

## Participative governance solutions found by UIA projects to support Democratic Transitions



The following chapters summarise the solutions found under three sub-topics: fostering citizen participation, collaborative decision-making and individual behavioural changes.

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- Fostering citizen participation
- Collaborative decision-making
- Individual behavioural changes

The 8 cases study projects are detailed in chapter 5.

### 3.1. Fostering citizen participation

In both the short and long terms, how can cities identify and bring all social groups into participative processes, thereby harnessing their perspectives, motivations, local knowledges, and skills?

And how can this involvement support innovation and a more democratic approach to urban policymaking?

This section describes the ways projects have engaged with the diversity of social groups to ensure inclusivity and respect democracy. Local authorities need to play a key role in identifying vulnerable and often excluded groups, using various means (ICLEI 2022). They must take measures to identify and select participants, design meetings/activities, and manage power distribution to assist the different groups through carefully selected and tailored involvement approaches (Adams and Ramsden 2019).

#### Challenges encountered

To engage citizens successfully in Just Transitions governance, urban policymakers need to provide them with information and help them to access the policymaking process in an appropriate way. UIA projects deployed information campaigns, public events, and workshops to reach out to different social groups. Some cities also used questionnaires (in person and online) or developed digital apps. However, traditional forms of participation that mimic or follow conventional public administrative processes aren't accessible to many citizens; people don't normally think like city administrations. The projects A Place To Be-Come, Seraing, and others learnt that engagement in inclusive decision-making must often be indirect and that the path to participation often requires finesse.

Workshops and other traditional methods can nonetheless prepare the ground for more active engagement if they are appropriately designed and supplemented with other forms of engagement. The IGNITION project, Greater Manchester, like many other projects, used in-person as well as online workshops. In-person workshops also helped the authorities to gain a deeper understanding of survey answers and regular workshops helped IGNITION to form long-term relationships and develop people's ability to participate based on their specific needs and motivations.

The COVID restrictions drove a rapid expansion in online communications. On the one hand, shifting online enabled several projects to reach more people. On the other, these were people who were already more familiar with online communication. This asymmetry trap has also been observed in other projects, such as SPIRE, in Baia Mare, where low familiarity with online and digital communication added an additional barrier to the already difficult challenge of engaging people, especially where the projects had been designed with an expectation of in-person interaction, using methods such as co-creation with young pupils to design their schoolyards in OASIS, Paris, or planting trees in SPIRE.

Most of the UIA projects analysed for this report targeted people in different ways and some focused on specific groups. Children, young people, and families were common target groups. Other projects targeted people on low incomes or the elderly. Other targets included women, people with special abilities, different ethnic groups, and local businesses. The choice of target group was usually driven by the nature of the project. For example, the focus on schoolyards in OASIS, Paris, and GBG\_AS2C, Barcelona, implied a focus on children and families. Co-City, Turin, focused on people living on low incomes. In the second stage of this project, associations' applications for establishing 'neighbourhood houses' (Casas de Quartieri) in deprived districts in Turin were subject to a formal inclusiveness selection criterion.

This shows that the approach to participation in the analysed UIA projects were not systematically designed to be inclusive of all social groups. However, many projects became aware of the need to widen participation during their project, or in hindsight. For

example, OASIS (Paris) became aware that the project might have potential to include grandparents and elderly people from the neighbourhood, which could be pursued in follow-up activities. IGNITION's ecostreet activity (Greater Manchester) was continued after the project ended with its selection of intervention sites more based on areas of need, whether these were social or to do with a lack of green space. IGNITION hired a dedicated engagement officer to communicate with and motivate the people who do not usually voice their needs, including by meeting them where they live and talking to them.

UIA projects learned that it is not easy to involve all social groups equally. When asked, most mentioned the elderly as being difficult to engage with. This may mainly be due to the participative tools used, which included workshops, meetings, and online tools, which appear less effective in reaching out to the elderly and bringing them into the process. Other hard to reach groups include lower income groups and to some extent people with low educational attainment levels where this means that they are not used to engaging in co-creation and the lack the abilities to engage. This was seen in A Place to Be-Come, in Seraing, and Co-City, in Turin. Language can add another barrier for minority groups. The IGNITION project in the Greater Manchester encountered this during its follow-up activities, when seeking to increase the number of ecostreets in districts most in need. The lesson is that creative and tailored efforts, which effectively reach hard-to-engage groups, are needed to ensure wide participation. UIA projects found different ways to reach and engage such groups, as the next section will discuss.

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## Solutions found

### Going to people's neighbourhoods and speaking their language

Co-City (Turin) established neighbourhood houses in selected deprived neighbourhoods (Casas de Quartieri) so that people could interact near where they lived. A Place To Be-Come, Seraing, created a local hub 'La Ruche', which, as a physical space in the neighbourhood, provided a focal point for citizen action. However, it needed - and got - something more, i.e., a facilitator, able to engage with people on their own terms, to persuade people to actually walk in and explore what the space could offer.

Košice 2.0 (Košice, Slovakia) used a Mobile Urban Laboratory to connect with people. The Lab took the form of a van equipped with data collection and other equipment needed to organise different types of events such as discussions, presentations, art events, etc., which visited various locations around the city. The Mobile Urban Laboratory provides a flexible yet direct way to reach communities and engage with citizens in/around the places where they live.

Whether it is ethnic languages, a vernacular, or everyday language used by different groups, which is often different to the language used by officials or experts, it is important to speak the right language. OASIS (Paris) aimed to transform schoolyards to truly resonate with children's aspirations and needs. The project therefore invested time and resources in developing appropriate participatory tools to meaningfully engage with them. It used illustrations, collages, models, drawings, etc., that children could understand. The pupils became real designers and 'owners' of their everyday space, under the guidance of adults/project experts.

