



World Urban Forum WUF10 - participation by UK Urban Ecology Forum (UKUEF)

General Report

Judy Ling Wong CBE 14.3.20

WUF10 attendance

UK Urban Ecology Forum attended WUF10 in Abu Dhabi in February 2020.

The key areas of participation were:

- Networking Event in partnership with the University of Pennsylvania.
- Participation in the UN Habitat Global Stakeholders Forum Networking Event.
- Attendance at roundtables, training events, networking events, etc.
- Networking

The UKUEF WUF10 Team

Judy Ling Wong Vice Chair (Lead), Richard Scott Chair, Tim Webb, Victoria Sherwin, Niall Williams

The WUF10 team encompasses a diverse range of expertise in the context of their associated organisations.

- Judy Ling Wong - Black Environment Network – Multicultural environmental participation
- Richard Scott Chair – National Wildflower Centre – using wildflowers on a grand scale to impact the urban landscape
- Tim Webb – Communications expert instrumental in setting up a Twitter platform for UKUEF and implementing communications during and beyond WUF10
- Victoria Sherwin – Vassall and Coldharbour Urban Forum and Myatt's Fields Park – working with deprived communities in the surrounding social housing around a small heritage park
- Niall Williams – Landscape Institute – landscape design and involvement of the full spectrum of environmental and community professionals



The UKUEF WUF10 Working Group

Many thanks to the support of the working group and WUF10 team (from left to right) Richard Scott, Jane Houghton, John Box, Victoria Sherwin, David Haley, Alison Millward, Pete Frost, Niall Williams, Tim Webb Nigel Lawson, Ian Douglas, Judy Ling Wong, David Goode (declined to include photo).

Financial Support for the WUF10 team

Contributions were gratefully received from Natural England, Routledge, an anonymous donor, and personal donations from members of the UKUEF.



Report on the Networking Event

Joining Forces: Planning Managing and Financing City-Climate Resilient Infrastructure Grounded in Nature-based Solutions

1. Background

At a time of climate and extinction crisis that challenges human survival itself, it is clear the link between people and nature are inseparable. We need bold creative action. The social, cultural, economic and environmental sectors need to be motivated to make the necessary effort to come together as powerful and effective innovative partnerships. In this context learning and sharing the critical challenges that cities face in planning, managing, and financing climate resilient infrastructure is paramount. Research and the purposeful bringing together of the full range of stakeholders through urban ecology forums are key.

2. Key Points of the Discussion

The session gave special attention to nature-based solutions that not only yield green employment opportunities, empowerment, and behaviour change, but also contribute to improved health, well-being and quality of life. Linked with this are actions related to air quality, biodiversity, and climate related impact on social and cultural life. We examined the merits of the Urban Ecology approach and the potential for setting up local Urban Ecology Forums to open-up citizen input in planning infrastructure. Research has shown that provision, access and engagement with nature and infrastructure improvements where people live and work enhances the quality of life, resilience, mental and physical health and well-being, offsetting rising costs associated with poor health in bleak and highly stressed urban settings. It's no secret that the poorest communities are those most affected by climate change. We reiterated that social, economic, and environmental professionals and organisations need to cooperate imaginatively. Further, we discussed the management of new and existing infrastructure that is climate resilient and provides liveability benefits for diverse urban communities in the global south and north. Great stress was placed on the importance of funding and how current systems need to change to better enable innovation and empower communities to act.

3. Main declared actions, recommendations and ways forward on sustainable urban development during the Decade of Action

Establish partnerships of practice and research to:

- Stimulate and support the formation of national, regional, city- based or local urban ecology forums in partnership with others to bring stakeholders together
- Establish and maintain knowledge sharing networks to support effective integrated practice
- Identify ways to support capacity building and articulation of stakeholder voices
- Organise presentations and events promoting cross-sector and public understanding of the social, cultural, economic and environmental outcomes of integrated nature-based solutions
- Influence policy and practice through the generation and promotion of research, guidance, discussion papers and publications
- Identify and promote good practice through publications and/or a website
- Partner with UN Habitat through the UK Urban Ecology Forum

4. How the recommendations can accelerate delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030

SDG 11

- Local, city-based, regional and national urban ecology forums can enable stakeholders' voices to be heard
- Build the knowledge and capacity of stakeholders to articulate and contribute to implementation of actions for ecological and resilient urban settlements
- Research and share best practice with examples and learning from case studies and experience to inform capacity building and effective planning and financing

5. Impact or dynamics on the implementation of the urban SDGs and the New Urban Agenda

Establishing regional, city-based or local urban ecology forums will contribute to the fostering of ecological and resilient human settlements by:

- enabling stakeholder voices to be heard
- enabling access to relevant knowledge and sound science
- building mutual learning and capacity for adaptation and mitigation of the impact of climate change
- driving sustainable patterns of consumption and production
- releasing the vast missing contribution of people to the protection of ecosystems and biodiversity.

[NB - All actions need underpinning by research.]

6. Innovative data, tools, ideas and initiatives discussed or presented at our WUF10 event.

- The importance of coming together on an ongoing basis through establishing local urban ecology forums to build the necessary relationships of trust and the capacity to articulate stakeholder voices and stimulate the articulation of local projects and ideas.
- The significance of partnerships in cascading best practice and research.
- Best practice examples, ideas and initiatives shared include:
 - London National Park City
 - Birmingham as a Biophilic City
 - National Wildflower Center and Walk on the Wild Side transforming social housing landscapes
 - State of Urban Development in Al-Qassim
 - Naturally Birmingham re access to nature
 - Guidance on Green Infrastructure from Natural England
 - Grangetown Sustainable Drainage, the contribution to biodiversity in urban gardens,
 - The Carbon Landscape stressing importance of Heritage in natural areas
 - Mersey Basin Volunteers re contribution of citizens
 - Walthamstow Wetlands restoration
 - Ketso a hands-on tool for community engagement.
- The use of webinars by UK Urban Ecology Forum to enable free access by stakeholders to share issues, knowledge, experience and expertise
- The forthcoming 88-chapter revised Handbook of Urban Ecology (Routledge) is a product of the UK Urban Ecology Forum. It is an instrument to support the effective implementation of the urban ecology approach giving equal status to the social, cultural, environmental and economic dimensions of sustainable development, set within an ecological framework.

