

Workshop „3 DAYS BY THE WATER“ in Alexandria

Rostock sits on the Baltic Sea, Alexandria on the Mediterranean. Two port cities with more in common than you might think at first glance.

In September we found that out on the ground. For three days, as a chair of the University of Rostock, we took part in the „3 DAYS BY THE WATER“ workshop together with students and colleagues from Alexandria University and the University of Kassel, exploring a question that concerns both cities: how does a city by the water develop?

In Alexandria the answer is particularly interesting right now. The city has almost everything you could wish for. A long history, a major port and a waterside location where many Egyptians spend their holidays. And yet it quickly becomes clear where things get difficult.

Getting around Alexandria takes patience above all. The city is built entirely around the car, buses and trains are barely an alternative, and you look for cycle lanes in vain. At its edges the city is growing so fast that planning can hardly keep up. And between

well-kept private grounds and public spaces that no one really feels responsible for, there are sometimes only a few metres.

We gained a very different perspective at Lake Burullus in the Nile Delta. There the focus was not on the metropolis but on villages, on everyday life and on the question of whether art projects can open up new paths for a place.

To finish, some of us travelled on to Cairo. A megacity that simply overwhelms you, so dense and so fast. Back in Rostock, one insight stays with us above all: how we move, how cities grow and who public space belongs to are negotiated in Alexandria just as they are here. Only at an entirely different pace.

To explore these questions together, we will be working with Alexandria University and the University of Kassel in teaching and research over the coming years.