

CITIES DESIGN AND WATER INNOVATION LAB

INVITATION

March 21, 8:30AM–1:30PM, Columbia University New York



The Cities-Design-Water Innovation Lab

Accelerating and Rethinking Water Action in Cities

Co-creating implementable, integral, innovative and inclusive approaches that use water as leverage

Speed up What we see, what we read, what we hear and only start to feel: our vulnerability in facing the consequences of climate change keeps increasing and among these consequences, the impact on water is especially profound. Cities are critical hotspots for water challenges and opportunities. Water scarcity, heat waves and flooding related to climate change increasingly affect urban settings and intersect with growing urbanization and industrialization. In particular, cities' most vulnerable communities are affected. At the same time, cities are dynamic places for rapid transformation and adaptation: 'the global trend of urbanisation [] offers a critical opportunity in the near-term, to advance climate resilient development' (IPCC 2022 AR6). Cities landscapes are thus an appropriate scale for effective climate action.

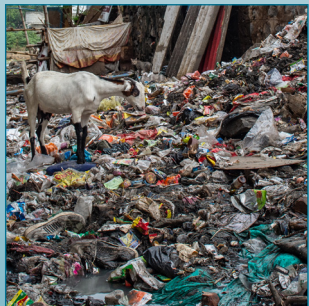
Water Action How to unlock the potential of water in cities? How can water leverage opportunities that catalyse needed changes, inspire sustainable development, lasting partnerships and transformative climate action? The way we address urban challenges today all too often exacerbates inequality and vulnerability, so how can water action contribute to creating more equitable, healthier, and safer cities for all urban dwellers? For this we need new, different and alternative approaches.

In this Innovation Lab we focus on alternative approaches that are inclusive, design-driven and use water as leverage to unlock cities' potential. This innovation lab will bring together and showcase these alternative approaches and methodologies. As a forum for learning across a range of experiences, we can innovate and accelerate water action in cities.

Organised by:
Columbia University Climate School, Columbia University GSAPP Urban Design, Columbia World Projects, Government of the Netherlands, Deltares

Venue and time:
Tuesday 21 March 8:30 - 13:30, Columbia University New York

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The Cities-Design-Water Innovation Lab

In the Innovation Lab we:

- **connect** experiences, journeys, learnings and examples of inclusive and design-driven climate action in city landscapes
- **reflect** on the journeys and understanding today's emerging climate action challenges
- **identify** the main themes and topics for speeding-up inclusive and design-driven water action in city landscapes

Based on the lab we build partnerships and formulate an action agenda to speed-up water action in cities through inclusive, design-driven and use water as a leveraging measure.

Program

8:30	Opening and setting the scene
9:00	Sharing cases, journeys, inspirations: what did we do and learn over the past years and what are current experiences and challenges?
10:30	Reflection in group-work: what themes arise from these stories?
11:30	Action planning: developing an action agenda based on the main themes
12:30 - 13:30	Lunch

Alternative approach: Water as Leverage

Water as Leverage (WaL) is an initiative by the Government of the Netherlands and associated partners as an approach to promote urban resilience on the ground through the design, planning and financing of projects that cut across sectoral and administrative boundaries. WaL is built on the recognition that a result-driven, holistic and inclusive pre-project preparation approach is the only way to kick-start and scale sustainable urban solutions, which are supported by decision makers locally and nationally, have long-term and sustainable impact, deliver to SDGs and are bankable. Water as Leverage has a successful track record in Asia and launched its first initiative in Latin America. It inspired urban planning, infrastructure design, landscape development, political engagement and finance in Semarang (Indonesia), Chennai (India), Khulna (Bangladesh) and Cartagena (Colombia). On-going discussions for WaL Initiatives are taking place in Africa, Europe and Asia. Preliminary discussions confirm strong demand for similar developments in various countries and regions of the world.



Alternative approach: Water Urbanisms and Climate Justice

Columbia University GSAPP's Water Urbanism Studio and the Climate School's Climate and Society program partner to design and policy towards water action and climate policy impact. This approach to design practice and pedagogy holistically joins the study of social and physical infrastructures, environmental justice, and hydrological systems. Multi-disciplinary teams of students produce research and design speculation to better understand the intersections of climate change, urban development, and water. Together, they partner with local governments, non-profit or non-governmental organizations and local schools to collectively generate alternative visions for the future of these places, prioritizing human rights, climate justice, and stewardship of our natural world. This year the Studio is working with partners in three cities in Colombia: Bogota, Cali, and Cartagena.



Photos in frames: © Cynthia van Elk | Water as Leverage

