



Connective Cities series of virtual events on Covid-19 response

Virtual event (6): The role of innovation in curbing the impacts of the pandemic

Date: 14th October 2020

Time: 13:00-14:50 CEST

Language: English and Arabic

Platform: BigBlueButton

Thematic focus of the virtual event

The crisis inflicted by the Covid-19 pandemic has triggered many initiatives around the world to employ innovative solutions that aim at impeding the spread of the virus and curbing its disastrous impacts. Examples of these impactful innovations include shift labs, remote screening and monitoring of patients, DIY face shields, low-cost ventilators, and the mobilisation of 3-D printing and robotics to manufacture vital medical devices or test kits. Overall, the registered progress at this front has highlighted the underlying and more critical long-term need to better resource and institutionalize strategic innovation in rebuilding local capacities of the health and economic sectors. Some expert opinions advocate for greater investments in developing platforms for diagnostics, vaccines, and therapeutics as a means to overcome the huge economic toll of this pandemic. Similarly, supporting and funding highly innovative start-ups, scale-ups and SMEs is crucial to the economy's fast recovery.

Given the urgency for innovative solutions to the pandemic, sharing existing and emerging breakthrough achievements is of utter importance. Sharing and disseminating such knowledge can potentially facilitate the creation of partnerships which in turn are pivotal to initiating strategic and operational response to the short-term challenges resulting from COVID-19, as well as to the long-term planning for recovery.

To this end, this virtual knowledge-exchange event showcases ongoing grassroots initiatives developed collaboratively by local and national entities, research institutions and the private sector. In particular, FIGHTCORONA.AC initiative¹ from Aachen (Germany), COV-Fight project² from Biskra (Algeria), as well as the good practice of using 3D-printing technology for the production of medical supplies³ in Batnah (Algeria) will be presented.

Objectives of the virtual event

This virtual event is organized as part of Connective Cities series of virtual events focusing on the topic of response to the Covid-19 pandemic.⁴ The virtual event aims at facilitating sharing of experiences of interventions undertaken from a production, innovation, and scientific point of view to mitigate the

¹ <https://hci.rwth-aachen.de/fightcorona>

² https://youtu.be/RyI_PORWj8E

³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H0xamQgGzZ0>

⁴ Further information on the series is accessible [here](#).

impacts of COVID-19 on cities in MENA and Germany. The presentation of concrete good practice examples enables intensive professional exchange and collegial consultation among experts. Moreover, the virtual event aims at showcasing locally-implemented **good practice examples** and disseminating **pragmatic solutions that can be applied or adapted to the different contexts**. There is also the possibility of developing individually tailored solutions in the future, which can be concretized and planned for implementation in the context of further cooperation. **Project ideas for concrete implementation measures can be further supported by Connective Cities through follow-up exchanges with relevant experts.**

The Agenda

| Time (CEST) | Agenda | Details |
|-------------|---|---|
| 12:50-13:00 | Signing in | Virtual Tea and Coffee |
| 13:00-13:05 | Technical check-in | Connective Cities- Tech Host |
| 13:05-13:15 | Welcome remarks & introduction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words of welcome • Introduction to workshop agenda • Introduction of participants | Dr. Muna Shalan Connective Cities network coordinator for the MENA region |
| 13:15-13:45 | Presentations from Aachen followed by a Q & A session | Prof. Jan Borchers RWTH Aachen University, Germany |
| 13:45-14:30 | Presentations from Biskra and Batnah followed by a Q & A session | Mr. Imad Eddine Tibermacine Biskra, Algeria Mr. Belcasem Islam Batnah, Algeria |
| 14:30-14:40 | Expert insights | tbc |
| 14:40-14:50 | Way forward and support by Connective Cities Closing remarks | Ms. Ricarda Meissner Project Manager of Connective Cities Dr. Muna Shalan |

Connective Cities at a glance

Connective Cities is a cooperation project between the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), the German Association of Cities and Engagement Global with its Service Agency Communities in One World (SKEW).⁵ The project promotes international knowledge-exchange among urban practitioners from city administrations, civil society, academia and the private sector since 2013. Connective Cities activities enables joint learning, peer-to-peer advisory and the development of joint projects on topics of sustainable urban development.⁶

⁵ Connective Cities is supported by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

⁶ Since its launch in 2013, Connective Cities has already held over 30 workshops attended by more than 2000 participants from over 200 cities in 65 countries worldwide. Connective Cities organised a dialogue event on the topic of *public health protection in biological emergencies at the local level* in Frankfurt in November 2015.