

Third Arab Land Conference
Troisième Conférence Arabe sur le Foncier
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Co-Producing Green Public Spaces in Arab Cities: Land Management and Participatory Greening

[LAND FOR FOOD SECURITY AND CLIMATE ACTION]

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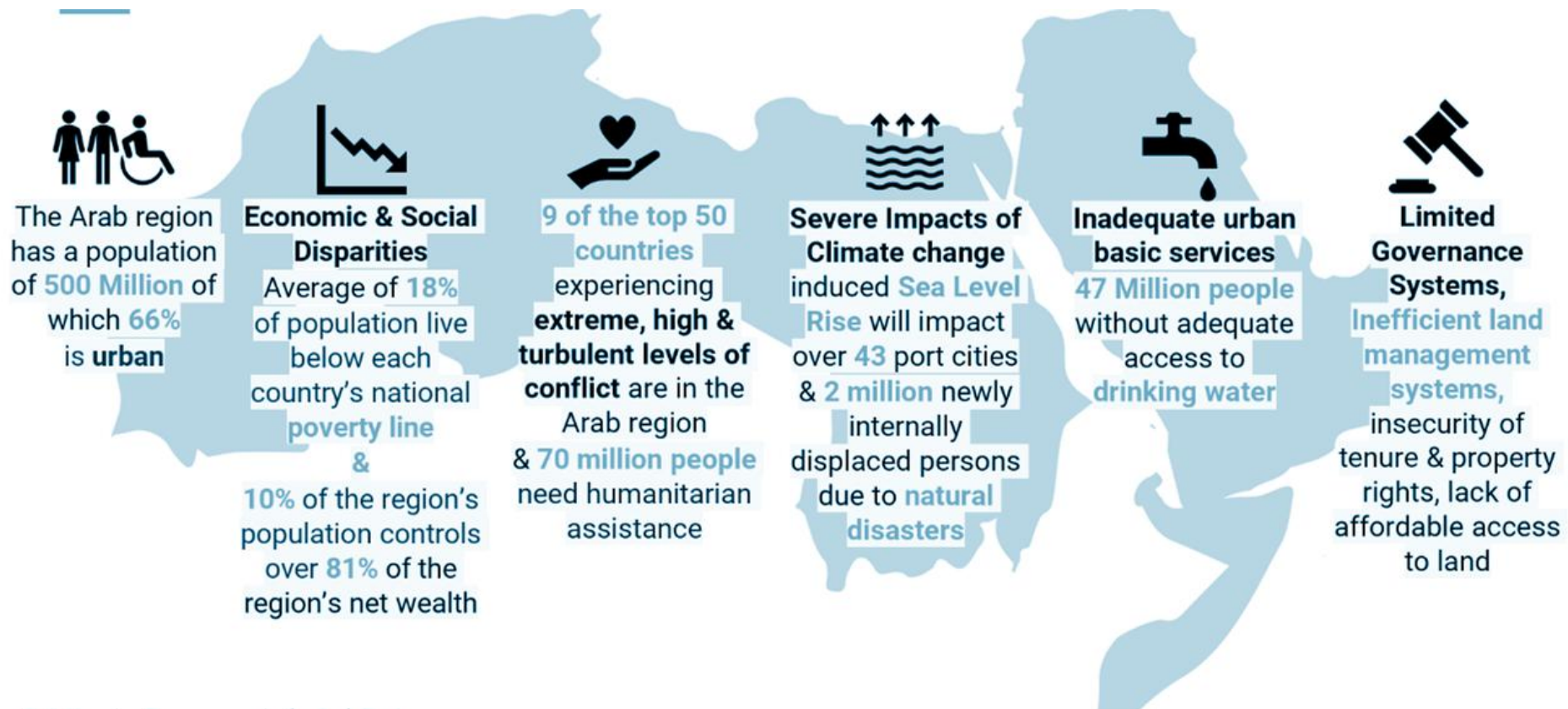
الاراضي العربية
Arab Land Initiative



Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst
German Academic Exchange Service

Introduction & Context

Key Urban Challenges in the Arab Region



Rationale

THE NEED FOR URBAN GREENING IN ARAB CITIES

In Arab cities, particularly, there is a need for participatory greening initiatives at the neighborhood level.

The Arab region is experiencing **HARSHER SUMMERS**, which is affecting the **QUALITY** of life of people in the **CITIES**. Greening efforts are needed to combat the **EFFECTS** of **CLIMATE CHANGE** in Arab cities

**HARSH
CLIMATE**

**COSTLY
INVESTMENT**

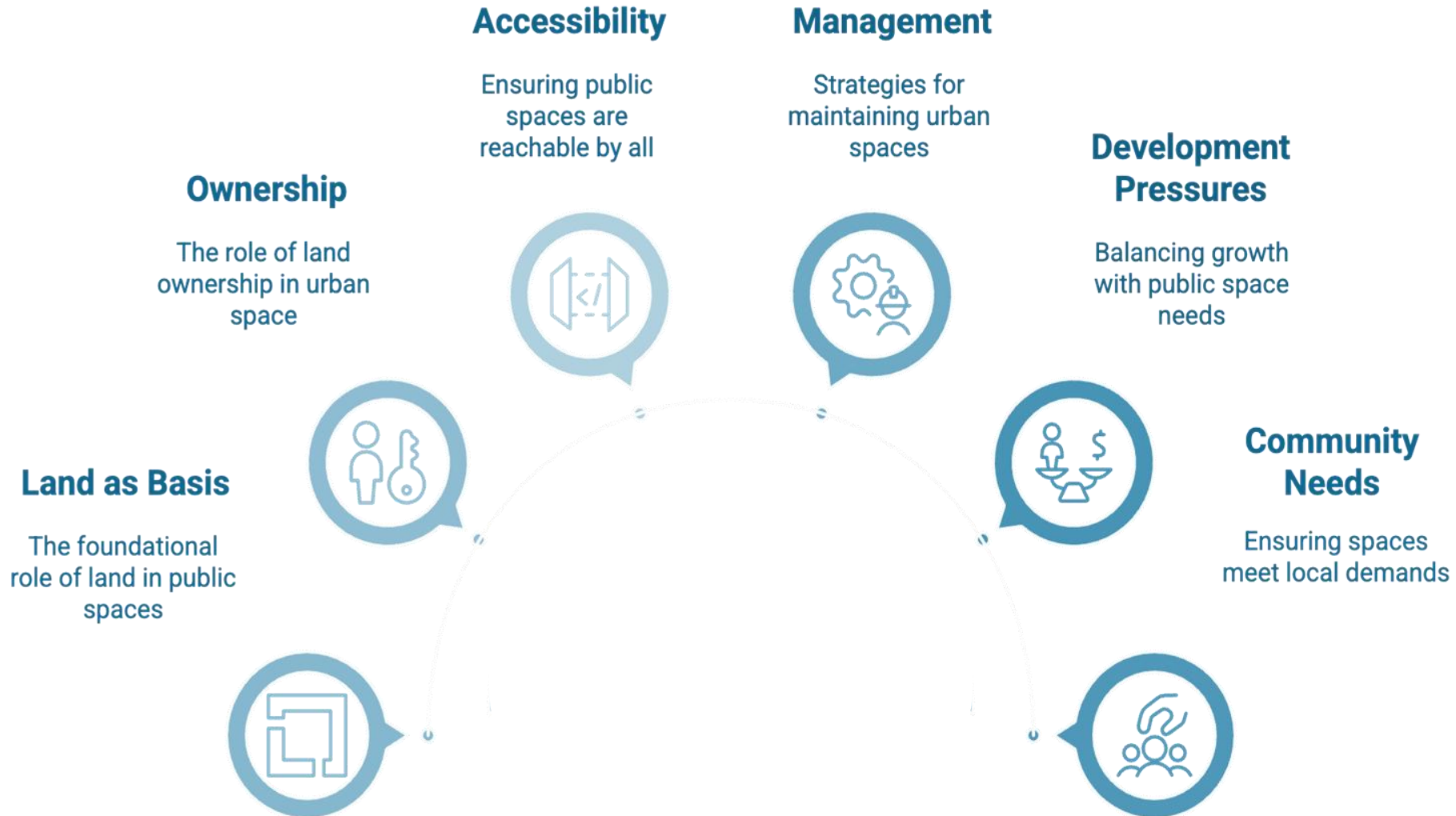
Greening projects are often **COSTLY** and are largely **PRIORITIZED** when their benefits are **HIGHLY VISIBLE** and **MARKETABLE**. Small scale local initiatives often do not provide the same visibility.

**NEIGHBOUR
HOODS NOT
PRIORITIZED**

Most greening projects are in the form of **LARGE** central **PARKS**, or green **CANOPIES** along **BOULEVARDS**, with little impact on **NEIGHBOURHOODS** and the **SCALE** at which most **PEOPLE EXPERIENCE** the city.

