education for water resilient cities
14th | may 2018

report

A one day-symposium for teachers and students #thecityweneed

Edited by Roberto Rocco
education for water resilient cities

14th may 2018

A one day symposium at the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment Delft University of Technology

On what to teach and how to teach spatial planning and design for water sensitive, climate resilient cities and communities

EXECUTIVE REPORT

Edited by Roberto Rocco © 2018

Event supported by:
Our commitment to the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a collection of 17 global goals set by 193 United Nations members states in 2013 with the objective to guide sustainable development in the next 15 years.

The SDGs cover a broad range of social and economic development issues and are part of the “Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, or 2030 Agenda in short.

The broad goals are interrelated, though each has its own targets to achieve. The total number of targets is 169. Although the SDGs might sound a bit too broad, each target must be measurable through indicators and statistical data. The UN has a specific service that seeks to provide measurable indicators for each target: https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/

The World Council on City Data (WCCD) is also working hard to produce standardized city data through a network of innovative cities committed to improving services and quality of life with open city data. It provides a consistent and comprehensive platform for standardized urban metrics. http://www.dataforcities.org/wccd/ The WCCD has developed the first ISO 37120 certification system and the Global Cities Registry.

The SDGs have a huge impact on the political discourse and are shaping European policy, such as the Horizon 2020 programme. It helps shape the research agendas of research and educational institutions.

More recently, a specific document focusing on sustainable urban development was enacted. The New Urban Agenda is a binding document enacted at Habitat III in Quito in 2016, and aims to provide a framework for sustainable, inclusive and fair urban development.

The New Urban Agenda seeks to create a mutually reinforcing relationship between urbanization and development, with the idea that by promoting SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities, we are able to deliver many of the other SDGs.

Bouwkunde wishes to promote SDGs and the New Urban Agenda among its community of academics, practitioners, researchers and students. Bouwkunde is intent on contributing to SDG 11 everywhere, but our focus now in on African urbanisation, through one of the three As (Africa, Automation, Agility). But BK has a very strong track record on many other SDGs, especially SDG 4 QUALITY EDUCATION, SDG 13 CLIMATE ACTION and many more. BK wishes to improve its track-record on SDG 5 GENDER EQUALITY, SDG 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES and many other SDGs.
Our commitment to the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda

THE FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT OF THE TUDELFT IS COMMITTED TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW URBAN AGENDA AND HAS BECOME A LEAD PARTNER OF UN-HABITAT. THIS COMMITMENT IS REFLECTED IN ACTIVITIES, EVENTS AND COURSES.
EDUCATORS AND RESEARCHERS FROM TU DELFT WERE JOINED BY AN ARTIST, PROFESSIONALS AND RESEARCHERS FROM OTHER INSTITUTIONS TO DISCUSS EDUCATION FOR WATER RESILIENT CITIES
Speakers

A NUMBER OF EDUCATORS, RESEARCHERS, PROFESSIONALS AND ONE ARTIST GOT TOGETHER TO DISCUSS PLANNING EDUCATION FOR WATER RESILIENT CITIES

Amy Sharrocks
British Artist.

Bert Smolders
Arcadis, Head of the Shelter Programme, NL.

Betty Chang
Assistant Professor, Department of Urban Planning, National Cheng-Kung University, Taiwan.

Fransje Hooimeijer
Assistant Professor Environmental Technology and Design at TU Delft, NL.

Iris Bijlsma
Arcadis, Consultant Shelter Programme, NL.

Kristel Aalbers
Lecturer Environmental Technology & Design, Sustainable Urban Planning and Architecture with a focus on Water, Urbanism MSC Track Coordinator, TU Delft, NL.

Nikki Brand
Postdoc Integrated Design of Infrastructures at Delft Deltas, Infrastructures and Mobility Initiative, TU Delft, NL.

Roberto Rocco
Assistant Professor, Spatial Planning and Strategy, Summer School Planning & Design with Water, TU Delft, NL.

Steven Forrest
Doctoral Candidate, Department of Planning, Faculty of Spatial Sciences, University of Groningen, NL.

