

Vaigai River Restoration Project

This joint venture project was carried out by Thiagarajar College of Engineering, Madurai and Graduate school of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, Columbia University, USA focusing on reimagining issues of River Vaigai and the Urbanism in Madurai. Nearly 15 students from Columbia university and 78 students from Department of Architecture participated in the process. The students were helped by the Environmental Engineering section of the Civil Department.

Water Urbanism is an innovative approach to design practice and pedagogy that holistically joins the study of social and physical infrastructures, public health, and hydrological systems. It challenges conventional planning practices that isolate elements of an urban system and instead starts with the assumption of a joint built and natural environment within which humans and machines operate. These complex, interrelated issues require a design-driven, integrative, and systems-based approach, one grounded in a deep understanding of social life, political context, and spatial thinking.

Water Urbanism posits that water and cities must be understood within an expanded notion of a constructed ecosystem. These systems- including rainfall, water retention, water harvesting, industry and agriculture use, re-collection and re-cycling, culture, water access and sewage, are framed as opportunities within an urbanized ecology with the potential for design interventions along multiple points in the cycle.

The proposals were drawn on the following directions:

- Rethinking Madurai River Channels as a template for Future Development
- Creating a food hub and spoke networks on open land and Riparian zones along River Vaigai
- Addressing Water Related Inequity in Madurai
- Think Tank- reconnecting the tank system for development.





