



Urban Transitions Alliance Milestone Meeting Report

ICLEI WORLD CONGRESS 2021-22: THE MALMÖ SUMMIT

11-13 May 2022 | Malmö, Sweden

Since its launch in 2017, the Urban Transitions Alliance has been a hub for collaboration of industrial legacy cities committed to inclusive and sustainable urban development, with a special focus on strengthening social equity in sustainability and climate planning. Before the project came to its official close in June 2022, Alliance members convened at the [ICLEI World Congress: The Malmö Summit](#) to reinforce partnerships and set the course for future cooperation. After more than two years of mostly virtual collaboration due to the Covid-19 pandemic, participating cities engaged in various panel discussions, workshops and meetings on sustainable and inclusive urban development, while discussing their green and just transition priorities and celebrating the wealth of knowledge that was shared throughout the Urban Transitions Alliance project.



Back, from left to right: Magash Naidoo, ICLEI World Secretariat; Klaus Kordowski, Stiftung Mercator; Sebastian Schlecht, Baukultur NRW / Iala.ruhr; Oliver Kroner, City of Cincinnati; Michael Leischner, City of Dortmund; Samira Pfeiffer, ICLEI World Secretariat; Aubrey Germ, City of Baltimore; Daniel Wolny, City of Katowice; Stephan Rath, Gelsenkirchen Science Park; Beata Urych, City of Katowice; Xuan Xie, ICLEI East Asia; Ying-Chih Deng-Sommer, ICLEI World Secretariat. Front, from left to right: Rebecca Kiernan, City of Pittsburgh; Yun-Ju Chen, ICLEI World Secretariat; Marion Guenard, ICLEI World Secretariat; Rebecca Wessinghage, ICLEI World Secretariat.

Urban Transitions Alliance Closing Workshop

This working session gathered the Urban Transitions Alliance project liaisons and partners, formally acknowledging the closing of the project while discussing its legacy and pathways for future collaboration. Participants also used this opportunity to reflect on project outcomes and provide feedback on the value the Alliance created for individual members. The session saw active participation from the cities of Baltimore, Cincinnati and Pittsburgh (USA), Dortmund and Essen (Germany), Katowice (Poland), Turku (Finland) as well as the Gelsenkirchen Science Park and the Mercator Foundation. As it was not possible for Chinese members to travel due to Covid-19 restrictions, their perspectives were represented by Xuan Xie from the ICLEI East Asia Secretariat.



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From a reflection exercise among workshop participants, common local priorities emerged: (1) circularity and climate mitigation with a focus on lifestyles and mindsets; (2) energy transition and energy security; (3) urban greening, biodiversity and open spaces; (4) housing, especially in the context of health and safety; (5) community resilience. Different opportunities and pathways for future collaboration were discussed and will be further refined, while a strong commitment from members was obtained to continue well-established working relationships and newly formed partnerships beyond the project duration.

As circularity presents the ideal framework to combine the Urban Transitions Alliance members' joint focus on equitable and climate conscious development, the shared identity and conditions of industrial legacy cities will be the starting point for the [ICLEI Circularity platform](#) to organize targeted exchanges for peer learning.

Circular buildings and construction



From an architect's perspective, Sebastian Schlecht reflected on the value of urban landscape with a specific focus on the Ruhr area.

Globally, estimations in the building sector point that its share is 40% of energy consumption, 40% of resources used, and 25% water demand. The building and construction industry remains one of the most wasteful sectors. With Alliance representation from Rebecca Kiernan from the City of Pittsburgh and Sebastian Schlecht representing the City of Essen, Baukultur NRW and lala.ruhr, the in-person workshop '[Setting stones towards a circular building sector from materialization to deconstruction](#)' explored the major challenges to implement circular economy principles in the buildings and construction sector.

Initial input from participants indicated a pressing need to stimulate shifts in cultural, financial and business approaches and practices. The speakers kick-started the discussion with four actionable cases, painting a holistic approach to retain and reactivate not only construction waste, but also the underutilized urban spaces and valuable skilled workers within the current construction value chains.

Mobile Workshop: Social enterprises and the inclusive and circular city

During this tour, Alliance members had the chance to explore the work of social enterprises and NGOs working with housing, food, health and employment opportunities in Malmö. The first stop was at [Yalla Trappan](#), a work integration social enterprise and women's cooperative run by a non-profit association in Malmö Rosengård. By offering catering, sewing and cleaning services to individuals and businesses, Yalla Trappan creates jobs and increased financial independence for immigrant women who are far from the labour market.

Afterwards, participants visited the Skåne Stadsmission and their circular and social supermarket that provides fresh and packaged produce to residents in need. While preventing food waste through collecting and redistributing leftovers from a wide range of businesses across the city, the project respects dignity of people living in poverty by offering a membership model and self-determined selection of items.



The Skåne Stadsmission (local NGO) and their circular social enterprises are working with food distribution and repurposing for residents living in poverty.