Stephen Goldsmith
Associate Professor, City & Metropolitan Planning, Undergraduate Coordinator, City & Metropolitan Planning, The University of Utah, USA.

Taneha Bacchin
Assistant Professor Urban Design, Research Leader and Coordinator of Education for the Delta Urbanism Research Program, Department of Urbanism, TU Delft, NL.
Summary

IN LIGHT OF THE NEW URBAN AGENDA LAUNCHED IN QUITO IN 2016, WE ARE STRIVING TO UNDERSTAND HOW TO IMPLEMENT IT THROUGH EDUCATION, CAPACITY BUILDING AND TRAINING. PLANNING AND DESIGN WITH WATER FOR RESILIENT, FAR AND INCLUSIVE CITIES IS ONE OF OUR MAIN TOPICS.

On 14 May, TU Delft in partnership the Center for the Living City (US), the University of Utah (US), the Department of Urban Planning of the National Cheng Kung University (Taiwan) and ARCADIS organized a symposium to discuss new water-sensitive urbanization paradigms and how to integrate them into EDUCATION for the built environment.

Building on the rich Dutch tradition of water sensitive urbanisation, we are seeking to create a community of educators, students, researchers and other stakeholders who can contribute to education for fair, resilient and water friendly cities, within the framework of the UN-Habitat New Urban Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – part of a wider 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

It is becoming widely recognized that there is no such a thing as a ‘natural disaster’, but only extreme climate events to which our cities and regions are ill-adapted. These extreme climate events are becoming more numerous as the planet’s climate transforms as a result of human activity. While many traditional cultures were able to manage the land and converse with nature in a sustainable way, the advent of industrialization and modernization has broken the links between settlements and the landscape in favor of a type of...
urbanization that pretends to tame nature.

This paradigm is no longer viable or desirable, as time after time nature comes back at us and castigates our poorly managed cities. Recent events in Houston, San Juan, São Paulo, Cape Town, Southern Taiwan and many other cities and regions the world call for an alternative way of planning and designing our cities in compass with natural systems and, most especially, in compass with our water resources. Many places around the world, including the Netherlands, are seeking a new paradigm of urban development in which cities and regions should not ‘fight’ or ‘tame’ water, but should work with natural systems in order to create safe and resilient cities. To these challenges, we can add the need for inclusive participatory planning and community involvement.

Underpinning our need to work with natural systems is to rediscover our cultural and symbolic relationships with water. From cultural relationships that include ceremonies, lifecycle events from birth to death and the privilege of drinking clean, healthy water, our stewardship in managing water is enhanced when we bring the knowledge that water is life to our discussions. Re-educating ourselves about these relationships is a vital step as we create new ways to urbanize with water. We see it as the university’s social responsibility to educate professionals, students and society about the importance of water resilient cities.

This symposium was organized within the framework of TU Delft’s lead partnership with UN-Habitat and the World Urban Campaign to promote and teach issues connected to the New Urban Agenda. This event also supports the Summer School Planning and Design Water, offered every July at the Department of Urbanism of the TU Delft now in its 5th edition.

https://summerschooltudelft.org
Education for Water Resilient Cities

Stephen Goldsmith
CITY AND METROPOLITAN PLANNING, UNIVERSITY OF UTAH
The World Water Museum

Students from the Metropolitan and City Planning course of the University of Utah prepared a museum of water, inspired by the work of Amy Sharrocks, in which they used postcards, short texts, photographs and water samples to tell stories with water. The exhibition was coordinated and put together by Professor Stephen Goldsmith.

Reflections on Developing the University of Utah Wing of the World Water Museum

Text by Professor Stephen Goldsmith, University of Utah

When Roberto Rocco invited our students from the University of Utah to participate in his brilliantly conceived symposium titled, Education for Water Resilient Cities, we didn’t hesitate to jump in. A cohort of 16 students, both masters and Ph.D. students, were preparing to enroll in a course titled Global Change and Society where they had agreed to explore water in all of its forms and create a portable museum of water. What better place to install this museum than at TU Delft?

