Nature-based Tools for Urban Adaptation and Improved Human Well-being

TimeLoc
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Paris
France
McKenna Davis [1]
Ecologic Institute's McKenna Davis presented insights about the potential of nature-based tools to address urban challenges during Naturparif's 5th annual conference in Paris on 5 June 2014. Based on earlier studies written by the Ecologic Institute on the subject, she discussed the evolution of ecosystem-based approaches and green infrastructure within a European policy context and their potential to address both climate change adaptation and human well-being in urban areas. The presentation is available for download.

The conference brought together practitioners, NGOs, scientists and policy makers to discuss methods for bringing ecology into the urban environment. In partnership with the Society for Urban Ecology and the Urban Climate Change Research Network (UCCRN), Naturparif designed the event as a forum to share knowledge and discuss the success or failure of urban ecology approaches in cities to date. An overarching theme was the largely underutilized potential of restoring urban ecological functions to enforce city resilience, while also having a positive effect on human health and well being.

McKenna Davis's speech opened the session on 'Urban Planning and Green Infrastructure'. She emphasized that, until recently, technological choices have been primarily utilized to respond to the increasing threats posed by climate change. However, increasing evidence indicates that working with nature can be the most effective way to address these challenges, while also providing multiple benefits for citizens, such as flood protection, microclimate control, aesthetic appeal, job provision, and recreation opportunities. Potential barriers to implementing these 'nature-based solutions' were outlined, as well as possible means to address them within an urban planning context. Additional presenters in the workshop illustrated urban green infrastructure case studies, looking at e.g. the effects of urban ecological corridors, green spaces, and the integration of biodiversity into urban planning.

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