

## News

13/11/2024

### Connective Cities at WUF12

Collaborative knowledge-sharing platforms, the transformative power of public spaces in the Arab Cities, and local climate action at Cairo Climate Talks

Under the notion 'initiate change from home: locally, together, and now', WUF12 was convened in Cairo-Egypt on 4 - 8 November 2024. Connective Cities and its network members have organized and participated in several activities with various thematic focus areas.

As a thriving knowledge-sharing network, Connective Cities was showcased during an intellectual panel that included representatives of the Guangzhou Institute for Urban Innovation, VNG International, the Arab Urban Development Institute, and Metropolis. The discussion delved into examples of utilizing digital tools and innovative approaches for growth and collaborative knowledge-sharing to advance inclusive and resilient urban development on a global scale.



Entrance to the World Urban Forum Expo | Photo: Connective Cities



Panel discussion with representatives of the Guangzhou Institute for Urban Innovation, VNG International, the Arab Urban Development Institute and Metropolis | Photo: Connective Cities

In a session focusing on the role of local governments in unlocking the transformative power of public spaces in the Arab Cities, examples from Egypt, Bahrain, Jordan, Palestine and Lebanon were showcased to demonstrate how public space initiatives contribute to gender inclusivity and safety, climate change mitigation, nature-based solutions, disaster risk reduction, as well as social inclusion between hosting communities and displaced persons. Recognizing the transformative power of public spaces, local governments in Arab cities have played a crucial role in creating and maintaining inclusive, accessible, and well-designed urban environments that enhance the quality of life for their residents. Local governments have a pivotal role in unleashing the transformative power of public spaces by implementing a range of strategies and initiatives that prioritize the planning, design, maintenance, management, programming, and activation of these spaces.



Raghida Haddad connected virtually during her presentation | Photo: Connective Cities

Ms. Raghida Haddad (the head of al-Hima committee at Kfar Matta municipality – Lebanon) has highlighted the role of Connective Cities in establishing rules of procedures for al-Hima Zone and a Local Development Office (LDO). The technical advisory provided by Connective Cities enabled Kfarmatta municipality to develop this comprehensive solution aimed at addressing the governance and sustainability challenges. The establishment of formal rules of procedures for the al-Hima Committee and the creation of a Local Development Office (LDO) are critical steps towards enhancing tourism governance and sustainability in Kfarmatta Municipality. This solution addresses infrastructure deficiencies, improves environmental protection efforts, and establishes a framework for generating sustainable funding for tourism-related activities. By formalizing the governance structure and ensuring the involvement of local stakeholders, Kfarmatta is well-positioned to manage its growing tourism sector effectively, ensuring long-term benefits for the community and the environment. Kfarmatta was the site of one of the worst massacres during the Lebanese Civil War. Restoring public space including the hiking trails in this touristic village was key for reviving local development and inducing social reconciliation.



Cairo Climate Talks at the Goethe-Institut in Cairo | Photo: Connective Cities

In parallel to WUF, a session was held as part of Cairo Climate Talks at the Goethe Institute. It brought together city officials, representatives from civil society, and businesses from Germany and Egypt to discuss strategies for embedding local climate action in economic and urban development. By discussing concrete examples from Leipzig in Germany and Aswan in Egypt, current local initiatives and strategies to address urban heat islands and to engage broader society through Climate City Contracts were analysed. Prof. Nabil Alhady (Cairo University) called for revisiting our understanding of economic growth in light of the inevitable impacts of climate change. He stressed the importance of establishing mechanisms for compensation for the areas that are on the receiving end of climate change. Dr. Marwa Ahmed (Urban Development Fund (UDF) –Egypt) noted that adapting to climate change impacts is not a priority in low-income areas in which the UDF is implementing its projects. Dr. Beate Ginzel (City of Leipzig) emphasized the importance of using digital-driven decision making, which was key in her city's pioneering role in localizing climate action.



Cairo Climate Talks at the Goethe-Institut in Cairo | Photo: Connective Cities

In between the rhetoric, the inspirational talks, and the opportunities for collaboration, WUF12 presented an important platform for agents of change to showcase their experience, many of whom are champions of Connective Cities network.

Author: [Muna Shalan, Connective Cities](#)  
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