Over the course of the 2018 Spring semester, these exceptional students explored water through the lenses of science, literature, religion, recreation, art, music, climate change, environmental justice, cosmology, and more. Plunging into this exploration from their different specializations led to the development of a robust, generative exhibition that could be carried in a large suitcase and installed quickly in TU Delft’s Orange Hall. The interactive displays were designed to provoke and invite meaningful discussions among the viewers in hopes of creating new relationships with this finite resource, relationships that might lead to a renewed sense of stewardship.

All of these students are deeply engaged in research ranging from deep coring in forests to explore carbon isotopes, to monitoring glacial patterns and exploring implementation strategies for sustainability goals, and other areas of scientific inquiry. None of the students had created any kind of formal exhibitions before, and the invitation to create a meaningful installation “across the pond” became a welcome challenge.

The result of their semester-long exploration unfolded in a few hours as the installation landed softly in the Orange Hall. Included in the exhibition were 16 bottles of water harvested by each of the students from a source of importance to them. Inspired by the work of artist Amy Sharrocks, whose massive water installations invite people to bring a bottle of water from a place of importance to them, the water transported to Delft came from a diversity of places. These included places as unique as the ancestral home of one of the students who grew up adjacent to a creek on Native American Reservation, to the tears shed while watching a television series each week, to the condensed breath of one student and the melted snow from from a skiing adventure. The variety of water and diversity of the students’ experiences expressed the truth that water is life.

To gather a glimpse of what the students attempted to transmit to viewers in the Orange Hall, a preview can be found at: https://worldwatermuseum.org/#/postcards-from-the-field/
Education for Water Resilient Cities
Contributions

EDUCATION FOR INCLUSIVE, FAIR AND WATER RESILIENT CITIES
Amy Sharrocks

AN ALTERNATIVE TAKE ON WATER

According to website of the Artsadmin foundation, “Amy Sharrocks is a live artist, sculptor and film-maker who invites people to come on journeys in which their own experience, communication and expression are a vital part. Undertaking these journeys with a sense of humour, joy and risk, Amy creates work that is rich, unpredictable and different every time. This invitation and the bravery and invention of people’s responses, produces new avenues for exploration and fantastic visions within the everyday.” (Source: https://www.artsadmin.co.uk/artists/amy-sharrocks). Amy was invited to speak at this symposium because we wanted to explore a different view on water, different from the technical approach we usually have at TU Delft. This exploration was important for the symposium, as Amy reminded the audience about the deeper meanings of water for our lives: symbolic, practical, poetic and sensual. Amy explained how she explores these dimensions through active artistic interventions, in which the public is invited to be part of the action and to share their own stories, such as the ‘Museum of Water’, a project she started back in 2013. The Museum of Water is an ongoing project, composed by differently-shaped bottles of water donated by the public, accompanied by narratives that explain the origin and the significance of specific samples of water. The Museum of Water set up during the symposium by Stephen Goldsmith from the University of Utah displayed stories, postcards, signs and also samples of water collected by the students of the city and metropolitan planning of the University of Utah. This project was carried out in partnership with Amy Sharrocks. During the symposium, Amy gave an account of several artistic performances and interventions in which water, and people’s stories with water, played a central role. Amy emphasized the symbolic relationships people establish with water and how they experience water on a daily basis.

According to the Museum of Water website set up by the artist (http://www.museumofwater.co.uk):

