

WELCOMING ALL AGES OF LIFE IN OUR CITIES

MANIFESTO

We strongly believe that cities that welcome all ages of life are:

- **GREEN**
- **INCLUSIVE**
- **CREATING A SENSE OF BELONGING**

GREEN

NATURE MAKES PEOPLE FEEL GOOD

Nature makes people feel good. Firstly, trees help even out extreme weather. The prevalence of extreme weather is increasing due to climate change, and it especially affects the elderly. Trees give shade during summer as well as making rain fall thanks to the transpiration of the leaves. However, heavy rainfall is mitigated through the absorption of the root system. That prevents flooding on the streets. Secondly, trees add a pleasing aesthetic touch to our green spaces, enticing more people to spend time in them. Green spaces are proven to improve wellbeing: a study by Fields in Trust found that the regular use of parks and green spaces provides the UK with over £34 billion in health and wellbeing benefits every year, saving the NHS £111 million annually (Fields in Trust, 2024). Thirdly, plants demonstrate the seasonal changes, which leads to wellbeing.

GREENNESS EVERYWHERE

Since the elderly cannot always walk extremely far, there needs to be a little bit of nature everywhere. We believe that many surfaces remain unused today - in vain! Bus stop roofs, lampposts, walls of buildings are just a few examples of surfaces that could be coated in greenery. Apart from that, pocket parks could be established on any unused, solid surface. It would be a clever idea to have some greenness visible within 3 metres, a smaller park available in 300 metres and a big green area within 3 km. Everywhere. Lampposts could furthermore have bird boxes attached to them because birds and bird song may be pleasing. Creating more habitats for wild species aligns with the EU's climate goals and it is also beneficial for the inhabitants of the cities (Ecosystem Services, 2015).

MEASURES AGAINST RISING HEAT LEVELS

Addressing rising heat levels in urban areas is crucial for creating sustainable and healthy cities, especially for the most vulnerable populations such as the elderly and the children. Implementing measures like planting more trees provides natural shade, significantly cooling surrounding areas and improving air quality. Establishing water fountains and misting stations in public spaces offers immediate relief from heat, encouraging outdoor activities and social interaction even during warmer periods. Designing buildings and urban spaces with

heat-reflective materials and/ or green roofs and walls further mitigates the urban heat island effect. Prioritizing the creation of shaded play areas and cool zones near senior centres ensures that both children and the elderly can safely enjoy outdoor environments. These efforts not only enhance the quality of urban life but also foster inclusive, resilient communities prepared to adapt to the challenges of climate change.

Young mothers often struggle with feeding their newborn babies in public spaces. It is crucial to make our spaces inclusive and comfortable for these babies and mothers. Installation of safe and free baby changing stations and feeding cubicles in public spaces is one solution for this issue.

OUTDOOR GYMS

We suggest that more outdoor gyms should be built because they offer numerous benefits that align with the vision of sustainable and healthy cities. These facilities promote physical activity in natural environments, enhancing both mental and physical wellbeing. They also reduce barriers to fitness by providing free, accessible equipment to all community members, regardless of socioeconomic status. Integrating outdoor gyms with playgrounds fosters intergenerational connections, encouraging family members of all ages to engage in active lifestyles together. This not only strengthens family bonds but also builds a sense of community and social cohesion in the cities. Furthermore, green outdoor gyms and playgrounds contribute to the greening of urban spaces, supporting environmental sustainability. By promoting regular exercise and facilitating social interactions, these combined facilities help create flourishing, resilient, and healthy urban communities.

INCLUSIVE - IF IT FITS THE VULNERABLE, IT FITS ALL

15-MINUTE CITIES

The concept of the 15-minute city envisions urban spaces where essential services such as work, leisure, housing, food, health, education, and culture are accessible within a 15-minute walk (Carlos Moreno, 2020). This model reduces reliance on cars, cutting down on pollution while promoting fitness and wellbeing through increased walking and cycling. Jeff Speck, a walkable city advocate, notes that 35% of Americans in walkable neighbourhoods are overweight, compared to 60% in non-walkable areas (Jeff Speck, 2013). To make the 15-minute city a reality, we can increase bike lanes, support local shops, and repurpose existing infrastructure (e.g., turning schools into community centres in the evening).

PEDESTRIANIZATION AND SLOWER SPEED LIMITS

Creating pedestrian zones where motor vehicles are restricted fosters safer, healthier, and more vibrant communities. These areas reduce congestion, lower crime rates due to increased pedestrian presence, and provide environmental benefits. Emergency and service vehicles maintain access, ensuring necessary services while limiting general traffic. Additionally, implementing slower speed limits in urban areas enhances safety and liveability. Lower limits reduce the number and severity of traffic accidents, protecting pedestrians and cyclists. Cities like Paris, Brussels, Madrid, and Amsterdam have seen fewer traffic-related injuries and deaths after reducing speed limits to 30 km/h in residential areas (European Transport Safety Council, 2024). Combined with pedestrian zones, slower speed limits improve urban life quality by reducing noise and air pollution and encouraging more walking and cycling.

ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Robust public transport systems, alongside bicycle lanes, are crucial for sustainable and inclusive cities. They should be reliable, well-maintained, fast, user-friendly, and affordable, with excellent connectivity to minimize wait times. Accessibility is key, with wheelchair-friendly vehicles and infrastructure ensuring mobility for all. Speed of public transport can be enhanced with bus-only lanes and dedicated tracks for trams, metros, and trains. Reduced fares for young people and the elderly, integration with pedestrian zones, slow speed limits, and

free Wi-Fi in social spaces all contribute to safety and connectivity, promoting community well-being, environmental sustainability, and economic wellbeing.