Introduction & Context

Land as a foundation for public space



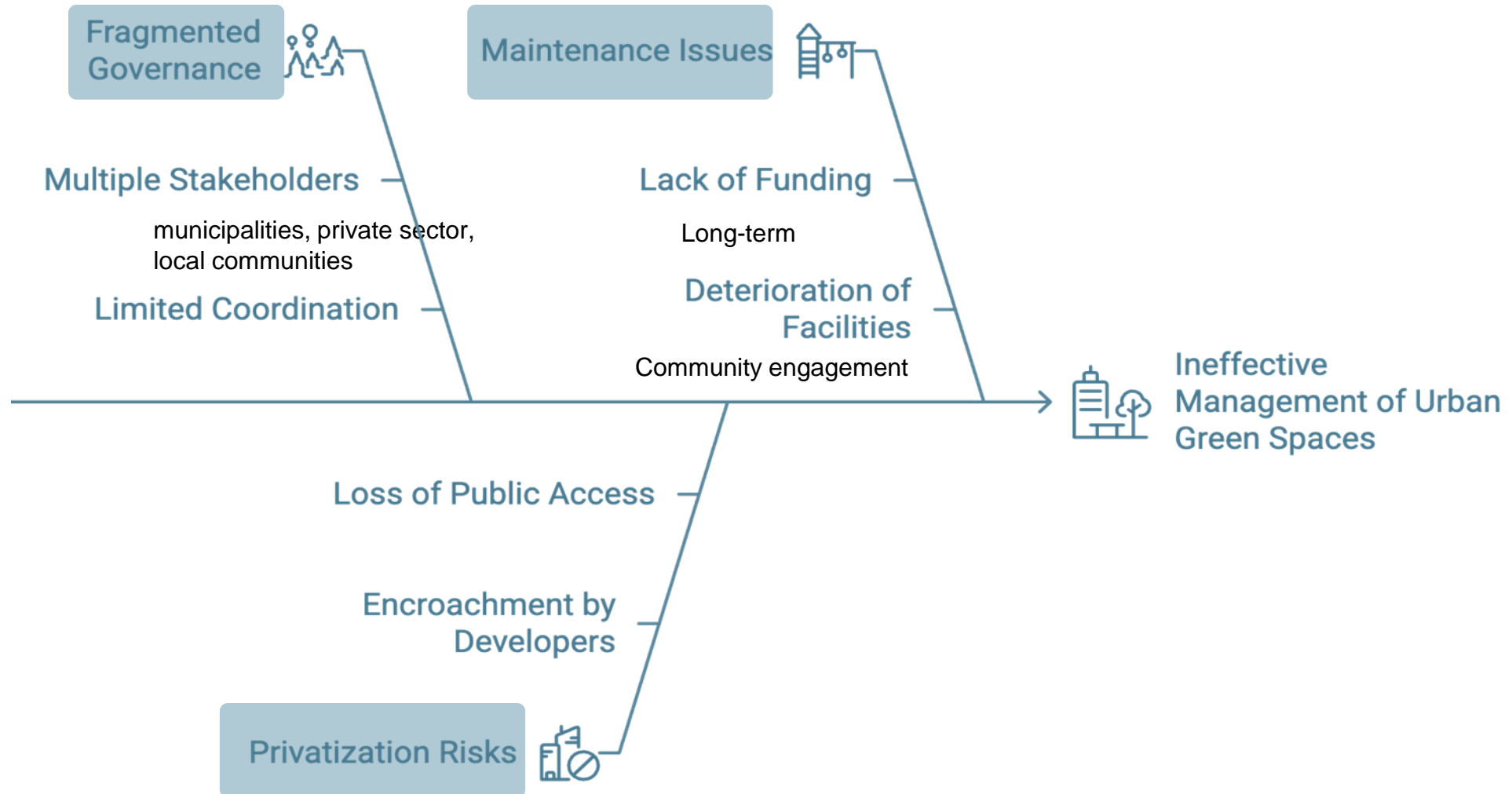
Land Management & Green Public Space

How could **land** (i.e., PUBLIC SPACE) contribute to **food security** issues, **climate change**, & **resilience** in the Arab region?



- Public spaces in the Arab region can enhance **food security** through **urban farming** and boost **climate resilience** by integrating **green infrastructure**.
- making cities greener, cooler, and more self-sufficient.
- Strategic land management ensures **sustainable cities** that are livable, food secure, and climate-adaptive.

Land Management Challenges for green Spaces



Establishing Green Public Space

Public Land for Food Security

Transforming Public space for Food Production



Community Gardens

Initiatives for growing food in urban areas.



Sustainable Practices

Methods for conserving water in agriculture.



Policy Support

Regulations and programs aiding food production.

Establishing Green Public Space

Public Land for Climate Resilience

Cooling Cities & Reducing Heat



Urban Greenery

More urban forests, shaded streets, and green roofs enhance city cooling.



Airflow Improvement

Green corridors improve airflow and reduce city temperature.



Tree Planting

Planting native and climate-adaptive trees helps absorb CO₂.

Public Space & Urban Greening

- Green spaces improve **climate resilience**, reduce **heat islands**, and enhance **air quality**.
- Public spaces promote **social inclusion**, especially for **vulnerable groups** (youth, elderly, low-income populations).
- **Participatory governance is key**; local communities must be involved to ensure sustainability.



Climate
Benefits



Social
Inclusion



Community
Involvement



Beirut Bank gets Lebanon's largest rooftop garden by GreenStudios. Source: <https://www.greenprophet.com/2014/11/beirut-bank-gets-lebanons-largest-rooftop-garden-by-greenstudios/>



Inside one of Cairo's poorest neighborhoods, informal unplanned settlements - Ashwaeyat "random." Source: edition.cnn.com/2012



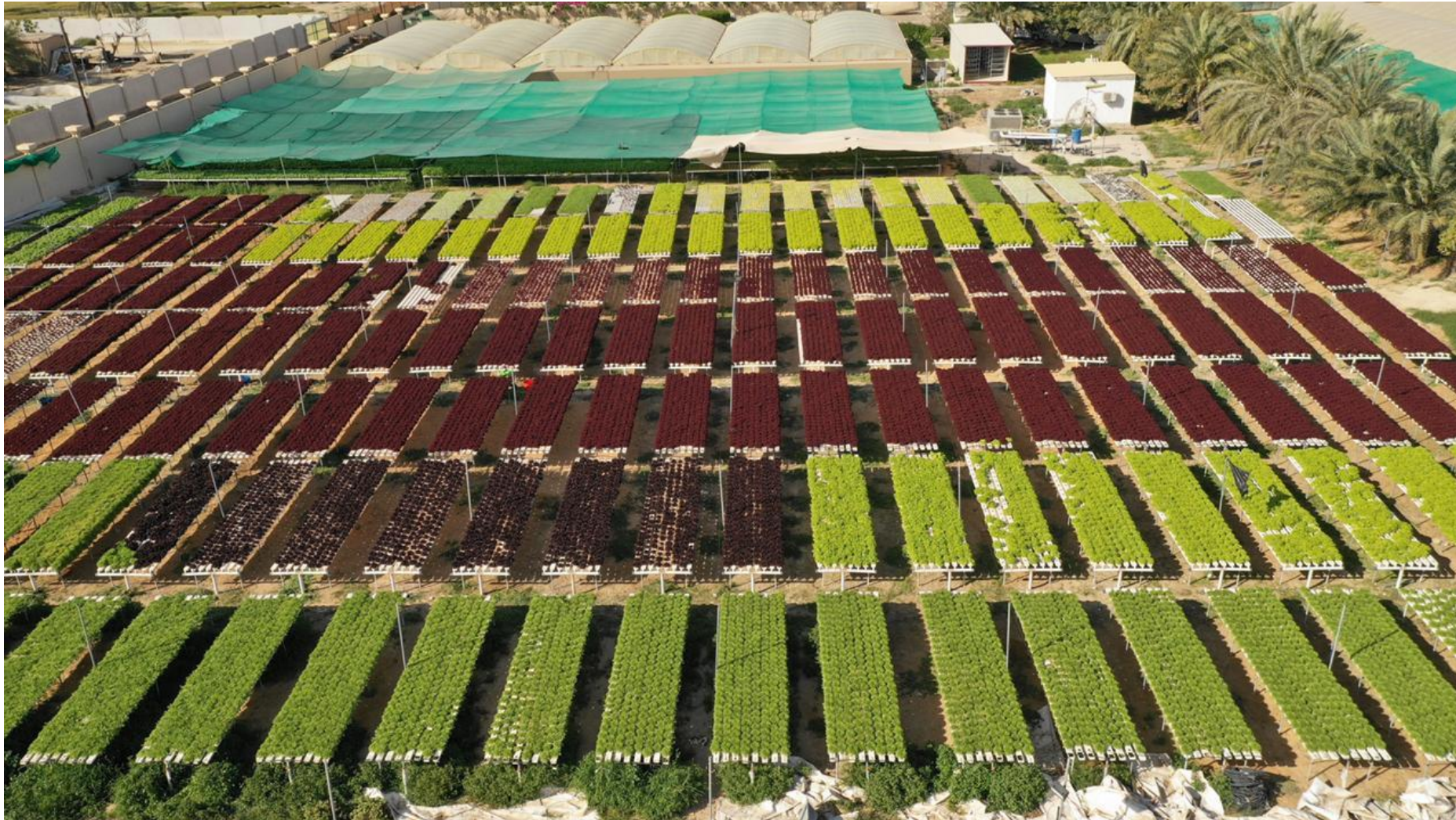
Green Cover of Riyadh, as part of Saudi Green Initiative

Source: <https://arab.news/yzp5b>



Sharjah Sustainable City, designed to reduce the carbon footprint, fully powered by renewable energy produced by solar panels while recycling water and waste.

Source: <https://www.sharjahsustainablecity.ae/news/sharjah-sustainable-city-builds-on-green-conce>



in Dubai, Controlled environment urban agriculture

Source: <https://igrownews.com/indoor-farming-in-the-uae-a-breakdown-in-2025/>

Greening in Arab Cities

City Level

GREEN RIYADH PROJECT



Source: <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/gulf/2021/07/09/Saudi-Arabia-s-Green-Riyadh-project>



Al-Azhar Park, Cairo, Egypt, as a green öung for the city

Source: <https://simerphotos.com/2023>

Greening in Arab Cities

City Level

AL DAAYEN PARK, DOHA



Source: <https://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/04/11/2021/main-works-of-al-daayen-park-project-completed>

Greening in Arab Cities

Neighborhood Level

AL MAAMOURA PARK, DOHA



Source: https://www.doha.directory/al-mamoura-family-park/i/1497#google_vignette

Greening in Arab Cities

Neighborhood Level

HOUSING BANK GARDEN, AMMAN



Source: <https://www.7iber.com/2015/05/parks-in-amman/>

Introduction & Context

What is Participatory Neighborhood Greening?