“Water is our most basic need and our most overlooked, throw-away substance. We choose water metaphors to define our thoughts, while in our actions we defend against it, squeezing and pumping it, chlorinating and piping, soothed by our certainty that it will pour from our tap at a twist of our fingers. It is time to re-examine our connection with the water that surrounds us, and develop a new relationship. We need to hold on to water, consider what is precious about it and how we are using it now in order to explore how we might save it for the future. We are all implicated in this. Museum of Water has travelled to over 50 different sites worldwide, been visited by over 60,000 people, and currently holds over 1,000 bottles in the collection. These range from a melted snowman to a burst London water main and water from the last ice age, a muddy puddle in Birmingham to a canal in Rotterdam, water from Lourdes, Mecca and the Ganges, condensation from a Falmouth window, Ghost water and bad dream water, 20-year-old evaporated snow from Maine, a new born baby’s bath water, Norwegian spit, three types of urine, two different breaths and water from a bedside table said to be infused with dreams.” (http://www.museumofwater.co.uk)
Of all natural hazards faced by cities, flooding is currently the costliest. Now more than half of the global population has gone urban, the future of mankind balances on the capacity of cities to build resilience against flooding. But we underestimate both the role of urbanisation as a driver of flood risk, and its potential to build resilience. Traditional flood risk management revolves around large-scale infrastructures that prevent flooding, or evacuation and insurance that mitigate damages.

What is missing, is the engagement of urban development itself to reduce vulnerability. The urban fabric of cities naturally expands and transforms in ways that can either soften or worsen the problem. Houston’s experience teaches us that the floodplain moves with development: they are like heat-seeking missiles that follow us around. However, examples like Texas Medical Center also demonstrate that retrofitting can completely prevent damage during a flood event. This is something we need to discuss in education.

Rather than waiting for large-scale engineering projects to bail us out, we, as spatial planners and urban designers of the future, have an obligation to build resilience on the scale of buildings and districts. This requires ‘flood literacy’: we have to plan and design under the assumption that our cities will flood, and complement the efforts pursued by mega-engineers and disaster managers.
My colleagues at the water board of Delfland used to say that the occurrence of water nuisance every now and then would help them to get all actors involved on the same page of solving the problem.

In the late 90’s big water nuisance appeared in the Delfland area with the eastern part of the old town of Delft (the lower peat area) partially flooded. Although a problem at first - especially for the ones living there - this also was the start of actually solving the problems together: municipality, inhabitants, home owners and water board. Striving to reach the shared goal, all were willing to talk and to search for a wider spectrum of possible solutions. A quick solution was implemented with temporary removable emergency pumps, gaining time to discuss, research and test sustainable, spatially and monumentally well-integrated robust solutions for the future.

Now the old city of Delft is well protected for the coming years. The lower part of the old city has become a semi polder; in periods of heavy rainfall and a rise of the water level in the larger boezem system (the boezem system consists of the main vaines of the water structure at 40 cm minus n.a.p./new Amsterdam or general level), the eastern part of the old town water structure can be closed off, preserving the desired water level and thus protecting the ancient and monumental buildings and its residents.

In education waiting for such a problem as a start for getting ready finding solutions should be a no go. Education should be upfront; should inform students ahead preparing them for the future to be and for future problems, trying to adapt or mitigate before actual problems occur.

But that is also pretty difficult. Because we are not familiar yet with the future problems, we do not exactly know what will happen. The further away the time horizon, the less specific we know what may or may not occur.

Therefore, teaching should not be about known problems and familiar solutions, it should be about preparing future generations to be able to recognize and answer future tasks by providing them with the right equipment to do so. We cannot teach how to solve specific tasks, but we can help students to develop necessary skills to solve future tasks by encouraging their curiosity, providing context and reference projects as well as an array of possible and plausible approaches or methods. By teaching them how problems were solved in the past, how they are settled in the present, and by reflecting on these approaches, by sparking students to combine present ideas into innovative combinations, we can prepare them for their future. We can help them getting ready to bend the route from the present status to the autonomous future towards a desired future.

But most of all we can help them prepare by provoking, stimulating and encouraging their love for our world, becoming good care takers; setting sustainable goals while taking care of the planet and the people in balance with prosperity.

Let’s make sure all students are equipped for the future and for future challenges!
The subsurface is a technical space, the “engine room of the city,” that incorporates the vital functions of water and energy supply, communication systems, sewers and drainage. Natural systems too – crucial for stable, dry, cool and nature inclusive cities – are also largely dependent on the quality of the subsoil. The subsurface is critical in an era of climate and demographic changes, the energy transition and economic uncertainty and constraints.

