



Virtual Workshop #3

“Post-crisis resilience in sustainable cities: how to build back better?”

Moderator: Romain Crouzet - Directeur des Programmes à Climate Chance Association

Panelists :

Mahoumoudou Wadidié, Director of the Regional Development Agency of the Bamako District, Mali, member of MTPA Africa

Meriem Chabani, Architect and co-founder of TXKL Architectes Urbanistes, France

Charlène Kouassi, Director of Development at Observatory of African Mobilities, Côte d'Ivoire

Sénamé Koffi Agbodjinou, Architect and founder of the African HubCités project, Togo

Useful Links :

<i>Climate Chance and the Sustainable Urban Development and Cities Coalition</i>	Development of Sustainable African Cities Coalition The Coalition's Roadmap : https://www.climate-chance.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/climate-chance-afrique-2018-sustainable-development-cities-eng.pdf
<i>MTPA, and the Regional Development Agency of Bamako</i>	http://www.mtpa-network.org/en/ https://www.adrbamako.ml/
TXKL Architectes Urbanistes	https://www.txkl.info/
Observatory of African Mobilities	https://www.facebook.com/OBSERVATOIREDESMOBILITESAFRICAINES/ https://movinon-lab.michelin.com/s/?language=en_US
African HubCités	https://les-smartgrids.fr/hubcite-modele-africain-smart-city/



Key-Takeaways:

- The workshop covered the theme of post-crisis resilience following the COVID-19 pandemic, and how to build back better. The panelists spoke of the experiences in African cities, in various sectors like urban planning, housing and transportation, the lessons learnt from these, and the challenges and opportunities moving forward.
- Most African cities were unprepared for the crisis, and were severely impacted. From the city-planning perspective, the pandemic has revealed existing weaknesses, but also showed how moving to the digital space can advance things along. It is important for city authorities to join networks like the MTPA, to share experiences and pool learnings.
- African cities' unique urbanism, which combines the official model with a more informal one, leaves them in a position to be the leaders of a new global model. This model is rooted in the organic, communal and traditional values of their local culture, but at the same time incorporates open-source, mass digitization.
- In the housing sector, the pandemic has exacerbated issues and inequalities that already existed, in terms of rights to housing, quality of housing and the challenge of creating mass-housing while ensuring decent standards. Incorporating local design elements and locally sourced building material is extremely important.
- The transport sector too saw inequalities intensified by the pandemic. Transportation was highly impacted by the lockdowns, with resultant increases in transportation times and fares. While the state of public transport infrastructure requires a lot of work, start-ups emerged the best-adapted to deal with such a crisis, and make the best use of digital tools. Moving forward, mass transport, intermodality and informal modes of transport need to be developed at a faster rate.

Romain Crouzet:

This is the third webinar in this series, where we'll be discussing **how to rebuild, to reinforce the resilience of sustainable cities, after the COVID-19 crisis**. We'll be talking about **better urban planning**- how to better adapt our cities, and what lessons we've learned from the pandemic. Thanks to our panelists, who will be introduced in a little bit.

To start off, an introduction to Climate Chance, which was formed in 2015, leading up to the COP21 in Paris. Climate Chance **gathers non-state actors in their diversity**, and aims to create more synergies between the 9 majors groups recognized by the UNFCCC: local



governments, organisations, researchers, companies/businesses, women's groups, indigenous people's groups, etc. We have our website, where we publish all information on local climate action, in both English and French. This portal gathers projects from in the field, identifies good practices, and particularly those from the African continent. Thus it creates access to information and data on climate change and related challenges at the regional/territorial level.

There is also the [Climate Chance Observatory](#), which analyses implemented climate action worldwide, and puts together yearly publications. At the beginning we started from the affirmation of the role of non-state actors, a certain advocacy finally, but after a while there was a need to explain the action concretely carried out. It is a very interesting publication that analyses different sectors, different countries, full of case studies.

Climate Chance organizes [annual summits](#), gathering our various coalitions, each with their own roadmaps, to take stock of climate action. Unfortunately, this year as it is not possible to have the summit that was planned to take place in Kigali Rwanda, we decided - in spite of the current situation - to go ahead with this [series of virtual workshops](#). Through the virtual workshops, we will continue to mobilize our coalitions and follow up on our roadmaps.

- The 1st round of Virtual Workshops aims to regain contact with members and co-pilots of all of the coalitions, and to present the changed situations due to the pandemic Covid-19
- The 2nd round in the fall, will focus on moving forward with the work defined in the roadmaps of the coalitions.

The Sustainable Urban Development and Cities Coalition is a very dynamic coalition, focusing on city development in the African continent. We work with the [FNAU](#) and [MTPA](#) in this coalition and have had meetings with them during our last 3 Summits. The MTPA is a network of urban agencies, founded by FNAU. Monsieur Wadidie from today's panel, work with MTPA Africa. Also, this coalition has closely worked with the network of urban planners in Africa, in partnership with the eco-city Zenata, near Casablanca - this year of course, it has been slowed down due to COVID-19. The next work meeting was planned for the Africa France Summit in Bordeaux, which has unfortunately been cancelled due to situation at hand.