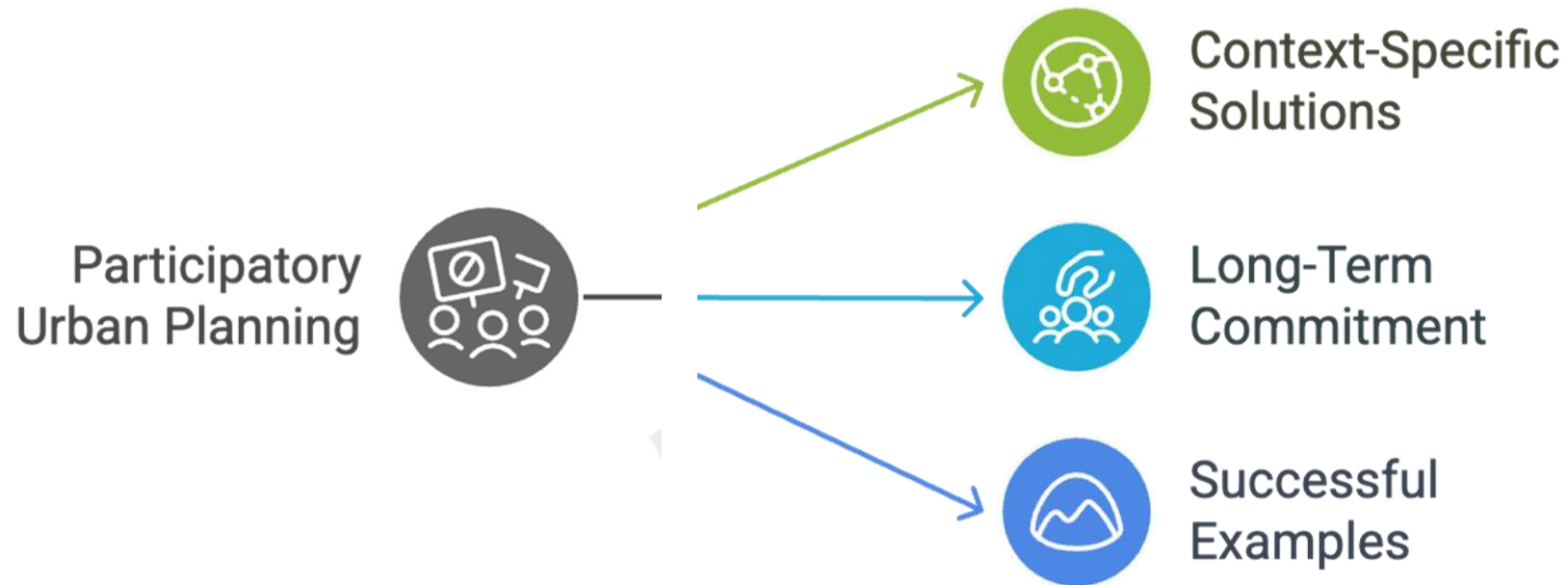
Participatory Neighborhood Greening: Components and Relationships



Introduction & Context

Why Participatory Approach?

Unpacking Participatory Urban Greenig Benefits



Public Green Disappearing Public Space: Urban Greenery vs. Control in Arab Cities

1. Decline of Public Open Spaces

- Parks and open spaces in Arab cities are shrinking due to **private development** and **political control**.
- Open space comprises only **2% of urban areas in the Middle East** (UN Habitat).

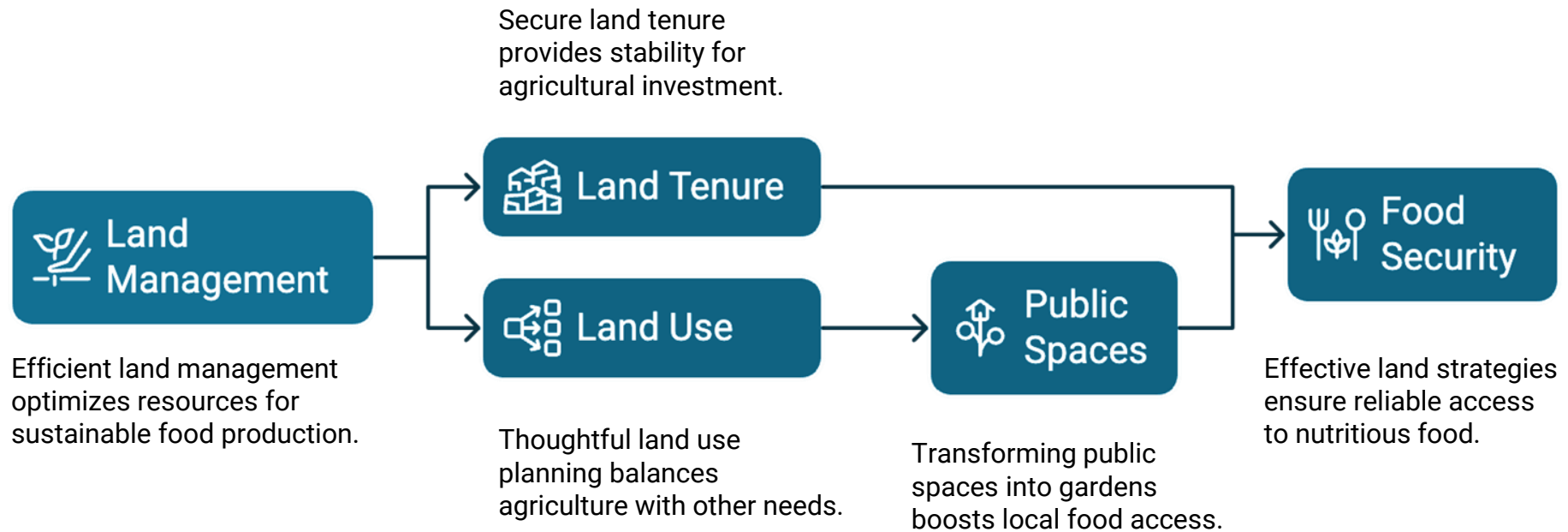
2. Urban Transformation & Security Measures

- Historically, Arab cities incorporated **gardens and large open spaces**, but this is changing.
- After the **2011 Arab Spring**, many public spaces were **restricted or removed** to prevent protests.

Establishing Green Public Space

Land Management & Food Security

INTERCONNECTIONS

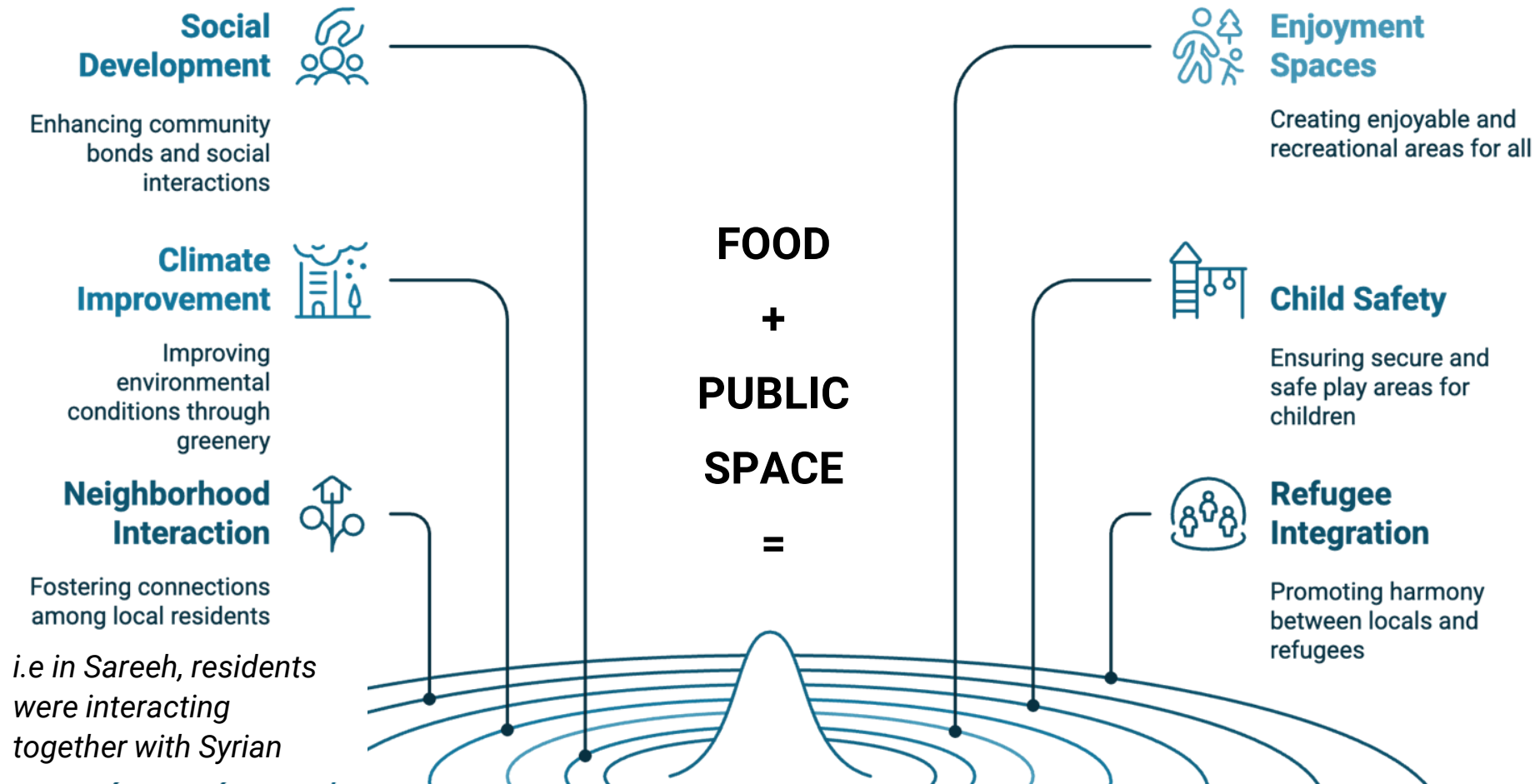


Establishing Green Public Space

Collaboration & teamwork

among students, professors, residents, & the municipality

→ enhancing QUALITY OF LIFE



Establishing Green Public Space

Land Management Material for integration

What is the **governance** model to make establishing public space easier?

What **governance** model is to be adopted for public space management?

