

# AUGMENTING URBAN PARKS IN BAHRAIN FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF CITIZENS' HEALTH

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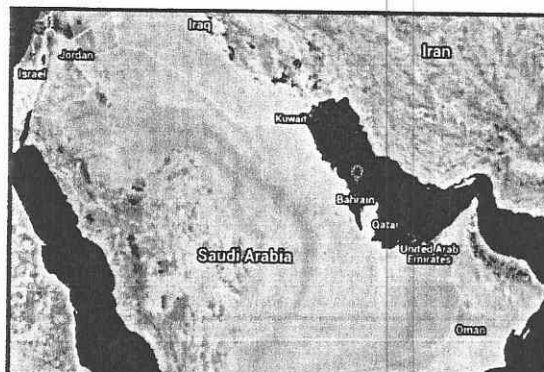
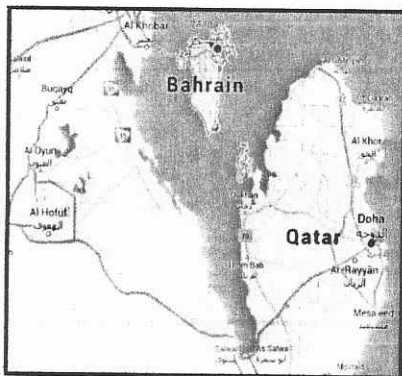
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## Abstract

Research over the past three decades has provided strong evidence of the positive impact of nature on the health of human beings. Contact with nature, whether that be with plants, animals, aesthetically pleasing landscapes or with the wilderness at large in all its forms, offers a range of medical benefits. Carlson et al. [1] those benefits may include: lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels, enhanced survival after heart attacks, more rapid recovery from surgery, fewer minor medical complaints, and lower self-reported stress. Although the Kingdom of Bahrain is a very small country, there are quite a few public parks in it: for example, Al Fateh Corniche, Arad Bay/Dohat Arad, Andalus Park, etc. In addition, strewn around residential areas, one finds many small neighborhood parks. This research suggests that the benefits of urban parks can be tapped into if the following criteria are fulfilled: First, policy makers and planners create the necessary awareness among citizens and residents of the positive impact on human health of contact with nature; second, recreational and cultural activities are conducted within those parks and green spaces; this will increase the interest of the population in frequenting them. Last but not least, parks in Bahrain need to be augmented to fit the needs of the specific country climatically as well as socially and culturally. Direct benefits can be reaped on the health of children and adults from walking and playing in parks, and indirect benefits can accrue on the health system from prevention of diseases through exercising, fresh air, and the sharing of recreational and cultural activities in those green spaces.

**Key Words:** Urban parks; general health benefits; recreation; societal and cultural needs; diverse activities.

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Bahrain Location in the Arab Gulf (Source: <http://www.maplandia.com/bahrain/bahrain/manama>)

## 1- Arad Bay/Dohat Arad