However, due to the domain’s current segregation and a weak urban design and planning connection, crucial design potential, benefits and innovations, remain unexploited. This contribution introduces ‘Reversed Engineering with Nature’ as a concept. In urban concepts, the subsurface is usually not identified or included as space.

By better understanding and re-thinking of this hybrid place, and re-designing the “engine room” from the integrated perspective of planning, design and engineering, the objective is to reach an efficient overall urban system that directly supports improvements in the general quality of cities. Revered engineering with Nature goes beyond Landscape Urbanism because it does not ignore the techno–sphere but carefully creates balance in an effort to find cooperation with the biosphere. It relates the tame and wicked knowledge fields, actors and looks at the city as a hybrid performance landscape. Thus, not only allowing the operational logic of the natural system to take the lead, but working together with the agency of the technological urban constructions that currently exist. Synchronisation (in time, space, technology and interests) is one of the main goals in this approach.
The TU Delft symposium (2018) highlighted the importance of planning for water resilient cities and that educational practices must be designed to support the next generation of planners by delivering both theoretical knowledge on water resilient cities and interactive opportunities to apply this knowledge (TU Delft, 2018). The University of Groningen’s combined flood resilience workshop and problem-based role-play game (by Steven Forrest, Elen-Maarja Trell and Britta Restemeyer) and the National Cheng Kung University’s use of field-based learning and stakeholder workshops (by Betty Chang) were examples presented at the TU Delft symposium of changing student learning experiences on the topic of water resilient cities.

Planning for water resilient cities is growing in importance for both current and future planners in light of predictions of more frequent and intense hydrological extremes (i.e. flooding and droughts) in cities as a result of climate change (EEA, 2012; Hegger et al., 2016). Flooding is one of the challenges that needs addressing for a water resilient city and there has been a growing emphasis on ‘flood resilience’ for cities and local urban areas (Forrest et al., 2017; Scott, 2013; Restemeyer et al., 2015). Flood resilience is a more holistic approach towards urban flood management that focuses not only on traditional flood defences, but also on reducing the societal consequences of flooding (Forrest et al., 2017). In contrast to traditional
flood management approaches that were run by state/government actors, flood resilience approaches seek to involve a broader circle of actors (Mees et al., 2016; Meijerink & Dicke, 2008). Consequently communities, citizens, businesses and non-traditional government actors are becoming more involved in decision-making and action in flood resilience approaches (Meijerink & Dicke, 2008; Scott, 2013). This greater diversity of actors presents opportunities for new cross-sectoral solutions for flood management (e.g. spatial planners and water engineers), for expanding the focus on flood control, response and recovery to also include pre-flood spatial planning approaches (e.g. the multi-layered safety approach in the Netherlands), and to access previously untapped or underutilised capacities (e.g. expertise) and resources (e.g. financial and human) from these newly-involved actors. The broader circle of those involved also presents challenges in consensus-building amongst actors with a range of diverse interests and competing visions for their urban environment. The different capacities and resources of each actor to take action or to persuade others to take action will impact the form of flood resilient urban areas that are planned. There will always be winners and losers: actors who can access more resources and achieve changes at the expense of other actors’ ability to do so.

Education for flood resilience and water resilient cities needs to consider the impact of having more diverse actors involved in decision-making and the processes of seeking compromises and consensus in the midst of competing interests and visions. Lecturing can provide insights into how these opportunities and challenges unfold in different local contexts with varying actors arrangements. However, in reality these opportunities are not realised as neatly as often taught and the processes of collaborative working, including negotiating the aims and scope of planning, are difficult to convey to students. Changing student learning experiences to also include interactive opportunities to apply this knowledge in a role-play game situation can be used to simulate these aspects of negotiation and consensus building.

To summarise, the widened circle of actors involved in flood resilience approaches presents both opportunities and challenges for planners, which needs to be reflected in education for water resilient cities. Educational courses are able to engage with the theoretical debates on these important issues, but there must also be opportunities for students to apply their learnt knowledge and to experience collaborative working, negotiations between competing interests and maybe even consensus-building (or encountering conflicts) in planning for water resilient cities. The connection between the lecture hall and practice is not always possible for educators and the use of problem-based role-play games can overcome this to provide stimulating education on water resilient cities.