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBILITY

In France, 62 out of 10,000 people use wheelchairs, with the average age of users being 70 (Journal of Rehabilitation Medicine, 2008). These individuals deserve accessible cities, but the lack of wheelchair-friendly slopes hinders their mobility. To make urban areas more accessible, every staircase should have a corresponding wheelchair-friendly slope. This benefits wheelchair users and non-disabled individuals alike, promoting inclusivity and ease of movement for all.

SAFETY AND 'COMPLETE STREETS'

Technology should be utilized to enhance road planning and avoid accidents. In London, data analysis of frequent crash deaths of cyclists revealed the reason of crashes to be trucks which came to deliver goods inside the city. The city then planned the deliveries during low-cyclist hours. Hence, data-analytics should be used to analyse data related to accidents and crashes to create heat maps and take measures to prevent accidents in future.

Implementing 'complete streets' policies is an ultimate way to ensure inclusivity across all ages and abilities. It involves creating different lanes for all transportation modes like four-wheelers, bikers, pedestrians, etc. It may also involve making traffic lights accessible for visually impaired people and implementing universal signboards at stops to ensure inclusivity of all language speakers. It improves mobility of all individuals irrespective of their age, abilities or the vehicle they own, thereby greatly making the streets more welcoming. For example, Mexico built its complete street, Avenida Eduardo Molino, where separate bus lanes, sidewalks, bike lanes, and green central lanes were constructed which resulted in a 40% decline in fatalities on streets.

CREATING A SENSE OF BELONGING

A CLEAR IDENTITY THROUGH HISTORICAL PLACES

Maintaining cultural identity through the preservation of historical locations cultivates cross-generational solidarity. By protecting memorials, historical sites, and religious landmarks, cities can create a shared sense of history and culture that unites all ages and strengthens community bonds.

AFFORDABLE ACCESS TO ART AND CULTURE

Reducing entry fees for young and elderly people to visit art galleries and museums supports cultural engagement across generations. Making these spaces more accessible encourages interaction between different age groups and strengthens community connections. Free or reduced admissions, as seen at places like the Chelmsford Museum, enable all ages to explore and appreciate culture and history together.

MULTIFUNCTIONAL LIBRARY SPACES

Transforming libraries into multifunctional hubs is essential for thriving urban communities. Libraries should offer diverse sections, such as kids' areas, social spaces, quiet rooms, and study areas, making them more attractive and inclusive. Hosting events and workshops further enhances their role as dynamic social and cultural centres.

REPURPOSING UNUSED SPACES FOR COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Transforming unused spaces into vibrant cultural and community hubs promotes a strong sense of belonging and sustainability. Revitalized areas can host events, workshops, and social gatherings, making cities more inclusive and dynamic. Providing accessible venues for cultural expression and social interaction bridges generational gaps and enriches the urban experience.

CAMPAIGNS AGAINST VANDALISM AND PROMOTING PARTICIPATION

Campaigns against vandalism play a vital role in fostering a sense of pride and belonging in cities. By maintaining cleaner, safer public spaces, these efforts encourage community engagement and stewardship. Educational programs and

public art projects, like murals and sculptures, can deter vandalism and promote civic responsibility, creating a shared sense of ownership and connection to the city.

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ABOUT THE PROJECT

This manifesto was created as a result of a project named “Welcoming All Ages of Life in our Cities” in collaboration with Les Ateliers de maîtrise d’œuvre urbaine de Cergy Pontoise. The participants were a part of an online international experience programme **EUTOPIA TeamWork 2024**.

The aim of the project was to share some ideas on the way to welcome different ages in the city as a preparation for an international workshop **Inhabit! Cohabit! Reinhabit!** Metamorphosis of habitat in response to the ecological and social emergency.

The workshop will take place in Cergy-Pontoise **from September 22 to October 04, 2024**.

EUTOPIA TEAMWORK 2024 TEAM

Sarah Smith I’m a British student at the University of Warwick and I’ve just finished my final year studying Modern Languages (French and Italian). In my spare time, I enjoy listening to pop music and reading various novels (at the time of writing, I am reading Emma by Jane Austen).

Taja Ivanc I’m from Slovenia and I’m currently finishing my master’s degree in Geography at University of Ljubljana. In my spare time, I enjoy traveling and hiking.

Vid Bukovec I’m just finishing my studies in medicine at University of Ljubljana. I love spending time with my friends and going to the theatre. I’m also an amateur enthusiast in architecture and architectural gems (especially the brutalist ones) are the first thing I look up when travelling.

Jan Krsnik I am a student at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, currently enrolled in the bachelor’s program in Social Sciences. In my spare time, I enjoy traveling, exploring different cultures, and spending time both in the city and in nature.

Haadi Khalid I’m a Second-year history student at the University of Warwick.

Klara Folkesson I’m a biology student, bachelor’s level, at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden. I study biology because of my passion for the living things and for the climate.

Kashvi Bansal I’m Kashvi Bansal and I am from India. I am studying BSc. Economics student at the University of Warwick. In my spare time, I enjoy listening to music and I love to travel!