- Partnership between municipality and management team
- It could be CONTRACTED or upon AGREEMENT, not importantly rental

+ *Contractual obligations*
+ financial liabilities
(i.e. water, electricity)





Insights from Small-Scale Interventions

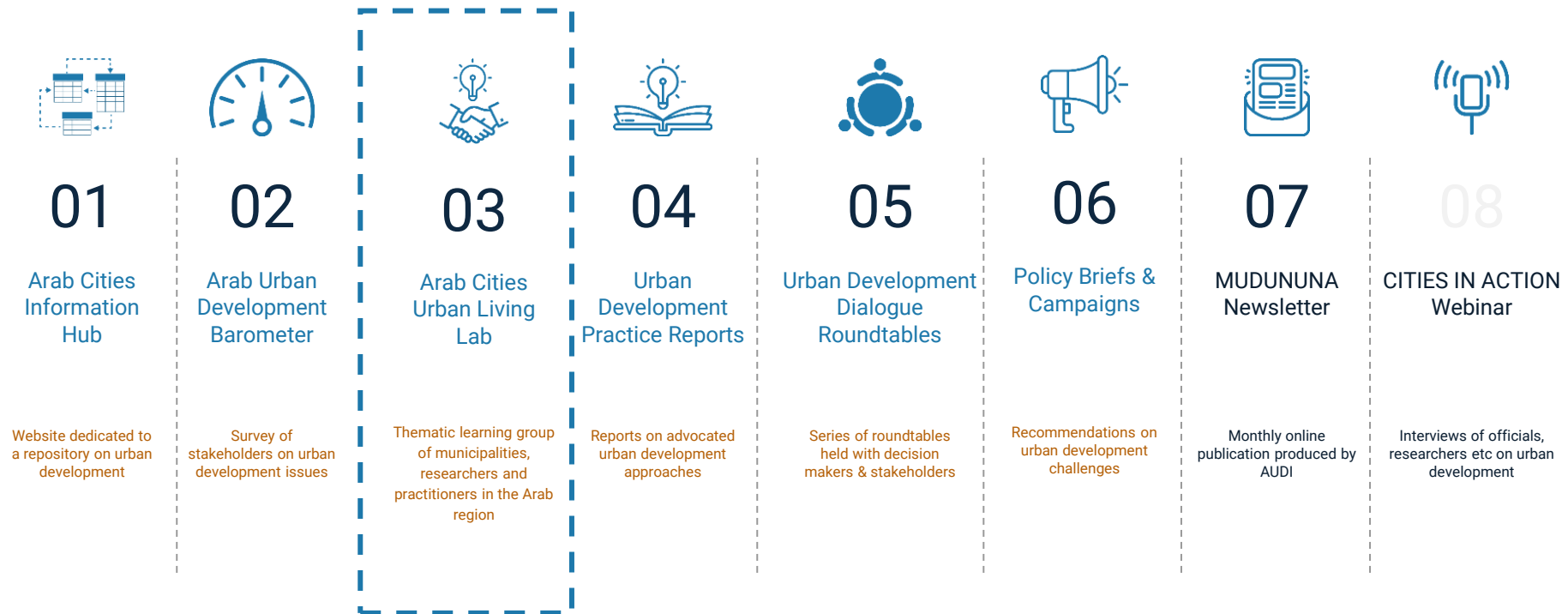
in Tunisia & Jordan

Small interventions demonstrate how **land management strategies** can reclaim and enhance **public space**, ensuring accessibility and sustainability.

- **Repurposing underutilized land** into **community parks** and **green pockets**.
- Testing **tactical greening approaches**: street greening, micro-parks, and facade gardens.
- Addressing **land tenure complexities** and engaging local authorities for sustainability.

Arab Urban Development Institute Urban Policy Research Program

The program aims to build and share knowledge about urban development practices in Arab cities and ways to improve them



Thematic learning group of municipalities,
researchers and practitioners in the Arab region



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Greening in Arab Cities

There are 2 **DOMINANT SCALES** manifesting greening interventions in urban areas today

City Level

Usually carried out at the **STRATEGIC** level, city-level greening **INTERVENTIONS** include large **PARKS**, contiguous **CANOPIES** along high-speed **BOULEVARDS**, & green **CORRIDORS** along mobility **INFRASTRUCTURE** in the city

Neighborhood Level

Although not at the forefront of greening regional projects, these exist in the form of **POCKET PARKS**, neighborhood **PLAYGROUNDS**, & **TREE-LINED STREETS** in residential areas

Greening in Arab Cities

01 The Gap Neighborhoods remain devoid of greenery

LARGE GREENING INTERVENTIONS HAVE **LIMITED RELATION** TO MOST OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD ENVIRONMENT

Even **IN NEIGHBOURHOODS THAT DO HAVE PARKS**, the general residential streets are **NOT WALKABLE**, which affects the **QUALITY** of **LIFE** in the neighborhoods.



Greening in Arab Cities

02 The Gap

Due to **LIMITED PARTICIPATION** in the **DESIGN PROCESS** of parks, and thereby the **NEEDS** of the **POPULATION** are not **SUFFICIENTLY** taken into consideration.

There are limited **OPPORTUNITIES** for people to contribute to **GREENING INITIATIVES** in their neighborhoods
LIMITED OWNERSHIP BY PEOPLE



Cairo, Egypt



Over-Population



Districts & Social Classes



Informal Settlements



Mass Housing Production Projects

Greening in Arab Cities

The Solution

Land for green in Neighborhoods

01

Interventions at the
LEVEL of
NEIGHBOURHOOD
streets benefitting from
RESIDUAL SPACES



02

INVOLVEMENT of
PEOPLE in the **PROCESS**
of design, maintenance,
and animation of green
public spaces

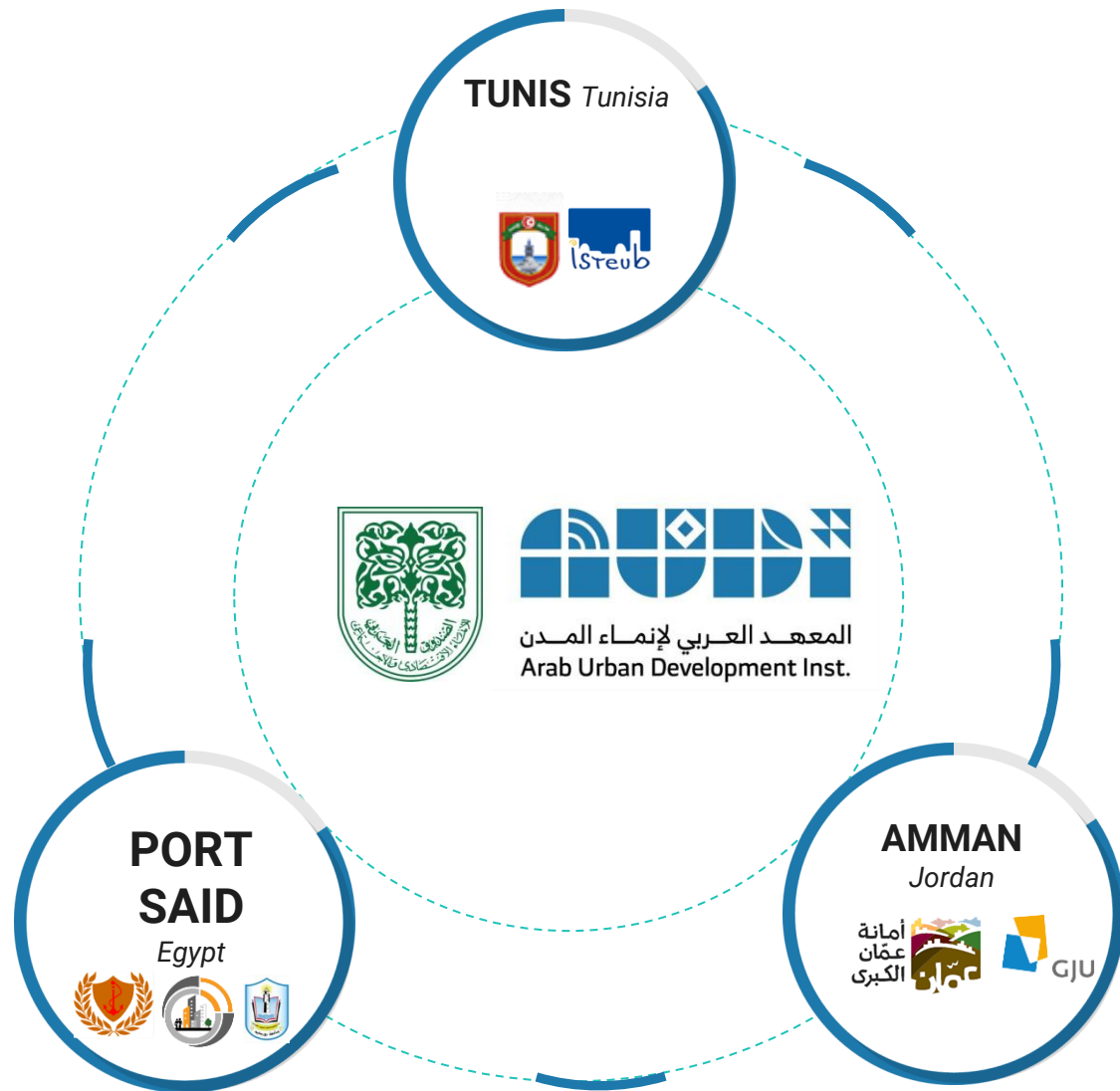


03

TECHNICALLY able
MUNICIPALITIES to
DEVELOP and **IMPLEMENT**
participatory **GREENING**
projects in neighbourhoods