References


The Arcadis Shelter program supported the Water Education Symposium in the Urbanism Department of the Delft Technical University. Bert Smolders Shelter program manager and Iris Bijlsma presented principles and experience on nature based solutions for integrated urban water management, and discussed with participants. Key message in the presentations is that water should be regarded as the basic layer in urban planning, and as foundation for development. First think water then think urban is the motto. Comprehensive solutions for flood protection, building with nature, room for the river and sponge city concepts where discussed. In all these concepts there is a strong relation between water management and urbanism. So it is logic and very important that the education on urbanism should include awareness and key knowledge on water management and nature based solutions.

The department of Urbanism of Delft Technical University is the natural location to develop expertise in this field, as it is based in The Netherlands with a long tradition and worldwide expertise on both water management and urbanism. This role can be enforced in future, with partnerships with all stakeholders including the Dutch consultancy offices such as Arcadis where experts work in practice on comprehensive urban water management projects all over the world.
Water – as a pedagogical project – requires one to approach multiple scales, subjects, and agents. As an ever-changing matter, water denotes instability, ephemerality, unpredictability, and thus criticality. Something not entirely to be conquered or to be completely controlled.

In history, the project of urban water, of water defense lines, of taming rivers and seashores showed the ever conflictual and changing relation between ‘urban’ and ‘nature’, or between ‘us’ and the ‘otherness’. This is better disclosed by the multiplicity of historical-geographical relations and processes of continual change in water systems as a result of urbanization.

More recently, we moved from a modernist technocentric and mechanistic approach of ‘us’ aiming to be in full control of the ‘otherness’ towards a contemporary acknowledgement of the need to design with instead of against the dynamics of nature. In this context, teaching water means to approach design and planning from a historical and geographical perspective first to delineate the specificity of each site, being physical, cultural, socio-economic, and political. Later, to approach space as a conveyer of water flows, disposing, displacing and assigning (better or worst) ways of maintaining water regimes and of ensuring water safety and security. This requires an ecological and ethical approach and design orientation, as well as the necessity to reflect on the coupling of infrastructure and environment in the development of new models of practice and new pairings of program, ever open to future change.
Education for Water Resilient Cities

She discussed several definitions of resilience: “The degree to which cities are able to tolerate before reorganizing around a new set of structures and processes” (Alberti et al., 2003); “The capability to prepare for, respond to and recover from significant multi-hazard threats with minimum damage to public safety and health, the economy and security” (Wilbanks, 2007), etc. and summarises by stating that a resilient city is sustainable in its economy, environment and community, but it has a deeper quality which enables it to quickly adapt to challenges and rebuild itself from any challenge it faces (https://infrascape.design.wordpress.com/2011/01/07/interview-with-peter-newman/).

Professor Chang discussed urban resilience in relation to social resilience, as part of the definition of disaster resilience by the World Bank (which includes social resilience, economic resilience, institutional resilience, infrastructure residence and community capital). For Professor Chang, professional resilience should be part of social resilience, and is connected to a shift in planning education paradigms, from physical/rational planning to participatory, advocacy, communicative, collaborative, insurgent and radical planning. In order to cater for this paradigm shift, field-based learning and stakeholder workshops become the main pedagogical strategies for professional and social resilience. It is necessary to enhance students’ professional competences to quickly adapt to challenges and to rebuild themselves for any new challenges they might face. At NCKU they use community-based learning and stakeholder workshops as experiential learning environments, with several courses and “project courses”, as well as three levels of workshops (dialogue, visioning and action). The pedagogy of social resilience in planning education is based on 1. Community problem-solving and experiential learning, 2. Stakeholder workshops and pedagogical experiments, 3. Reflection (response paper/workshops/ interviews) and finally 4. Speakers and lectures (values/ story telling). At NCKU they are seeking to build up collaborative planning education and design thinking for planning innovation. The role of students is defined as facilitators, process designers, innovators and entrepreneurs.