

**“Transformative Changes for Biodiversity and Health” Alternet Conference
14 – 17 June 2022**

APPLICATIONS OPEN UNTIL 31ST JANUARY

Name and Institutions of Chairs and Co-Chairs:

Chairs: Shreya Utkarsh and Adriana Duarte (ICLEI Europe)

Session title: Making cities biodiverse: Co-benefits for people and nature

Session abstract:

The involvement of citizens in the development and monitoring of green spaces is a win-win situation for cities and their residents: while citizens can support the maintenance of Nature-based Solutions (NBS) and help local governments collect relevant data on biodiversity and NBS impacts, more green spaces and enhanced contact with nature promote healthy lifestyles and help build a sense of community among residents.

Through their involvement in European projects such as [CLEVER Cities](#) and [GoGreenRoutes](#), cities such as Milan (Italy) and Lahti (Finland) are experimenting with the co-creation, co-implementation and co-monitoring of NBS that enhance biodiversity and, by extension, foster human health. Research has recently indicated that urban nature could be responsible for mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on psychological health and physical activity during the ongoing pandemic (Nigg, Petersen and MacIntyre 2021). Other studies also reveal correlations between the species richness of urban green areas and the well-being of residents. (Fuller et al 2007, Dallimer et al 2012)

This session aims to highlight cities' experiences with citizen engagement in urban greening to foster healthy lifestyles, including Milan's strategy to involve citizens in co-monitoring biodiversity around new green roofs and walls, and Lahti's co-creation of a "health forest" around the city's central hospital. It will also bring in the latest contributions from the scientific community on the benefits of green spaces to health, such as ISGlobal's [landmark city ranking](#) on air quality, green space and mortality data.

Draft speaker line-up:

Representative from Milan: Chiara Vona (Cooperativa Sociale Eliante Onlus) and Israa Mahmoud (Politecnico di Milano - Department of Architecture and Urban Studies), authors of the study "[Citizen engagement for urban biodiversity through NBS: the CLEVER Cities experience](#)". (CLEVER Cities project)

ISGlobal representative: either [Mark](#)

Nieuwenhuijsen or Evelise Barboza, authors of the study "[Green space and mortality in European cities: a health impact assessment study](#)" / [The Lancet Planetary Health](#). (ISGlobal)

Representative from the City of Lahti ([GoGreenRoutes](#) project)

Possibly other project representatives from H2020 cluster SC5-14-2019 - Visionary and integrated solutions to improve well-being and health in cities

Type of session: Presentation

Intended outputs: Recording, recap news item published on ICLEI's website and project websites

Duration:
2 hours

References:

Barboza, E; Cirach, M. Khomenko, S; lungman, T.; Mueller, N.; Barrera-Gómez, J.; Rojas-Rueda, D.; Kondo, M; Mierwenhuijsen, M. (2021): "Green space and mortality in European cities: a health impact assessment study". *Lancet Planet Health*; 5: e718–30

Dallimer, Martin; Irvine, Katherine N.; Skinner, Andrew M. J.; Davies, Zoe G.; Rouquette, James R.; Maltby, Lorraine L.; Warren, Philip H.; Armsworth, Paul R. and Gaston, Kevin J. (2012): "Biodiversity and the Feel-Good Factor: Understanding Associations between Self-Reported Human Well-Being and Species Richness". *BioScience*, 62(1), pp. 47-55.

Fuller, R. A.; Irvine, K. N.; Devine-Wright, P.; Warren, P. H.; and Gaston, K. J. (2007): "Psychological benefits of greenspace increase with biodiversity". *Biology letters*, 3(4), pp. 390–394.

Nigg, C., Petersen, E. and MacIntyre, T. (2021): "Natural Environments, Psychosocial Health, and Health Behaviors during COVID-19 – A Scoping Review". *PsyArXiv preprint*. Available online at: <https://psyarxiv.com/a9unf>.