, Kenya. In January 2013, KDI was awarded a \$100,000 grant from The Rockefeller Foundation to support the development of the WATSAN Portal: Kibera's pilot. KDI will formally launch the pilot project, WATSAN Portal: Kibera (watsanportal.co.ke), on February 28th, 2014— allowing users to examine the economic and physical feasibility of making connections to municipal water and sewerage infrastructure. The project was developed in partnership with Nairobi City Water and Sewerage Company, and Spatial Collective, a social enterprise that develops innovative digital tools to support collective action, as well as a number of community-based and non-governmental organizations working in the water and sanitation sector in Kibera.

WATSAN Portal: Kibera grew out of KDI's 7 years of experience building Productive Public Space projects — high impact, low-cost built environments – in Kibera. Kibera sits on the tributaries to the Ngong River and Nairobi Dam - waterways that are burdened with garbage and human waste. Only 4% percent of residents have access to a water tap in their home and pit latrines remain the primary sanitary facility. A mere 12% of sanitation facilities have formal connections to municipal sewerage. WATSAN Portal: Kibera was developed using a participatory design process to ensure that the barriers that local water and sanitation service providers and community members face in connecting to municipal infrastructure are properly addressed in the tool's interface, functions, and content.

“Residents of Kibera lack access to clean water and decent sanitation. Many people and organizations are at work to improve this injustice, yet the process to locate, fund, and run effective water and sanitation projects is mired in bureaucracy. After years of trying, KDI has successfully navigated this opaque process and is acutely aware of the need for a simplified system,” says KDI Executive Director Chelina Odbert.

WATSAN Portal: Kibera was developed as a response to this growing need to connect stakeholders to pre-existing information. It improves the ability of small-scale service providers, local government agencies, and entrepreneurial individuals to more efficiently and effectively launch water and sanitation projects. According to KDI Associate Director Joe Mulligan, “It fills a critical gap in the WATSAN project delivery process by taking geo-referenced data on municipal infrastructure and relaying it in an open, accessible, and relevant format”.

The pilot version of WATSAN Portal: Kibera will allow users to assess project feasibility in the Kibera villages of Laini Saba and Gatwekera. These two distinct villages will allow KDI, Spatial

Collective, and Nairobi City Water and Sewerage Company to assess the platform's functionality and track the success and efficiency of new water and sanitation projects. A baseline survey on access to water and sanitation covering over 2,000 randomly selected households in pilot and control areas will allow for the impact of the tool to be clearly identified. The success of the pilot platform will enable the tool to be expanded to the whole of Kibera, as well as other informal settlements in Nairobi.

About Kounkuey Design Initiative

Kounkuey Design Initiative is a non-profit design and community development practice made up of architects, landscape architects, urban planners, engineers, artists, and community organizers. We partner with people living in poverty to design and implement solutions that transform their communities and improve their quality of life. We know that poverty is economic, social, and physical. To address these challenges, we build low-cost, high-impact projects called Productive Public Spaces (PPS)— underutilized spaces, like vacant lots or dumping sites, transformed into community hubs—that simultaneously improve people, place, and environment. PPSs provide shared amenities (sanitation facilities, playgrounds etc.), offer social programs (skill trainings, recreational activities etc.), and provide economic opportunity (small businesses in the space) all in one location.

Since the organization's founding in 2006, KDI has worked with residents in Africa, Latin America, and the United States to create functional yet beautiful public spaces in which communities can thrive. Our projects have won numerous awards for their aesthetic contributions, design innovation, and participatory design process by notable institutions such as The Rockefeller Foundation, Ashoka Changemakers, American Express, Annenberg Alchemy, Smithsonian Institute, and Echoing Green.

Please visit www.kounkuey.org for more information.

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