7. Culturally transformative ideas or initiatives discussed or presented

- The urban ecology approach is a big idea whose time has come with the challenges of accelerating urbanization at a time of climate crisis and biodiversity extinction, threatening human survival itself. The approach gives equal status to the social, cultural, environmental and economic dimensions of sustainable development, set within an ecological framework.
- The idea that meaningful participation can be taken to another level through stimulating and supporting the formation of national and city-based urban ecology forums in partnership with others and establishing and maintaining knowledge sharing networks to support the effective practice of urban ecology. At an international level, the cultural dimension of sharing, learning and integrated practice is accentuated.
- Research needs to share both the lessons of success and failures. Partnership and proximity to work on the ground increase the potency of research

8. Concrete monitoring and follow-up mechanisms to actions on sustainable urbanization were proposed or discussed

- Potential research partners may be identified to share knowledge, and themes for collaboration.
- UK Urban Ecology Forum will track its own progress in stimulating and supporting the formation of regional and city-based urban ecology forums in partnership with others and establishing and maintaining knowledge sharing networks to support the effective practice of urban ecology. It will track the partners identified to take this forward. Importantly, we wish to explore the idea of identifying process indicators alongside outcome indicators. This is an approach succinctly put forward by the Minister from Kenya at the National Urban Forums roundtable.

9. New partnerships initiated, created or finalized any for the Decade of Action

- We have a list of attendees and interested parties to work with in partnership as a result of presence at WUF10.
- UK Urban Ecology Forum wishes to reiterate our commitment as a member of the UN Habitat Global Stakeholders Forum to work in partnership with UN Habitat. We are signed up to work in partnership with UN Habitat to contribute to the UN Habitat Best Practice platform.

10. Outreach strategy to follow up on the outcomes, actions, commitments, or partnerships achieved

- We will follow up with the list of contacts for partnership made at WUF10 to develop and consolidate partnerships
- We will cascade the knowledge and experience of WUF10 to stimulate more partners to come forward
- We will review our existing contacts and networks to identify further partners

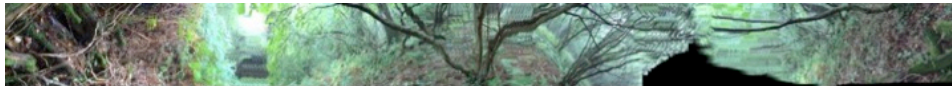
11. Direct short quotes from the discussion for media and publication purpose provided to UN Habitat

Quotes from University of Pennsylvania Institute for Urban Research and UK Urban Ecology Forum

“A vast missing contribution must be brought forward into the New Urban Agenda arena. We can bring forward stakeholders’ voices powerfully using the urban ecology forum approach. Underpinning actions with research is fundamental. We look forward to working with UN Habitat to make this a reality.”

“The UK Urban Ecology Forum proposes that people for nature and nature for people is the new paradigm. We look forward to working with UN Habitat to establish this formula for building resilience and quality of life, thereby protecting people and nature.”

“True power is inclusive. It comes through effective platforms that bring people together and build capacity that enables the articulation of visions that are locally owned and globally connected. Urban ecology forums is one of the instruments. We look forward to working with UN Habitat to move this forward.”



UK Urban Ecology Forum
People and Nature Thriving Together

An Invitation to Partner with Us

Work with us to promote the understanding and **effective practice of Urban Ecology** - an integrated ecological approach that brings together and puts **equal value on social, cultural, environmental, and economic dimensions.**

As a **member of the UK Habitat Global Stakeholders Forum**, we will:

- **Promote the Urban Ecology approach, working with the UN on their Best Practice platform.**
- **Work in partnership** to stimulate and support the setting up of **national, city-based or local urban ecology forums as appropriate** in the UK and across the world.



A. The PowerPoint Presentation

The presentation began and ended with an invitation to partner with us.

The very colourful PowerPoint has 85 slides and was presented in 40 minutes followed by a discussion. The presentation aimed to promote the urban ecology approach. In particular, we aimed to stimulate interest from the non-environmental sectors in nature-based solutions by homing in on the social, cultural and economic associations and outcomes that may be delivered.

The audience was told at the outset that there were a lot of slides with lots of text and information. The aim was to enable others to use the PowerPoint as notes. The extensive text contents were not read out at the presentation. Main points were vocalised and the inspiring pictures reinforced messages.

The best practice examples were categorised into:

- **Social Housing Environment and Local Green Spaces**
- **Green Infrastructure**
- **The Role of Big Ideas and Ways of Thinking**
- **Policy and Influencing Policy**

Please download the final PowerPoint for your interest.

B. Further individual reports and details of contacts and action points

These are still a work in progress, but rather than delay communication with the UKUEF, this initial report has been produced.

The individual reports will demonstrate the importance of a diverse range of contributors against the context of different kinds of stakeholders and their associated expertise and organisations.

C. Not all work and no play

The intensity of the event and the massive amounts of information and people were overwhelming. WUF, from its years of experience incorporated free social tours and a reception after the first day with music in the evening to help us get through the days.