The main topic of this session will be **how to reinforce the resilience of the global cities of the future, especially in Africa, keeping in mind the consequences and lessons from the COVID-19 crisis.**

Mahamoudou Wadidié:

Bamako, like other cities, has been highly affected by COVID-19. These cities were not equipped or prepared to deal with such a crisis. However, the impact has not been as bad as we'd feared, thanks to two things. The first is nature. Secondly, the Mali government took necessary measures, like that to secure individuals, modifying working hours and working conditions. There have been communication and publicity campaigns.



Mali is a highly decentralized country where communities are trying to take action. For example, through the distribution of: handwashing kits for offices, advertisements and publicity campaigns to raise awareness are displayed at all levels. We have created the conditions for meetings to take place (e.g. videoconferencing).

This pandemic has revealed that we can find our way around our shortcomings, and that these are ways of overcoming that we could have/should have thought of earlier. One such measure is moving ourselves to the digital, which this pandemic has pushed us to do. Different sectors have been affected differently by this crisis, and trade has been one of the worst-affected. Bamako as a city relies a lot on trade, and the crisis has shown us how the existing system of collection of resources that we have needs to be worked on. Another sector we need to touch upon is the education, which was not prepared for this crisis. We need to plan to be able to move to the digital. One of the measures taken in Mali was education through the television, which still needs work and needs to be improved.

We realize today that we do have the technical tools but there is still this need to network. Through the work carried out in the MTPA, and especially MTPA Africa, we are raising awareness among our peers so that we can come together. This work had started well but unfortunately Covid-19 has slowed down its development. We need to organise meetings but we are going to move towards digital: the objective is to formalise the Africa network. This is work that had started well, but was slowed down with the pandemic. If the pandemic goes away, we'll be able to better do this.

Our link with Climate Chance: Climate issues are something that we're aware of, we've been working on helping Bamako have a climate plan, but we've noticed that some of the bare minimum doesn't exist. We would like to have 3 basic research projects, on adaptation, mitigation and access. Now we're trying to prepare the conditions to continue working despite the pandemic, and we need to find a palliative solution. As already mentioned, that solution lies in the digital.

Romain Crouzet:

You spoke of the importance of working with other networks. Along these lines, what other projects or concrete practices would you like to share?

Mahamoudou Wadidié :

The MTPA portal on Good Practices aims to provide cities with good initiatives and a monitoring system. We believe that working in a fragmented way is not appropriate. There are cities that already have experience with their agencies, so the aim is to pool knowledge in order to move forward.



Romain Crouzet: This relates to another aspect- the low quality of data available, which hinders effective policies. This is especially a challenge on the African continent. We have noticed this problem, and in fact, we are having a couple of workshops in the fall (September and October) on climate data in Africa, in association with the Climate Chance Observatory and the Covenant of Mayors of Sub-Saharan Africa.

Meriem Chabani:

A special look at housing issues in African cities, especially in times of crisis.

Together with the French partnership of cities and territories as well as the French-speaking housing network, we participated in an event in February 2020 (during the World Urban Forum). In the end, when we look at its housing issues, coronavirus only accentuates issues that we already know.

In relation to the pandemic, the right to housing is a priority. It is in fact, a life or death issue, the need for people to be isolated in their homes. There is no equality. The issue of lack of housing has been highlighted in this pandemic.

Many measures have been recommended, but how do cities equip themselves with the right tools? Mali has been looking to put in place affordable housing policies. One tool they can use is to secure real estate tenure and alternative financing. The situation can vary between cities, but one common difficulty is having a social policy that will guarantee rent payment, which limits the public's access to housing. We need to ask ourselves what kind of tools can we have, in both the public and private sectors simultaneously?

For example in Algiers, the difficulties we find in the big complexes are related to stairwell. We need to work in a vertical way to isolate individuals better, while developing community spaces and building private homes. Examples of Addis Ababa and others, transition between public spaces and housing through various thresholds, through various actors and communication tools. We can have, for instance, sanitary spaces at the base of buildings, shared courtyards as sanitary hubs and to distribute resources.

Coming to other models we consider good-- what are the types of housings we want to create today?The creation of collective housing on the model of large housing estates, France has abandoned this idea for a few years now, but it is a model that has been adopted by other countries as well. The problem is that more and more people have to be housed, as well as the poorly housed.The challenge is that millions of people need houses. The challenge is to promote new models taken from typical local cultures, with elements from other other cultures, rather than having a single global model that we apply from Paris to Shanghai to Benin.



This is not a new idea, we have been pushing for this for quite a while, it is nice to see Mali habitat taking this forward. During an exchange with the Director General of the Office Malien de l'Habitat, Mr. Sékou Demba, we were able to observe the specifications which include the use of raw land or mud bricks in the development. In addition, the promotion of the local supply chain in terms of materials and the valorization of the local population was also noted in the specifications.

