



TIME MANIFESTO

**WHAT IF
TEMPORARY
USES CAN ACCELERATE
JUST TRANSITIONS
IN EUROPEAN
CITIES**



TIME (INCREASINGLY) MATTERS.

We have a major problem with time.

No one can tell how the climate crisis is impacting and will impact our lives in the coming future; the context is fundamentally uncertain, and deeply entangled with systemic risk in an interdependent world.

Yet, we know the time span in which we can act before it is too late is rapidly decreasing.

Across Europe, cities are accelerating their commitment to decarbonisation, pushed by a firm political will at EU level which is mobilising unprecedented resources within an ambitious vision of carbon-neutral cities rooted in principles of **beauty, sustainability** and **inclusion**.

Decarbonization paths will have to be holistic, bold and fundamentally just, making sure that we can reap the benefits of the twin digital and green transition to leave no one behind. The **just transition** - the idea that climate neutrality and social justice are two sides of the same coin, and that addressing them in an integrated way would lead to better quality of life for all, within planetary boundaries - is gaining momentum, increasingly becoming a widespread call to radically redesign the ways in which we consume, produce, and overall live.

Yet, time remains a challenge because just transitions are well beyond a matter of navigating long, complex and uncertain paths. Addressing climate breakdown through the lens of social justice won't happen as a fix of the status quo, nor by means of decarbonising hard infrastructure only. Instead, it will require us to address the fundamental point of **what democracy and democratic access to cities mean in contemporary societies, and how we can build collective capacity, agency and legitimacy throughout transition journeys**.

It will call us to move away from understandings of participation and inclusion as unilateral processes of 'some groups who include and others who get included', toward principles of equality as a collective, all-to-all endeavour. It will require that **children and young people** are deeply heard and prioritised in the choices to be made today, towards a future where the structural failures they inherited are transformed into learning and leadership for safe living. Failing to address these points will mean wasted money, efforts and hopes, and will lock our relation to time mainly as a matter of how rapidly we will be heading to societal collapse.

Cities may already have powerful tools to embrace and accelerate just transitions.

Temporary uses - the practice(s) of reactivating and revitalising spaces that stand dormant, empty or abandoned, typically for an interim period of time - seem to grow throughout Europe, and raise momentum across a wide array of stakeholders, including decision makers. While this practice is certainly not new, it is currently receiving attention vis-à-vis the contemporary challenges cities face worldwide. With arguments spanning civic engagement and participation, co-creative and agile use of spaces, response to existing and emerging needs, creation of enterprises and jobs, or revitalisation of empty buildings and green assets, temporary uses are often described as viable ways to build back better, particularly in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic. At the same time, there is no shortage of critics as well, especially when

it comes to the risk that temporary uses may feed 'pop-up' cultures and become spatial signifiers of our precarious times, if not even trojan horses of neoliberal modes of urban development.

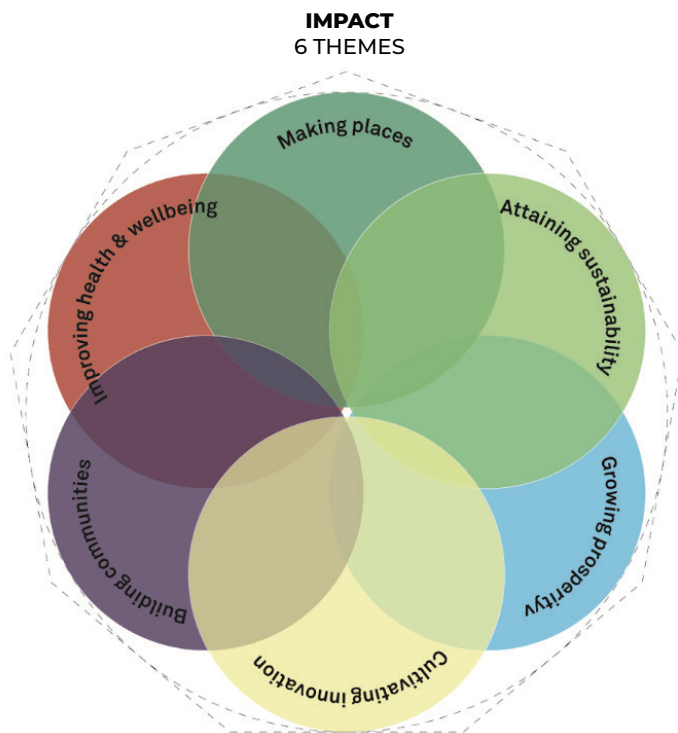
Whatever the pros and cons, we believe there can be much more at play. As long as we continue to look at a collective garden or a recycling hotspot as single and siloed practices constrained to time, these may say something around revitalising spaces, peer collaboration or engagement in responsible behaviours in the short run, yet very little when it comes to decarbonising entire urban systems towards the long run. Taken alone, they might even risk becoming 'nice tiny tweaks' that seed (more or less unintentionally) some of the conditions for gentrification. But if we can begin to look at that temporary garden or recycling hotspot **as multiplied for n° neighbourhoods, districts and communities across cities - with an overarching vision and orchestration steered by the public good, those temporary uses may become a new liquidity for cities as we seek to discover our new economy and society.**

