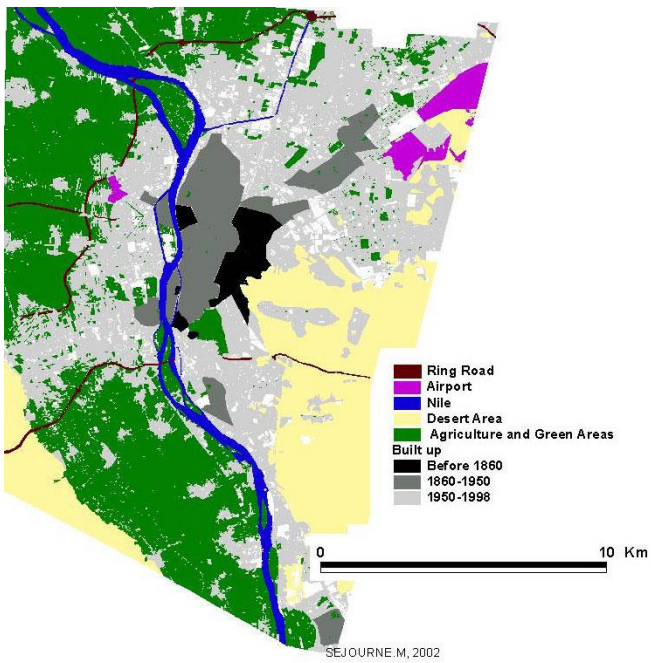
MAQAAD
DESIGN . URBANISM . RESEARCH

The Urban Challenge of Cairo (Egypt's Capital)

One of Cairo's current pressing urban challenges is public space development. Cairo is a metropolitan city that hosts 20,000,000+ inhabitants who are rapidly expanding with a population density of 19,376 people per square kilometer, which ranks 37th in the world (World Population Review, 2020). Therefore, there is an urgent need to improve and increase Cairo's public spaces to accommodate the community needs for sustainable and well-equipped public areas. Since most of Egypt's public/ urban spaces contain shabby seats, outdated garbage bins, and unequipped bus stops, which increases daily life challenges of Cairo's citizens and deprives them of a better use of public spaces. In some main squares, the government is improving public spaces, but with minimum community participation. Additionally, it uses materials that have high CO2 emissions such as concrete and plastic.

For example, map 1 shows the expansion of the built environment in Greater Cairo with limited public and green spaces during three periods, pre-1860, 1860-1950, and 1950 to 2003 (Sims, Sejoume, & El Shorbagi, 2003). Additionally, from my personal experience, when I need to visit a comfortable public space, I find a few options maximum of three places that are with entrance fees. Furthermore, the below photo (figure 1) shows an example of a bus-stop that is serving the city of Cairo; you can notice that it is made of concrete with poor design, while on the right side of the photo you can see a bus-stop designed by MAQAAD, which we envision to equip the public spaces with them.



Map 1

From the previous examples, we can notice that 1) Cairo has a rapid urbanization rate with high population density, which decreases the public spaces available per capita. 2) The urban furniture used in the city does not fulfill the community's needs and environmental considerations. Therefore, these examples illustrate urgent community needs for more and better furnished public spaces.

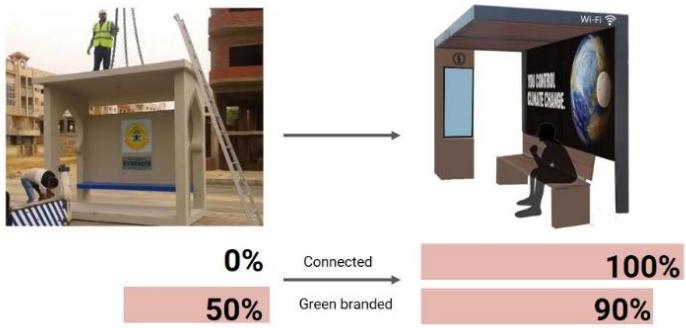


Figure 1

Moving forward, MAQAAD plans to address that challenge as an urban design firm through enhancing public spaces with tech-improved and green urban furniture designs & products to increase the youth and private sector's role in economic development, climate change action, and promote entrepreneurship.

References:

Sims, D., Sejoume, M., & El Shorbagi, M. (2003). *The case of Cairo, Egypt* (Publication). Retrieved November 22, 2020, from https://www.ucl.ac.uk/dpu-projects/Global_Report/pdfs/Cairo.pdf

World Population Review. (2020). Cairo Population 2020. Retrieved November 22, 2020, from https://worldpopulationreview.com/world-cities/cairo-population