In Addis Ababa, the difficulty is with reference to the models as tools to be used. The school of architecture there is giving classes in english, and for matters of housing and planning, makes use of the English model. These descriptions don't match their own conceptions of housing. There is a vast field of innovation to be derived from African know-how to be developed.

Charlène Kouassi:

At the level of Abidjan and other West-African cities, what can be said about development to increase the resilience of cities, and about informal transport?

As we all know, these cities were not prepared for this pandemic. In terms of transportation, we have a mixed assessment. Speaking of the challenges to health, digitization, intermodality and other things-- inequalities that were there before have continued in the transport sector, and haven't really been tackled.

Public and urban transport in cities was highly reduced as parts of the population stopped going to work. For example, in Kampala, all transport, public and private, had come to a half was started again on June 5th. In Abidjan, even with services like carpooling, there is a fear/psychosis related to COVID-19, even after the ministries took measures to reduce the capacities of vehicles. There was a 50% reduction in transport in Kampala.

There was also an increase in the amount of time spent in transport, and time spent waiting for transport. People ended up leaving earlier, staying later, walking more. Distancing was respected, in terms of masks, etc. But overall, there has been a lack of infrastructure to meet the growing transport needs. The quality of supply has been reducing. Majority of the vehicles are owned by individuals, who are concerned more about profits. We need to find a consensus with public actors to have better transportation.

We also noticed an increase in fares in some transport lines in cities, which shows that this sector did not adequately meet the demand. If at all the transport sector was resilient, it was due to start-ups. These start-ups are at the forefront of making advancements, they know how to adapt.

In west Africa, money issues slow down mobility. Online payment advances things. It also helps to improve the living conditions of the drivers. In the crisis, savings were affected, but with online payments, people can keep better track of payments and incomes.



This crisis has highlighted the socio-economic discrepancies and inequalities in Africa, and also in transport. Stakeholders have realized their weaknesses, and have been working on improving these, on reducing the time spent in waiting for transport. Other challenges include combining the need to be sustainable with the need for mass mobility. We need to renew the fleet, which is old, and has high levels of emissions. There is also need for an impetus in informal transport. There is a lot of potential in the digital sector, with new online platforms coming up. Infrastructure needs improving, like better signalisation.

Lagoon transport deserves to be much more developed, rail transport for example. It would be good to be able to develop a MAS (Mobility at the Service) project, it would help to have greater mobility in terms of offers, informal transport as well as soft modes of transport. In African cities, it was not easy to adapt. We can use aggregators to have better supply, keep better track of carbon footprints. We need to develop soft transport. Long term plans exist for mass transit and metros, but people need an immediate, short term answer, and this has to be answered for resilience.

Sénamé Koffi Agbodjinou:

My project is seen as “marginal” as it is self-funded. We anticipated this crisis-- of course it's easy to prophesy after something has happened, but there have been some predictions that we made around 10 years ago, on the problem of over-urbanisation. We can only try to be prepared, it is very complicated to imagine what it would be like.

In this configuration, Africa has a special place because it offers urban objects that are quite interesting, even unpublished. Africa could very quickly accelerate the anthropocene, which is in fact an "urbanocene". Or Africa could propose models that if built could help to repair this global design. Africa's asset is that it is not totally indoctrinated in the urban. There are two types of urbanism: official/regulatory urbanism but also the urbanism of "anyone who creates a place". This can be an asset the day the official system is shut down. This is what we'd foreseen to encourage the a-system/de-system to transition when over-industrialisation would stop.

We saw this during the pandemic, the large supermarkets and corporations closed, and it was local and communal markets that sustained. From this point of view, we defended the need to provide African society with digital tools, not tools from Silicon valley. There was an awareness that digital technology was a necessity, and therefore the States in the urgency to start their digital transformation. By doing this as a matter of urgency, the GAFA will be favoured, whereas the start-up would find it difficult to respond to such a demand as a matter of urgency. We kept saying that in the digital city, there would be a new form of coloniality.

In the digital boom, there is a vicious potential. Capitalism has used urban planning to increase individualism, especially with smart city projects. In Smart Cities we see the final stage, with a setting that discourages sharing and community, pushing people into isolation. This could be extremely problematic, we need to stop this destiny of extreme digitization,



and develop communal digitization using organic and traditional ways of doing things found in African societies.

We favour the multiplicity of centres to create like cells or an archipelago, localism based on the benefits of today's technology. This would make the whole city more resilient in the face of contagion crises. It is the non-colonized part of Africa that is resisting the crisis we are experiencing today.

That is something we tried with HubCities, using local human resources and know-how, while leaning on open-source technology to address all aspects of urbanism (for example, food, energy for all) If there is a lack somewhere, we develop community centres Labs must be able to be self-sufficient by finding resources within 2km. Communities would develop their own systems.

Conclusion - Romain Crouzet

Thanks to all you, many of you have been following our virtual workshop, thank you to our speakers. If you have any more questions feel write to us at association@climate-chance.org, you can also follow us on social media, and find more information on our website as well. We'll be taking a break from the workshops for summer, and restarting in September with a workshop on supply of food and agriculture during the pandemic. You can find the recordings of these webinars and the summaries on our website, as well.