It is often said that temporary uses are a means to 'make spaces' quickly and creatively, especially within long term redevelopments. But temporary uses can be well beyond a matter of time: **they can**

¹ 'Beauty', 'Sustainability' and 'Inclusion' are the three pillars of the New European Bauhaus Initiative launched by the European Commission in 2020 to 'connect the European Green Deal to our living spaces and experiences.' See: https://new-europe-an-bauhaus.europa.eu/index_en

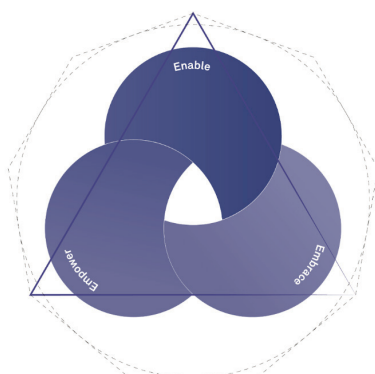
transcend short termism. Against the urgency we experience and feelings of fear, anxiety and impotence that are spreading especially amongst the youngest and those who are most vulnerable, temporary uses can be designed as **city-scale infrastructures of engagement, collective action and capacity-building throughout decarbonisation paths.** They can be leveraged as bottom-up trials and social innovation platforms that complement macro investments in climate adaptation, mitigation and resilience, ensuring that opportunity and legitimacy to just transitions are (also) put in the hands of everyone, everywhere and in the everyday. Geared to children, adolescents and young people especially, they can be rehearsals for new ways of

thinking, doing and being through which we can prepare the next generation of adults and leaders for climate justice and social equality. Whatever the time constraint, hyper-locality and narrowed impact that temporary experiments can have by themselves, it is in their **'sum of many small distributed things'** that we can start unfolding **collective action for long term impact.** This requires clearly defining temporary uses as a means to **embrace challenges, empower choices, enable change** from the seeds - to spread and connect across communities **as a forest of experiments.** A series of connected and integrated actions can become embedded and systemic, ushering **in a new form of city making that is about creating human movements.**

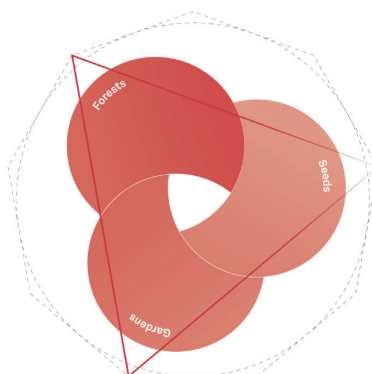


So, how can we envision this journey from seeds to forests?

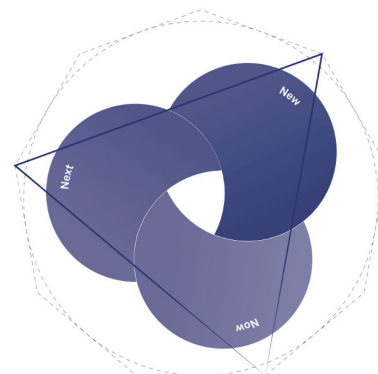
COMPLEXITY / CHANGE
From Embrace to Enable



SCALE / NARRATIVE
From Seeds to Forests



TIME / JOURNEY
From Now to New



ABOUT THE TIME MANIFESTO

This is a call for interest launched by **T-Factor**, a Horizon 2020 project that seeks to unlock the transformative potential of temporary uses in urban regeneration.

Our intent with this Manifesto is to set a starting vision on temporary uses that can be relevant to local decarbonisation strategies as well as major EU policies and initiatives such as the **European Green Deal**, the **New European Bauhaus**, and the **EU Mission on Smart and**

Climate Neutral Cities by 2030.

The ultimate goal is to produce a **White Paper** at the beginning of 2024 that can contribute to drawing bold **institutional and research agendas for temporary uses and just transitions in European cities.**

We invite you to reach out to us if you are interested to contribute to the key arguments of the White Paper. **We welcome contributions from all corners of society - practitioners, activists, researchers, decision makers, developers, investors and more.**

Contact us at communication@t-factor.eu and we will reach out to you!

