

Concept Note New York Water Week 2023

Rivers for People: When communities lead initiatives on regenerating urban waterscapes

Date and Time

Date: Thursday 23rd of March 2023

Time: 4:30 pm - 6:30 pm EDT

Location: CUNY Graduate Centre, 365 5th Ave, Science Centre, 4th Floor, room 4102, New York, NY 10016 (*Registration is required*)

Registration Link for attending **in person**: <https://forms.office.com/e/d2dfGUHyrL>

Join the session **online** via this link: [Meeting Registration - Zoom](#)



Hybrid session

Rivers for People:
When communities lead initiatives on regenerating urban waterscapes

4:30 pm - 6:30 pm, 23 March 2023

CUNY Graduate Centre, 365 5th Ave, New York, NY 10016
Science Centre, 4th Floor, Room 4102

Logos: NEW YORK WATER WEEK, UN HABITAT FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE, NTNU, PLACEMAKING X, psrg, CUNY

Scan the QR code & join the session online!

Event Description

Urban rivers appear back on the agenda as focal points of sustainable transformation. River regeneration initiatives face a renaissance among urban development projects world-wide. Indeed they are considered vital to making cities more attractive, green, just, liveable, resilient, and promoting climate change adaptation. In both situations, whether the state has been traditionally strong, or whether it has been exceptionally weak, there seems to be an emerging momentum of bottom-up energy driving certain initiatives and projects. In this context this event seeks to **reflect on the experiences of community-led initiatives on regenerating urban waterscapes.**

When do grassroots initiatives emerge to drive the regeneration of urban waterscapes? What experiences do communities make when driving water-related regeneration initiatives in various contexts? What have been the main outcomes and which major opportunities and risks can be observed?

Organizers

- United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-Habitat)- Global Public Space Programme
- The Graduate Center, City University of New York (CUNY)- The Public Space Research Group
- Placemaking X
- Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)- Urban Ecological Planning

Goals

- To better understand the role of grassroots initiatives as part of waterscape regeneration initiatives.
- To contribute to increasing social and environmental justice and quality of life in cities through waterscape regeneration
- To achieve societal impact by contributing to the improvement of global policy and people-centered local solutions based on urban river restoration initiatives

Intended outcomes

- Networking with activists, practitioners, local governments, and academia in order to contribute to establishing a new community of knowledge and practice people-centered and Resilient Spaces related to Urban Rivers

Agenda

Moderator: Jose Chong

4:30 – 4:40 Welcome note and Opening Remarks, Setha Low

4:40 – 4:50 The role of civil society for transformative process: UN-Habitat's Global Public Space Programme experience

Jose Chong, Lead, Global Public Space Programme, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

4:50 – 5:00 Blue Spaces & Health and Wellbeing: The Case of Walkway Across the Hudson

Setha Low, Director, The Public Space Research Group and Distinguished Professor of Geography, Anthropology, and Psychology, The Graduate Center, CUNY

5:00 – 5:10 Environmental Activism and Gentrification

Melissa Checker, Professor of Urban Studies, Queens College, and Professor of Geography and Anthropology, The Graduate Center, CUNY

5:10 – 5:20 PEARLS: Promoting a New Community of Knowledge and Practice on People-Centred and Resilient Spaces related to Urban Rivers (Virtual)

Peter Gotsch, Professor, Urban Ecological Planning, Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)

5:20 – 5:30 Where Communities Flow: Riverfront Placemaking Around the World

Ethan Kent, Executive Director, PlacemakingX

5:30 – 5:40 Global Community Initiatives 1: Experiences from around the world: Bronx River Placemaking

Siddhartha Sánchez, Community Development Planner, Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice, Bronx, New York

5:40 – 5:50 Global Community Initiatives 2: Experiences from around the world: Nairobi Rivers Commission

Eva Muhia, Commissioner, Nairobi Rivers Commission

5:50 - 6:25 Moderated Discussion

6:25 – 6:30 Closing Remarks