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Transformative Hope. Blockchains and civic digital platforms for circular urban economies

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# URBANISM OF HOPE

Delft  
Multi-city  
Lausanne  
Online Conference:  
Global Relay, 48 Hours, 6 Cities

The 16<sup>th</sup> Conference of the International Forum on Urbanism  
(IFoU)

Buenos Aires

Auckland

12-14 December 2024



EPFL



# The 16<sup>th</sup> Conference of the International Forum on Urbanism (IFoU)

12-14 December 2024

## Book of Abstracts

IFoU 16 Conference Hosts:

NTU Taipei

EPFL Lausanne

University of Buenos Aires

Chinese University of Hong Kong

University of Auckland - Waipapa Taumata Rau

Delft University of Technology

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The 16th conference of the International Forum on Urbanism (IFoU) took place from 12 to 14 December 2024.

This publication includes the abstracts accepted for the 16th IFoU Conference, which was organized as a collective event by six member institutions of IFoU: National Taiwan University, EPFL Lausanne, University of Buenos Aires, Chinese University of Hong Kong, The University of Auckland – Waipapa Taumata Rau, and Delft University of Technology. Under the general theme, Urbanism of Hope, each participating institution became the host for one sub-theme presented online during the conference. In this way, following the presentations of the different sub-themes from host to host, it became a virtual tour around the world.



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# 5. SPACES FOR LOCAL ECONOMY

**Host: Delft University of Technology**

In times of global crises, local economy and employment often get heavily influenced by unexpected events, such as trade restrictions, pandemics, flooding, and more, which further lead to socio-economically downgraded areas. In this context, the magnitude and emergency of the issues require innovative solutions to enhance local economic vitality and livability, which are sustainable and flexible to cope with uncertainties ahead. At the same time, we see that local initiatives, informal settlements, free spaces, and eco-villages can be frontrunners, combining social resilience, spaces of making and circularity.

Relevant questions include, but are not limited to: Which spatial interventions can stimulate local initiatives that generate urban vitality under these global crises? What is the role of informal economies, their impact on and demand of urban space? What forms of co-working and combined working-living spaces can improve circular economic and quality of living?

# Transformative Hope. Blockchains and civic digital platforms for circular urban economies

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**Abstract:** In a context where envisioning a future is increasingly difficult, digital innovation has emerged as a genuine beacon of hope for improving our territories, particularly in terms of social and environmental justice. However, this optimism is tempered by complexities and ambiguities, which underscores the limitations of a strictly technocratic vision of digital innovation. The use of digital technologies in civic and non-profit contexts in urban projects represents compelling examples that diverge from a technocratic view of digital innovation. The research presented in this paper is part of the European project CORPUS, which aims to explore viable models of circular urban economies (CUE) for retrofitting public urban spaces through participatory processes and digital technologies. This paper offers an exploratory review of CUE and investigates how digital tools are used within them. It then discusses the cases under consideration through the lens of prefigurative planning (Davoudi, 2023), which serves as a critical lens for assessing both their potential to challenge the status quo of unsustainable production and consumption models in urban contexts, and their inner complexities.

**Keywords:** circular urban economies; prefigurative urbanism; prefigurative planning; digital technologies, blockchain.

# Local urban economy of migrant communities: case of Tbilisi, Belgrade, and Berlin

Veronika Sharova  
Independent researcher

**Abstract:** The article presents the results of research focusing on the local urban economy of migrant communities that have formed in the last two years in cities around the world. The chosen cases are Tbilisi (representing the post-Soviet type of urbanism), Belgrade (Eastern Europe) and Berlin (as a modern Western European city with a specific type of spatial memory due to the history of the Berlin Wall, etc.). The hypothesis is that these new migrant communities are initially oriented towards the development of the urban environment and that the entrepreneurial activity of this type of migrants can play a significant role in the daily life of the city. Their presence in the urban environment can lead both to a revitalisation of the urban economy and to the emergence of certain tensions that deserve the attention and interaction of researchers, city administrations and citizens themselves.

**Keywords:** migration, local economies, urban communities, urban subcultures, relocation



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