Participatory Greening of Neighborhoods in Arab Cities



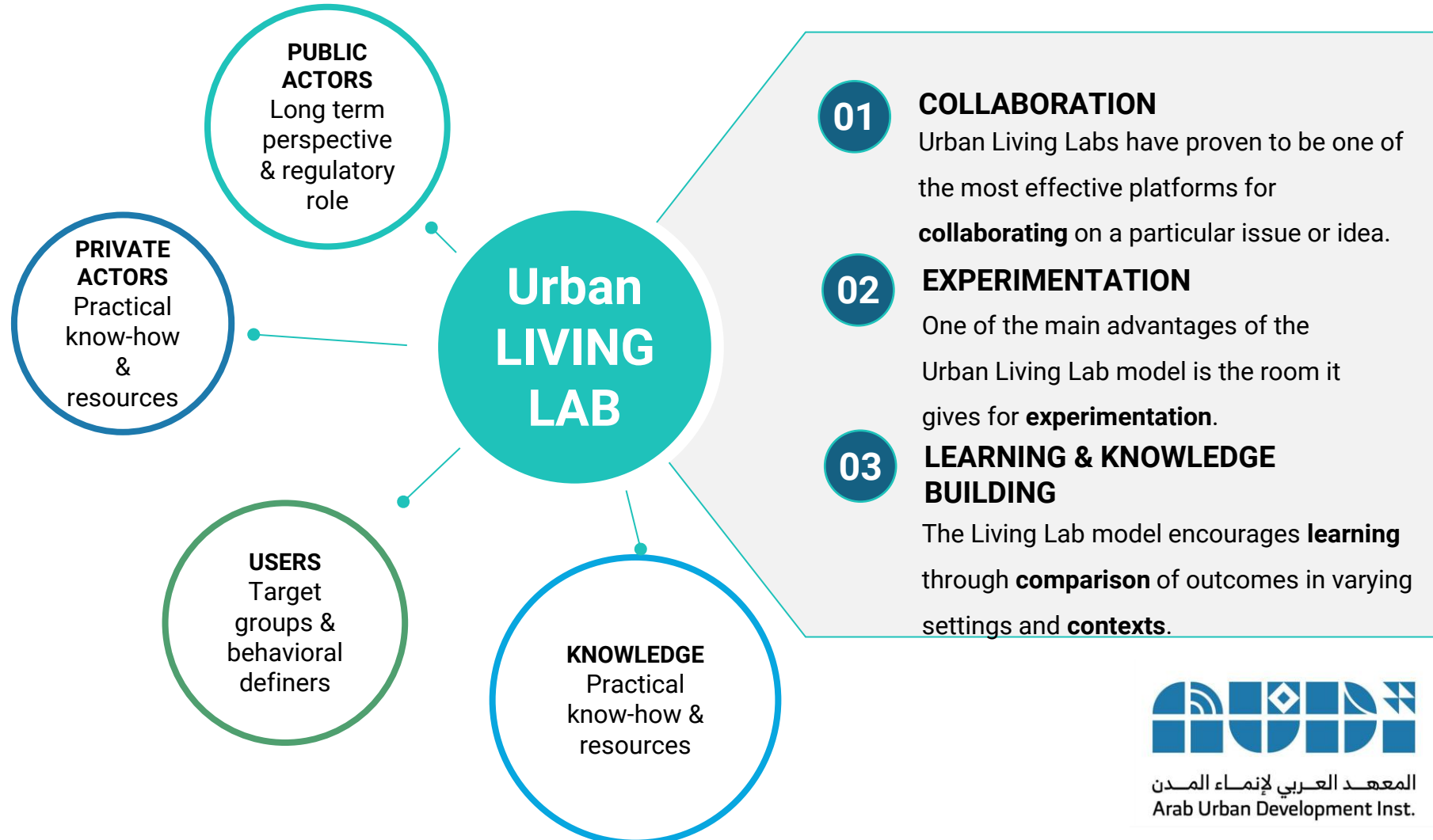
4
Years

3
Cities

The project is working with **ARAB CITIES**, using multiple **STRATEGIC** and **TACTICAL** approaches, to **MAXIMISE GREENING** and bring it to the level of the **NEIGHBOURHOODS**

Participatory Greening of Neighborhoods in Arab Cities

The project is to be implemented through an **URBAN LIVING LAB** model



Criteria for selecting cities, partners & neighborhoods



Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development



The Arab Urban Development Institute



Experts & Service Providers



Municipalities



Universities

20 Arab cities were checked, Gulf countries were excluded, and six cities administrations that fit the selection criteria were contacted, and three were selected.



1. The cities' need to green their neighborhoods
2. The weakness of the financial resources of these cities
3. The ability of the partners, headed by the relevant local administration (municipality, secretariat, governorate, etc.), to deal with the project from another side.

Participatory Greening of Neighborhoods in Arab Cities

Project Partners

The attribute

Regional Organization

Local Administration

Public University

**National institution affiliated
with the Prime Minister**

Project Partners

Arab Fund for Economic & Social Development, Kuwait
The Arab Urban Development institute, Saudi Arabia

Municipality of Tunis, Tunisia
Port Said Governorate, Egypt
Greater Amman Municipality, Jordan

University of Carthage, Tunisia
Port Said University, Egypt
German Jordanian University, Jordan

Urban Development Fund, Egypt

Participatory Greening of Neighborhoods in Arab Cities

Project Packages

WORK PACKAGE 01

SITE SPECIFIC INTEGRATED “GREEN LUNG” INTERVENTION

- Selected public space
- Selected neighbouring roofs and facades

WORK PACKAGE 02

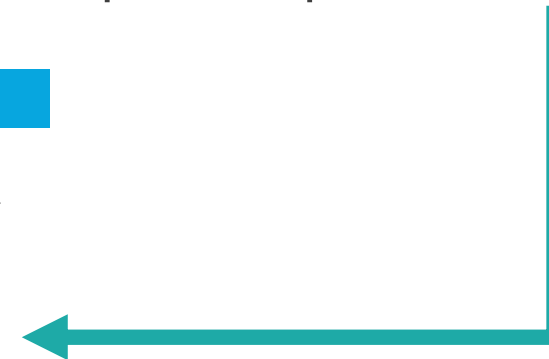
MULTI-SITE TACTICAL GREENING

Multiple residual sites-
interface of public and
private spaces

WORK PACKAGE 03

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

Publications produced
and disseminated
throughout the project
cycle



Participatory Greening of Neighborhoods in Arab Cities

WORK PACKAGE 01

Neighborhood Green Lung

Site Specific Integrated Greening



Outputs | Types of Actions

Definition

Select
Neighborhood
Location



Transform
into Green
Lung

Goals

Improve
Quality of
Life

Mitigate
Climate
Change

Enhance
Social
Cohesion

03

Pilots in 3
Neighborhoods



Compost
Production

08

Types of
interventions



Urban
Agriculture



Green
Roofs



Green
Facades



Water
Management



Solar Panel
Installation



Open Space
Conversion

METHODOLOGY

SITE SELECTION &
MOBILISATION

IDEATION IN STUDIO

SELECTION, DEVELOPMENT &
IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECT

EVALUATION

Participatory Greening of Neighborhoods in Arab Cities

WORK PACKAGE 02

Green Multi-Scale Tactical Interventions

Definition

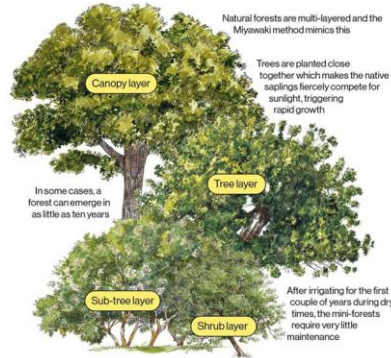
Identify
Neglected
Public
Spaces

Goals

Community
Involvement

Implement
Simple
Interventions

Enhance
Neighborhood
Quality



GREENING DRIVE

Pocket plantation across
selected neighborhoods



Outputs | Types of Actions

03

Neighborhoods

10 to 20

Sites in each
neighbourhood



Intensive
Greening



Miyawaki
Urban Forest

MIYAWAKI URBAN FOREST

Dense urban plantation -Miyawaki
technique -reduced maintenance efforts



METHODOLOGY

NEIGHBOURHOOD IDENTIFICATION

SITE SURVEY & PLANT
IDENTIFICATION

LAUNCH &
ADVERTISE

WORKSHOPS

PLANTATION

EVALUATION

Participatory Greening of Neighborhoods in Arab Cities

WORK PACKAGE 03

Disseminating knowledge & building capacity



Series of publications and trainings on the theme of urban greening to help cities implement projects and initiatives

Outputs | Types of Actions

10 Practice report

02 Policy briefs & campaigns



Training

04 Toolkits

09 Roundtables



Reports & Publications

02 Training course



Support for the AUDI Portal



Policy & Campaign Brief



Guidelines



Round tables

Definition

Training, Learning, and Evaluation



Work Packages 1 and 2



Goals

Knowledge and Tools Development



Participatory Greening Practices



Local Governments and Entities



Participatory Greening of Neighborhoods in Arab Cities

WORK PACKAGE 03

Knowledge Transfer

Series of publications and trainings on the theme of urban greening to help cities implement projects and initiatives

PRACTICE REPORT

MULTIPLE Project Reports in **MULTIPLE CITIES**

Analyzing ARAB **CITIES** SITUATION

Reports on the 3 **NEIGHBORHOODS**

Reports **process** of **PARTICIPATORY GREENING PROJECT**

TRAININGS

MOOC & TRAINING on processes-related to **URBAN GREENING & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

DIALOGUE ROUNDTABLES

3 STAKEHOLDER BASED roundtables in each city

1- with the **PUBLIC SECTOR**

2- with **PRIVATE SECTOR.**

3- with **CIVIL SOCIETY** organizations

POLICY BRIEFS & CAMPAIGNS

Briefs and campaigns on needed **REGULATIONS**, and **INCENTIVIZATION** at both National and the City level

ONLINE CAMPAIGN, small **INFORMATIVE** snippets about the recommendations.

Social media posts.

TOOLKITS

4 kits (based on packages), each focusing on one type of intervention

All sections of the toolkits will refer to case studies from the Urban Living Lab

Participatory Greening of Neighborhoods in Arab Cities

CURRENT STATUS

01

REPORTS & CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT



المعهد العربي لإنماء المدن
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- Launching a global benchmarking report on the production of different typologies of green spaces
- Expanding the Arab Urban Development Portal to reach 60 summary reports of greening projects in Arab cities
- Producing a synthetic comparative report on greening projects in Arab cities
- Developing a MOOC on participatory greening



