

[CURL: Introducing the Cairo Urban Resource Library](#)



The Cairo Urban Resource Library is a project initiated by Omar Nagati and Beth Stryker ([CLUSTER](#)) and is supported by the British Council. The idea is simple: to create a publicly accessible architecture and urban studies library in a central location.

The library is located in the premises of [CLUSTER](#), Cairo Laboratory for Urban Studies, Training and Environmental Research, at 43 Sherif Street, 3rd Floor.

The library is a work in progress and is soon to be opened to the public. Architect Omar Nagati and curator/architect Beth Stryker believe having a well-stocked library of urban and architectural books available to architects, planners and students is an important piece of “infrastructure” that is lacking in Cairo. At present most of the books in the library are from Nagati’s private collection but they are looking to partner with others owning similar libraries willing to collaborate as part of the project. CURL will also accept book donations (email below for contact).

The library is being cataloged in Arabic and English and its cataloging system will be a parallel system to Rufoof, which is an initiative that aims to catalog Cairo’s many and separate art libraries. CURL aims to veer more in the direction of urban/architectural libraries using an especially designed system.

Cairo’s lack of public libraries and specialist libraries focusing on items related to the city or urbanism and architecture in general, makes CURL a particularly significant project. Another resource library for architecture and urbanism is available at the premise of [MEGAWRA](#) in Heliopolis. One of CURL’s objectives is to link architecture resource libraries across Cairo via the shared cataloging system. Also important to note that university libraries, including those in architecture departments, have limited collections and those which maybe more up-to-date, such as AUC’s or GUC’s libraries, are less accessible to the public and are far outside the city center. Thus, students of architecture seeking to further develop this knowledge beyond the classroom will need alternative and specialized libraries such as the one being built in downtown by CLUSTER.

CLUSTER already has plans to expand the library to include a maps section and to seek Cairo-specific works such as dissertations, student projects, development agency reports, etc. They are also looking to develop a lexicon of Arabic terminology to match with contemporary and recent terms and concepts that appeared in the professions of planning and architecture, which don’t have Arabic translations.

CLUSTER welcomes contributions to the library, including donations of books from publishers or individuals, pertaining to Cairo architecture and urbanism.

For further information or to inquire about how to join the CURL network, support this library or to donate books contact CLUSTER at: info@clustercairo.org