



R-Cities OASIS Schoolyards Global Program

Children are among the population groups most affected by the escalating impacts of climate change, notably heat.

As the Harvard University Center on the Developing Child recently [reported](#): Extreme heat affects infants and young children more than most adults—and potential impacts on their health and development can be lifelong.

The more heatwaves children are exposed to, the greater the chance of health problems including chronic respiratory conditions, asthma, and cardiovascular diseases, learning loss, impacts on mental and behavioral health. Potential impacts on their health and development can be lifelong.



1 in 3 children live in countries that face extreme high temperatures and almost 1 in 4 children are exposed to high heatwave frequency



by 2050, nearly half of all children in Africa and Asia will face sustained exposure to extreme high temperatures



by 2050, all of the world's 2.02 billion children are expected to be exposed to high heatwave frequency, regardless of whether the world achieves a 'low greenhouse gas emission scenario' (<https://www.unicef.org/turkiye/en/press-releases/559-million-children-currently-exposed-high-heatwave-frequency-rising-all-202>)



THE URGENCY FOR URBAN RESILIENCE

We live in an era of polycrisis, characterized by multiple cascading risks and interlinked challenges, making resilience building ever more essential.

Urban resilience is the capacity of a city's systems, businesses, institutions, communities, and individuals to survive, adapt, and thrive, no matter what chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience.

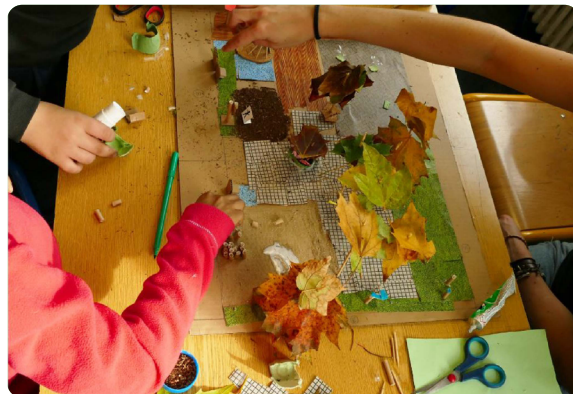
Resilience requires a holistic, whole of society approach that relies on a shared understanding of risks and vulnerabilities. Resilience is a generational endeavor, demanding systemic change and a new way of behavioral adaptation to ensure sustainable urban futures.



THE OPPORTUNITY

Cities worldwide are actively deploying resilience solutions to safeguard their communities and assets. At the Resilient Cities Network, we believe that children should be central to these solutions, as their futures are most at stake. Positioning young children at the heart of our adaptation strategies can transform urban environments for the benefit of all. This program can instill an understanding of and commitment to building resilience for generations.

Schools play a crucial role in this transformation; they can serve as beacons of resilience, not only mitigating the direct impacts of climate change through robust, school-based initiatives but also empowering students and educators to champion change within their broader communities. By doing so, schools can influence not only their pupils and families but also the surrounding neighborhoods by providing a green and cool refuge for all, thereby amplifying their impact within the city.



THE OASIS INITIATIVE

Originating in Paris and now adopted by Quezon City, the OASIS (Openness, Adaptation, Sensitisation, Innovation and Social Ties) initiative, reimagines schoolyards as 'urban oases.' These spaces not only combat flooding and mitigate urban heat but also serve as vibrant, green sanctuaries that promote environmental awareness and community engagement.

Launched in 2018 as a flagship initiative of the Paris Resilience Strategy, the OASIS Schoolyards program transforms schoolyards into innovative, non-formal learning spaces that utilize nature-based solutions to enhance climate resilience. This program promotes community awareness and sustainable environmental practices through actionable solutions, collaboratively designed by students, teachers, and other community stakeholders. It serves as a model for integrating experiential learning with urban sustainability efforts.

The City of Paris has strategically targeted schoolyards for transformation, recognizing them as underutilized spaces ideal for conversion into green, resilient, and community-centric areas that can also function as cooling refuges during heatwaves. By 2023, this initiative has successfully renovated 100 out of a planned 770 school and college courtyards across the city, turning them into vibrant hubs of community engagement and environmental resilience.

Transforming schoolyards into OASIS has yielded substantial benefits across multiple dimensions, such as:

1

Enhance resilience:
The transformed schoolyards provide “cooling hubs” during heatwaves and improve ground infiltration, reducing water accumulation during heavy rainfall.

2

Improved well-being:
These greener spaces offer a cooler and more pleasant environment for students and the entire school community.

3

Educational benefits:
The schoolyards become vibrant outdoor learning environments, enhancing educational experiences and raising awareness of sustainability and environmental issues.

4

Community Integration:
By adopting an inclusive approach, the initiative strengthens community ties and empowers school communities to actively improve and take ownership of their surroundings.

WHAT MAKES OASIS UNIQUE

The OASIS program demonstrates the transformative impact of collaborative design and active community involvement. This approach incorporates several key components and innovative methods:



Participatory Design Process

Engagement Sessions:
The transformation begins with workshops and meetings involving students, teachers, parents, and residents to gather ideas and feedback. This participatory approach ensures that the designs reflected the needs and aspirations of the community.

Collaborative Planning:
Architects and planners work closely with school communities to develop designs through co-design, incorporating suggestions and addressing concerns raised during the engagement sessions.





Multifunctional Design

Educational Features: The schoolyards are designed to include elements such as vegetable gardens, composting areas, and rainwater harvesting systems, which serve as hands-on learning tools for students.

Recreational Areas: Spaces for play and relaxation, such as playgrounds, seating areas, and sports facilities, are integrated to promote physical activity and social interaction.



Sustainability Practices

Promote eco-friendly materials: using permeable options to reduce heat retention and improve water drainage. Water management system such as rainwater collection can be implemented to ensure the sustainable use of water resources.

Integrate green infrastructure: Specific areas are designated to enhance biodiversity by implementing green element such as trees, shrubs, and garden beds, encouraging students to learn about and engage with their natural environment, as well as offering cooling benefits



Multi-disciplinary expertise

Bringing together multi-disciplinary expertise is crucial for the OASIS Schoolyards initiative. The OASIS program integrates both local and international multidisciplinary expertise blending global best practice with local knowledge, and fostering collaboration between the private sector and public institutions. This approach ensures the long-term sustainability of the program and promotes the exchange of diverse ideas and perspectives.

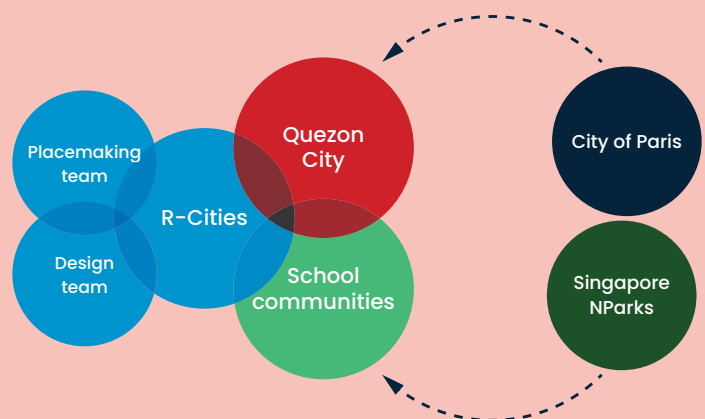


Diagram showing how R-Cities is collaborating with Quezon City while leveraging global knowledge and best practices from other cities across its network such as from Paris and Singapore.