Participatory Greening of Neighborhoods in Arab Cities



Habitat Unit

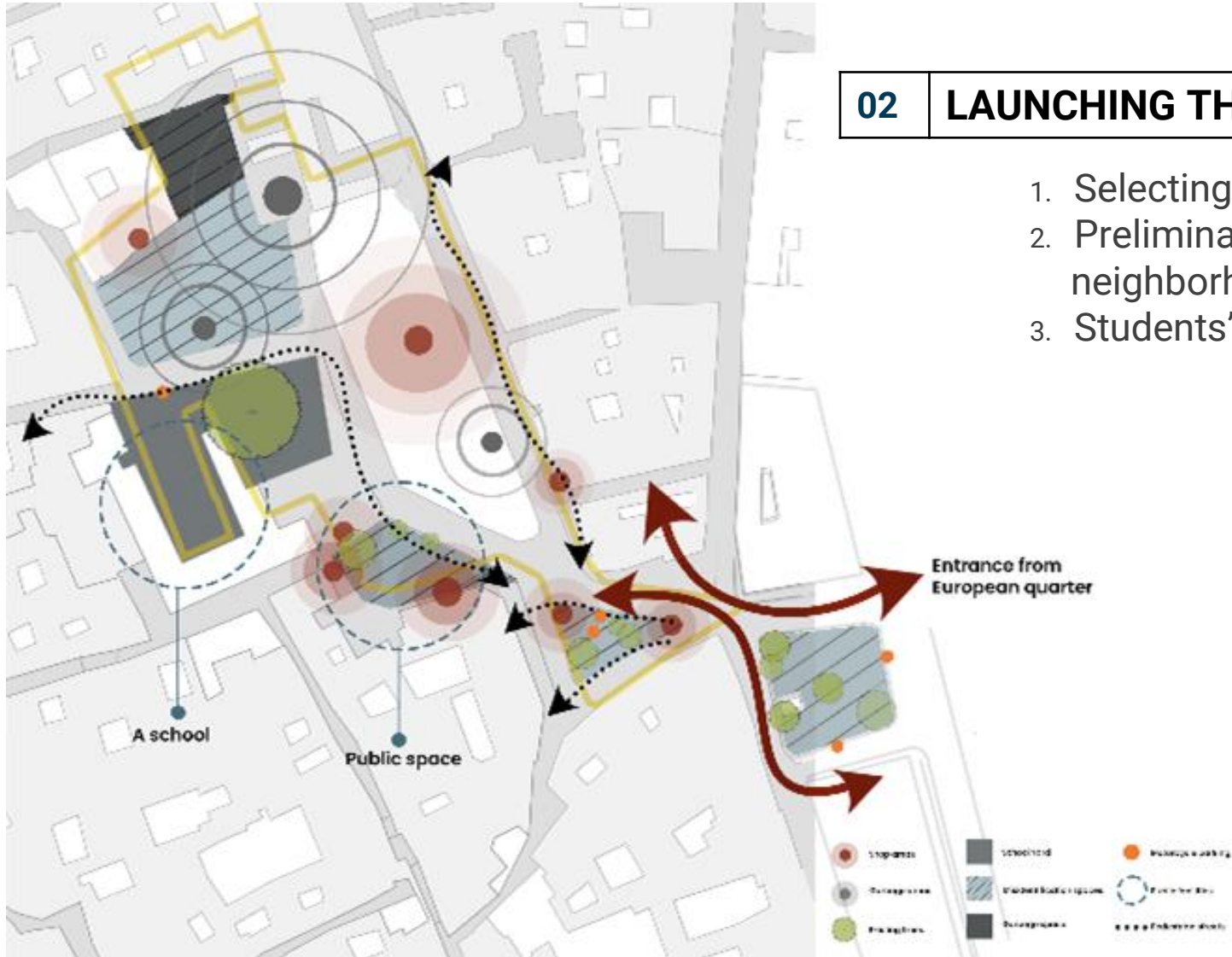


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Arab Urban Development Inst.



Analysis

Surrounding land-use & activities



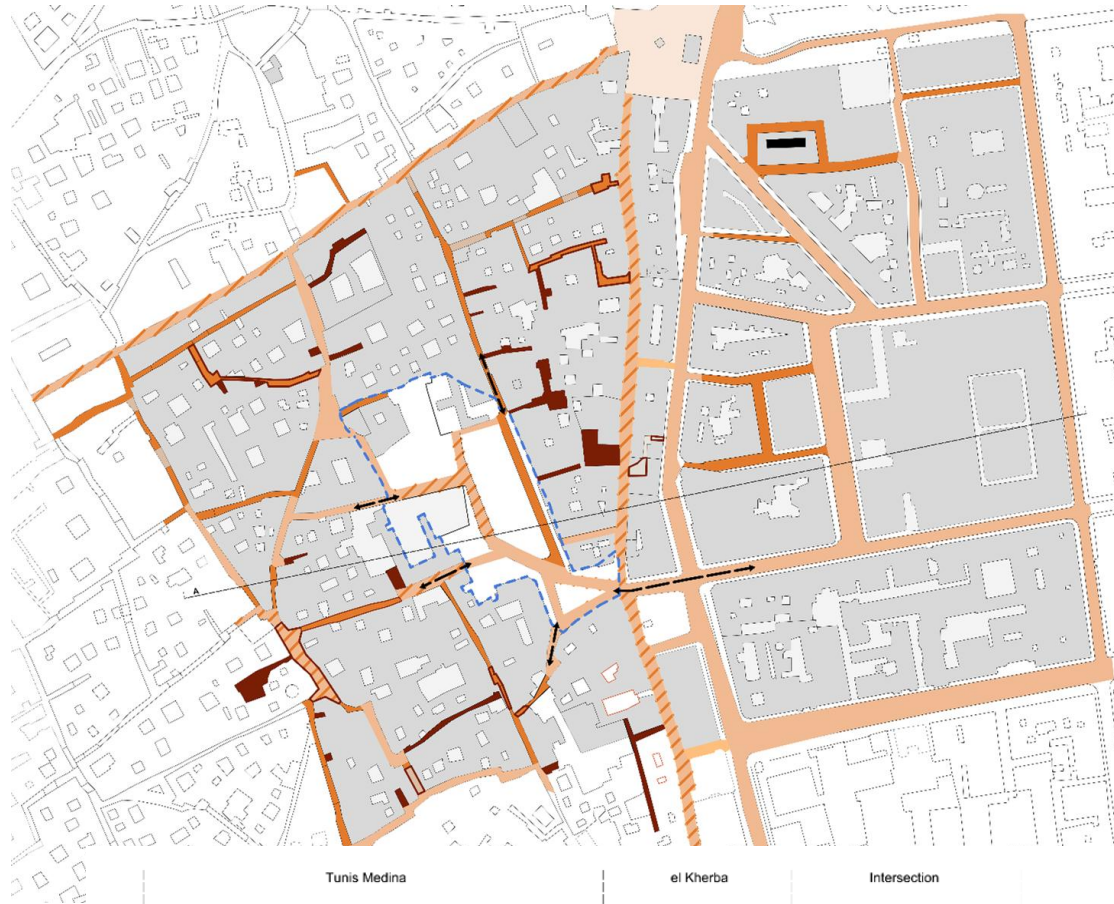
02 LAUNCHING THE PILOT IN TUNIS




1. Selecting the neighborhood
2. Preliminary analysis of the neighborhood
3. Students' workshop

Analysis

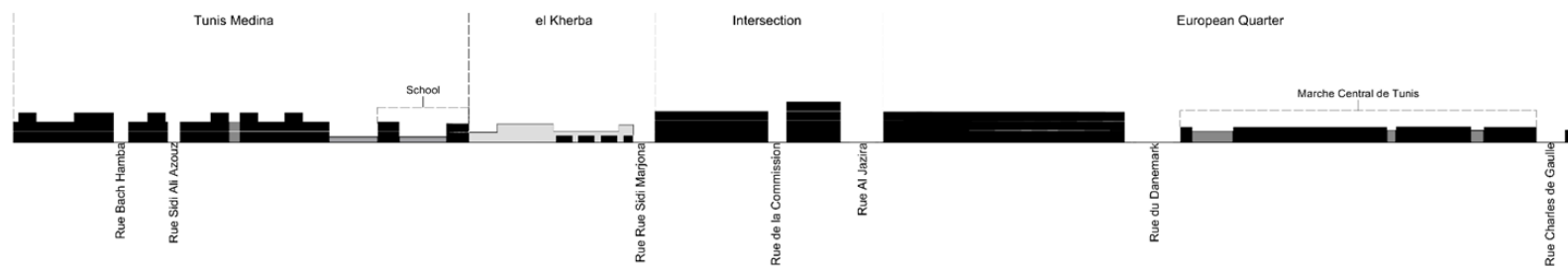
Mobility

Streets' Width and Navigation in the District

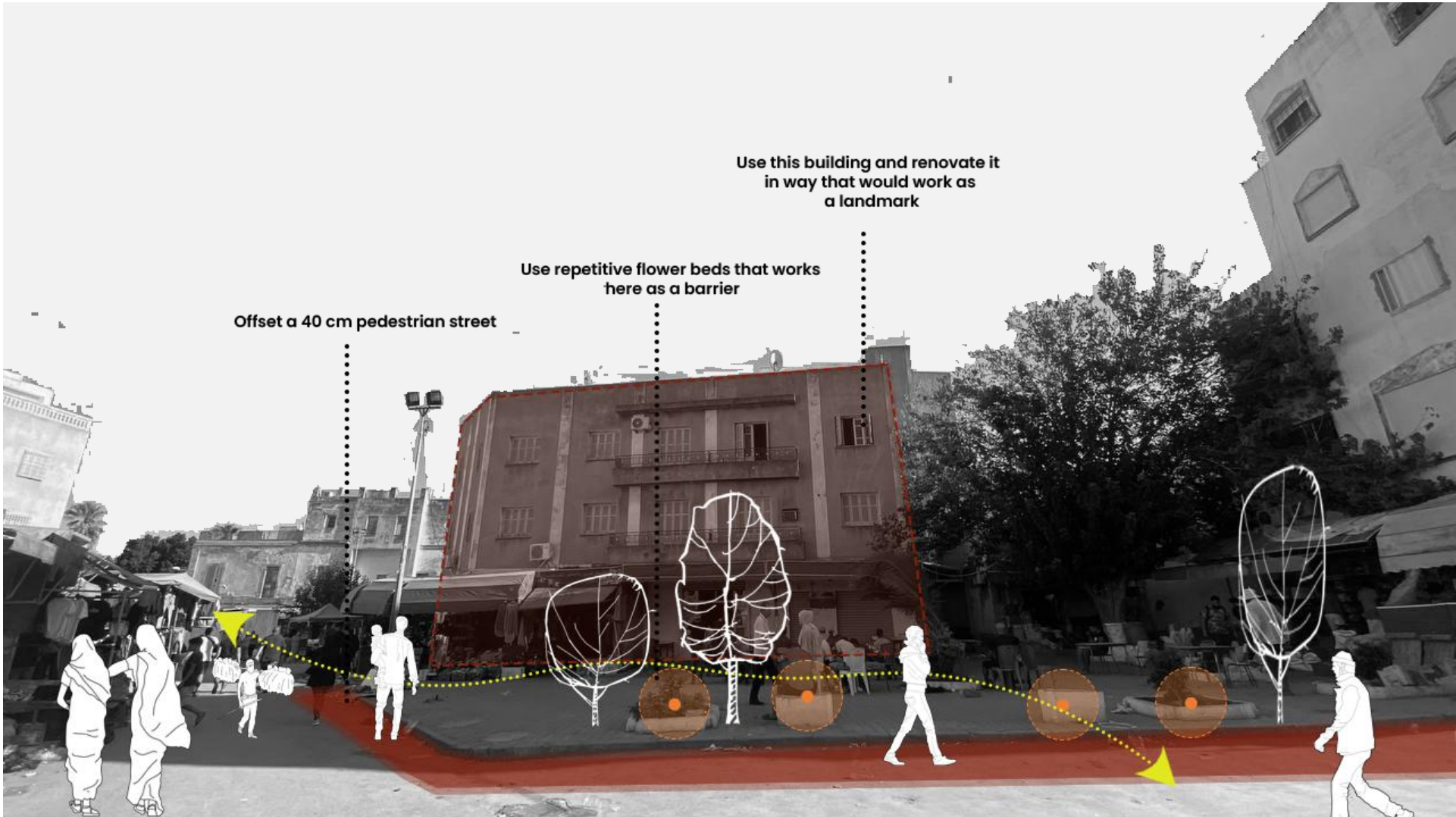


-  focus site
-  narrow/crowded streets*
-  wide/spacious streets*
-  left over spaces*/ dead ends
-  private spaces
-  wide streets with narrow perception*
-  interlocking passages
-  entry points

Site section



Defining, Greening, and Engaging



Public space: In Urban Education

Appropriation during a participatory planning process

Case studies
2021-2025



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German Academic Exchange Service

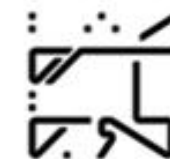


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Arab Urban Development Inst.

Habitat Unit



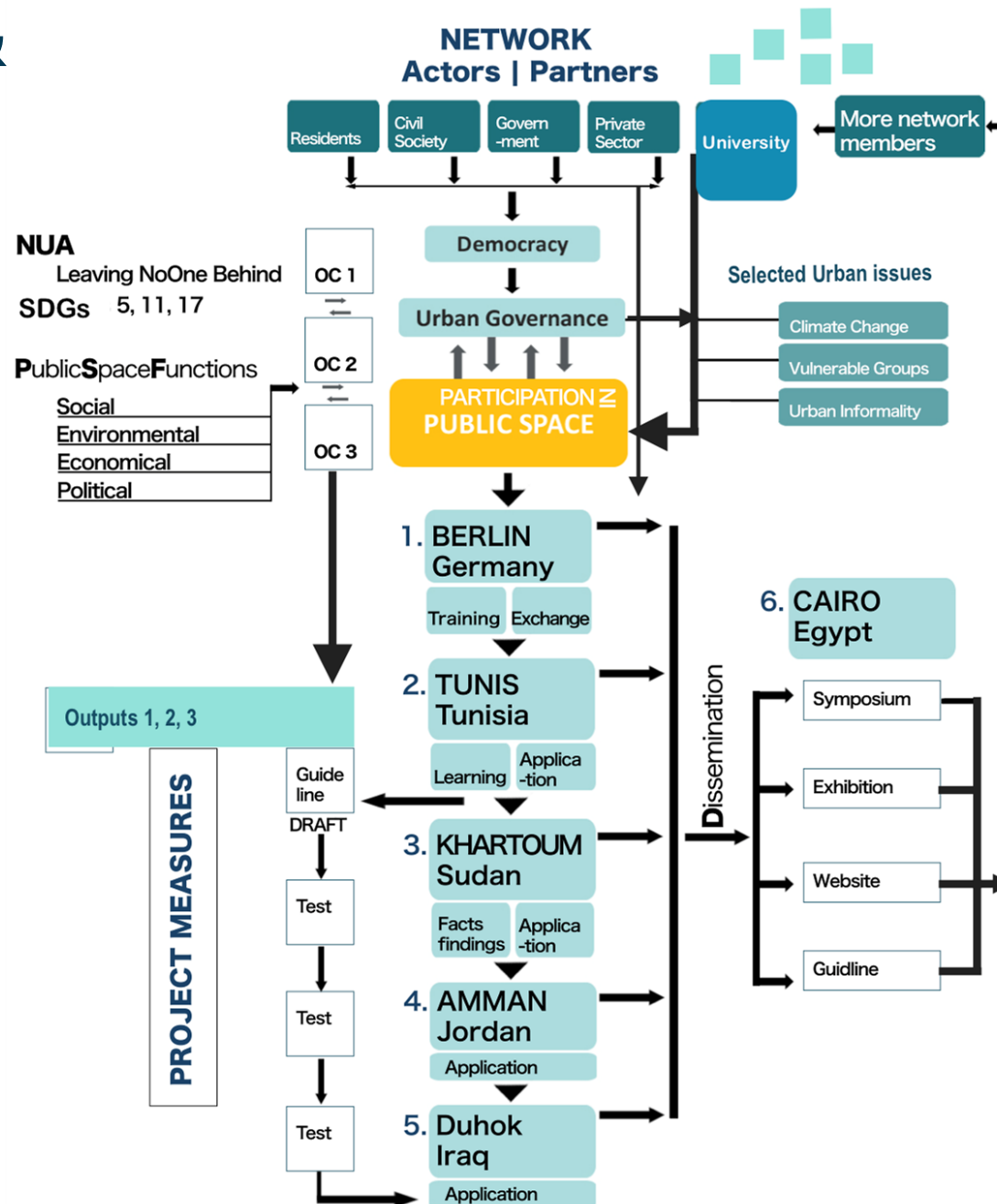
RAUM FÜR BETEILIGUNG



Urban Development Fu

Project concept & Design

PR-GPS: -Power Relations in Urban Governance: Participation in Public Space of the Arab Cities



Public Space In Urban Education

Building Refugees Integration

Through Urban Development & Social work

Work Plan



1

Research
question



2

Methodology



3

Results



4

Discussion



5

Conclusions &
future steps

Research question - Extended

- What are the practices of green public space during a regeneration process?
 - How will these practices evolve?
 - Local governance vs. fast-track implementation (design-build)



Public Space In Urban Education

Building Refugees Integration Through Urban Development and Social Work (BRICK)

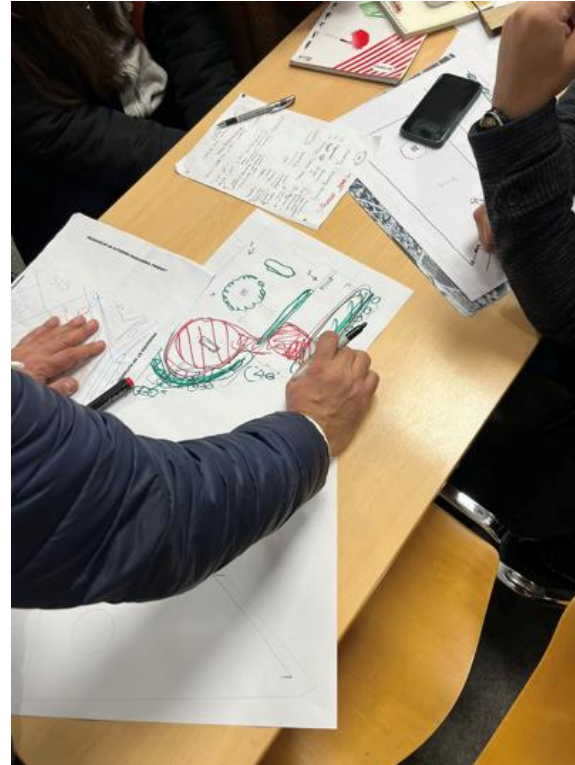
IRBID, 14th -21st November 2021



Public Space In Urban Education

Building Refugees Integration Through Urban Development & Social work

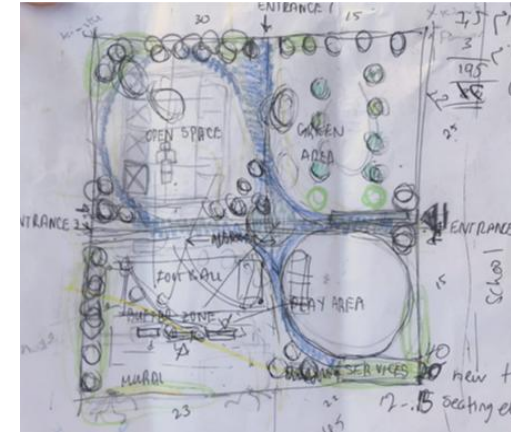
Al Sarih, Irbid, Jordan,
Sociology and social
work, Yarmouk
University, Habitat Unit
TU Berlin, in
cooperation with the
municipality of Irbid
(2022, DAAD)



Public Space In Urban Education

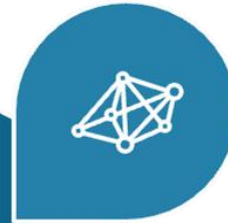
Building Refugees Integration
Through Urban Development & Social work

Design Process



Collaborative Methods

Engaging community members in planning asking residents and neighborhoods about their needs in the public space



Zoning

The process of dividing land into sections for specific uses

Design Elements

Aesthetic and functional features in space design



Materials

Various reusable items used in construction
Stones, used bricks, plastic bags, cans, old tires, old water tanks, etc.



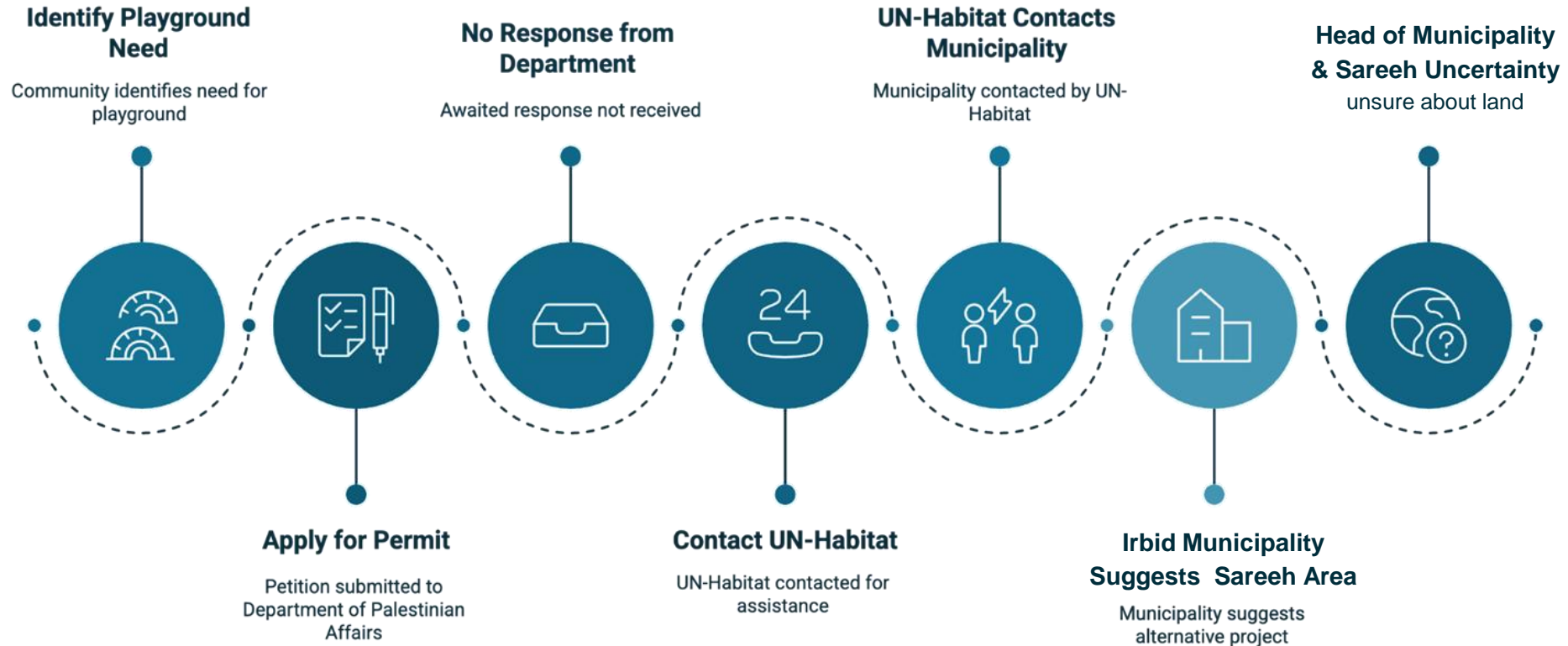






Land-Related Experience

Irbid, Jordan



Public Space: A Place for Interaction, Cohesion, & Integration

Burj Alwazir, in collaboration with the Municipality of Soukra

Surroundings:

- **primary school and several kindergartens**
- **Residential neighborhood with some local shops**

Current Condition of the Space:

- **Located on a street island, but not in use**
- **Lack of seating areas, insufficient shade, and no children's playground**











PR-GPS

Power Relations in Urban Governance: Participation in Public Space of the Arab Cities

Ta'ziz Partnership–Network–2023-2025

- Partners' kick-off Meeting; Online (July 2023)
- Workshop 1 and training: Berlin-Germany (Sep 2023)
- Workshop 2: Tunis, Tunisia (Sep 2023)
- Workshop 3: Ira, Jordan, Feb 2024
- Workshop 4: Tunis, El-Kherba, Sep 2024
- Workshop 5: Duhok, Kurdistan, Iraq
- Workshop 6: Cairo, Egypt, + Closing Symposium & Exhibition



PR-GPS

Power Relations in Urban Governance: Participation in Public Space of the Arab Cities

Methodology

- Practical research, 3 case studies (Tunisia, Jordan, Iraq)
- Governance, Partnership, & Co-production (Citizens, refugees, civil Society, & Government Institutions)
- Different tools (fieldwork, lectures, meetings, drawings)
- Observation (implementation, evaluation a year after)



Workshop 1 Training





JORDAN (Feb 2024)

Municipality Park Ira - Al Salt, Jordan

- The **seven-day workshop in Ira** is part of the *Contemporary Arab Urbanism III* course during the **winter semester 23/24** at **TU Berlin**.
- It is part of the **PR-GPS (Power Relations in Urban Governance - Participation in Arab Public Space)** project.
- The project is **initiated by Habitat Unit** and **funded by DAAD, Ta'ziz (2023-2025)**.

Ira and Yarqa, located in the **Salt District, Balqa Governorate, Jordan**, consist of **four districts** with an estimated **population of 11,139 (2015 census)**.















Public space:

A place for Interaction, Cohesion & Integration

Burj Alwazir, ISTEUB Carthage University, Habitat Unit TU Berlin, in co-operation with the municipality of Soukra (2021-2022, DAAD)







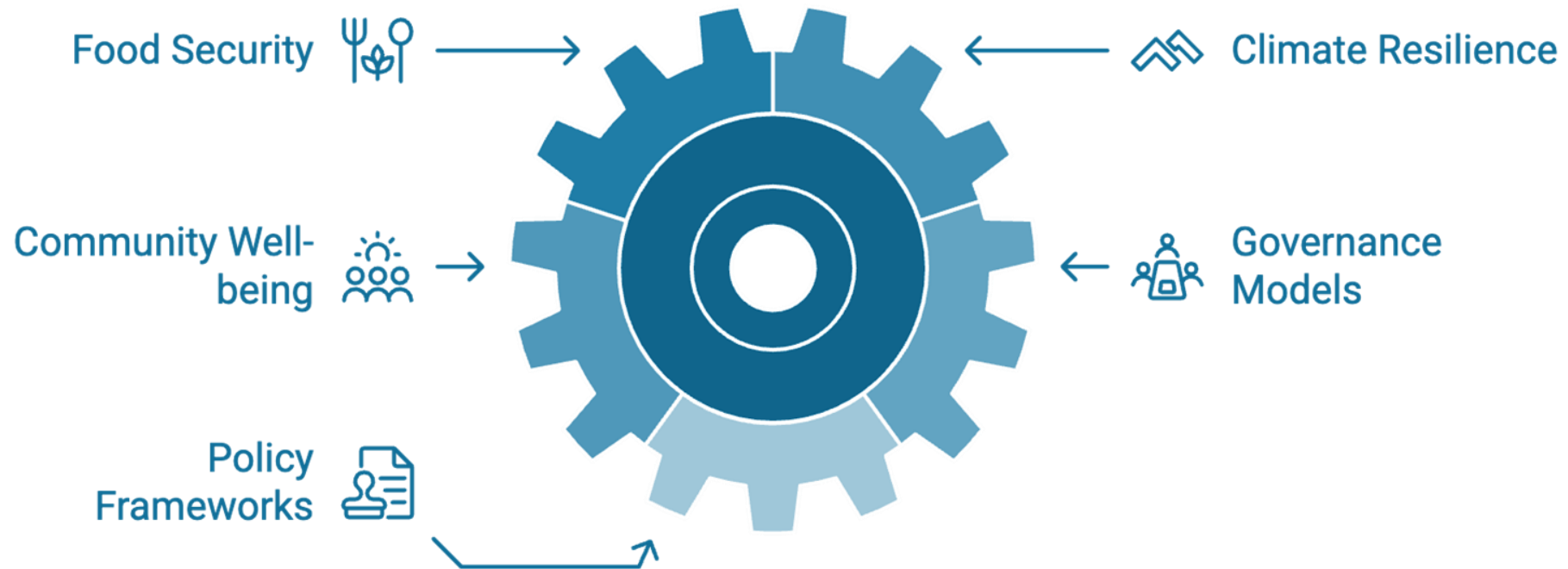
Results

- Diversity of approaches to interact within public spaces
- Different models for space appropriation
- Decline in the appropriation & practices



Key Messages

Co-Producing Green Public Spaces Requires Sustainable Land Management



Partnership models in Green Public Space



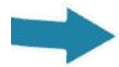
Tunis Approach

Successful integration with municipalities



Egypt Model

Effective income generation through fixed agreements



Jordan Situation

Challenges due to lack of public space and varied responsibilities



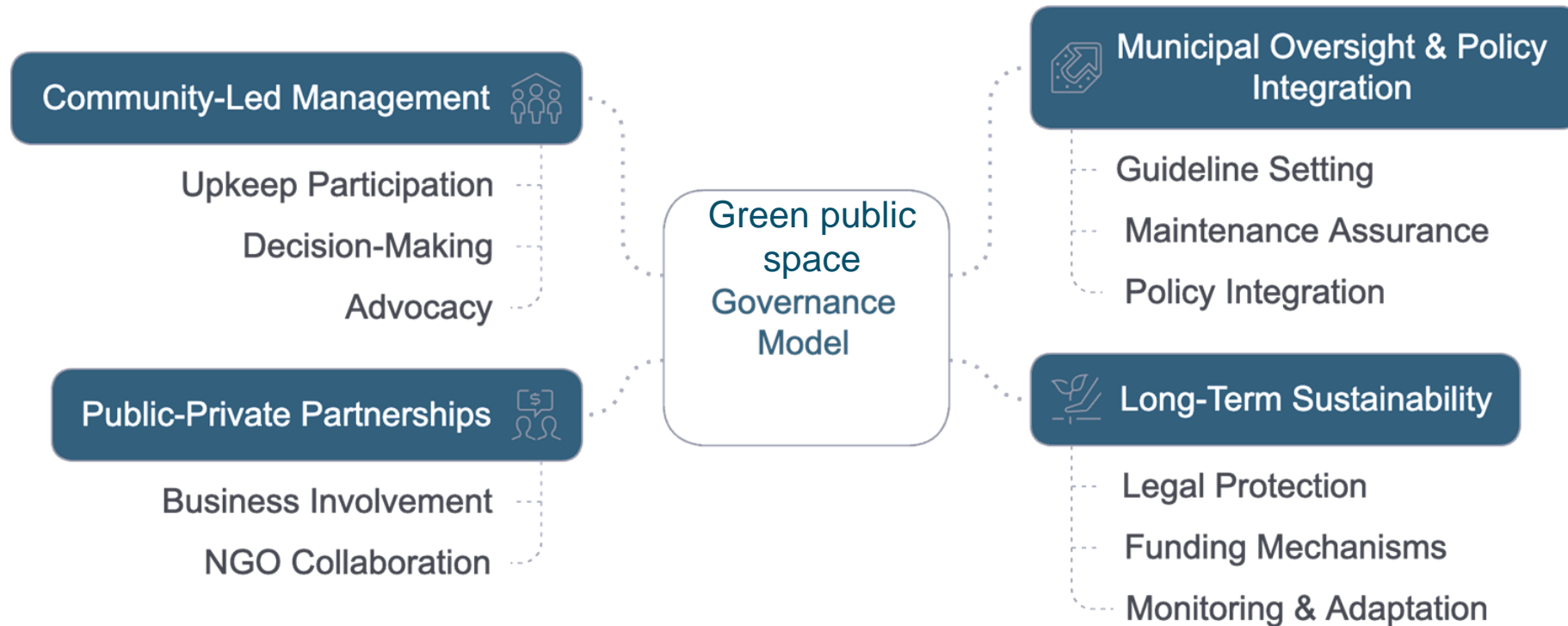
'investment management'

"The sponsorship for the creation of the garden includes a bank and a small branch within the garden."

"نشامى" (**Nashami**) is a **Jordanian and Arab term** used to describe **brave, generous, and honorable people** (with a strong sense of duty and loyalty); it is *closely tied to Jordanian culture and is frequently associated with the military and various volunteer initiatives.*

Urban Greening Governance Model

Public Space Management



Key Messages

Linking to the Work Packages for Greening Neighborhoods

Work Package 1 Package 3



Site-Specific Greening

Selecting and transforming land for public use.



Tactical Greening

Creating adaptable green spaces on various land types.



Knowledge Transfer

Developing guidelines and governance models for greening.

THANK YOU! شكرا لحسن استماعكم

For more information, visit:
araburban.org

habitat-unit@tu-berlin.de

or contact:

elmouelhi@araburban.org

elmouelhi@tu-berlin.de