### Reaching people through ambassadors

As in Co-City (Turin), in A Place To Be-Come (Seraing), a key breakthrough came with the appointment of a facilitator whose role was to connect with the community, to organise activities, and to give people the confidence to propose doing things in La Ruche and in the local area. This facilitation was key. In the early stages, the facilitator visited both local groups and council teams to talk to them about La Ruche, what was happening there, and what was on offer. Sometimes this was awkward and uncomfortable, with people not really knowing why the facilitator was talking to them or what it was all about, but gradually this direct contact built trust and confidence and prepared the ground for greater levels of engagement.

IGNITION's roll out of its ecostreet approach across the Greater Manchester deployed dedicated community advisors to communicate with and motivate the social groups who don't usually voice their needs, by going to their neighbourhoods and talking to them. TastInFive is run by the City of Lille's social support department, whose team works with many associations to provide access to different people, including the isolated or the poor. The Circular South (Antwerp) community manager put a great deal of time into one-on-one discussions and conversations with residents - to inform them, to respond to their questions and concerns, and to understand their interests. It was felt that while this approach was intensive, it did pay off.

### Seeing is believing - Using experiential learning & motivation

In OASIS (Paris) the breakthrough on participation came with a study tour to similar projects in Belgium. 50 stakeholders from Paris visited examples of natural school yards in Antwerp and Brussels. This visit reassured the OASIS delegation that their project would be feasible and laid the foundation for an alliance between different stakeholders.

Circular South (Antwerp) supported circular solutions based on citizen engagement. The project partners found it difficult to engage with people living in social housing so they used repair cafes to make contact. Citizens have been offered concrete tasks, one that would usefully solve an everyday challenge for them and also contribute to reducing waste (materials, water, energy). In other words, a tangible first-hand experience with immediate results. At the same time, this gathering offered an opportunity to introduce other topics, such as creating more sustainable and circular lifestyles. A lesson from the project was that citizens are reluctant to commit to 'long-haul policy development/implementation activities'. They prefer to take it one step at a time, with inspiration and motivation building with each step taken.

TastInFive (Lille) tackled urban poverty and engaged low-income people through a community kitchen. This was designed as a tool for sharing and empowering, a place to gather for the simple pleasure of cooking. The community kitchen was open to everyone, and the professional kitchen and the food court brought in other types of people too. Hence it also became a gathering place for other activities, which could also include climate-related activities. A similar approach was taken by Co-City which, through its neighbourhood houses, provided community services such as childcare, a canteen, courses, and training. These could then be used to introduce other topics and activities, fostering a shared management of urban commons, which can be defined as sharing material, immaterial, or digital goods in an urban setting and which are beneficial for the individual and collective well-being.

### Using other topics as vehicles

Citizens are not always interested in the topic of a project. Finding another topic or problem to solve that is close to their concerns and building from there can therefore be a good tactic. When, in its project HOPE on air quality, Helsinki worked with its residents, it learned that motivation to participate was less an interest in air quality and its health impacts than the city had anticipated. The residents seemed more concerned by the general quality of urban life, that it is lowered by excessive vehicle traffic and vehicle emissions, traffic noise, street-dust, and wood-burning smoke, which they did not directly associate with health issues.

A similar kind of approach was taken by IGNITION (Greater Manchester) to promote nature-based solutions for climate-resilience. Green spaces and other nature-based solutions are appreciated as they increase well-being, offer contact with nature, and bring health benefits. Their popularity increased under the COVID lockdowns, where access to greenspace – if available - was one of the few pleasures available.

Health also worked for Green Minds (Plymouth). The ‘green social prescribing’ activity was one of its most popular pilot actions. Green social prescribing aims to improve physical and mental health through a multi-disciplinary programme that combines sports, arts, and nature. The activity took place at the Community Hub, located at the 94-hectare Central Park, which has hundreds of daily visitors. The project managed to engage 502 participants in nature connection activities amid the COVID restrictions. The social groups that benefitted from this activity were mainly vulnerable groups; children from low-income families, adults and young people with disabilities, older people who have recently been bereaved, and war veterans.

Green Minds’ re-introduction of beavers to key green spaces around Plymouth also proved to be an effective way to promote a range of volunteer opportunities and engage a more diverse audience. And an associated social media campaign accelerated outreach to an even broader audience; the project team saw a 970% increase in the project’s average engagement.

Culture is another vehicle through which climate change can be addressed. CAMINA, (Almeria, Spain) explored the role of culture in fostering social cohesion in urban areas through cultural heritage infrastructures and activities. This outreach and intercultural cohesion work could potentially also be harnessed to address climate change. So the project involved citizens, residents, artists, etc., together with the local authorities and cultural stakeholders in a novel project to shape culture and how people think about culture based on grassroots initiatives and applied collaborative design thinking, all undertaken in target neighbourhoods.

Plymouth’s Green Minds successfully attracted a quite diverse group of people (different ethnicities, ages, income groups) to its ‘Generation Restoration’ programme. This was an opportunity for them to plant flaxseeds and to then harvest and weave the leaves to create artwork. This activity fruitfully combined a connection with the land with the opportunity to share different experiences from different cultures in creating art - all in an urban setting.

### 3.2. Collaborative decision-making

How can meaningful co-creation and co-decision processes with citizens be organised and ensured over the long term?

Even after a connection with the different social groups and other stakeholders has been made, their active involvement in Just Transitions governance won’t happen automatically. A number of different approaches for different levels of public participation are possible. The ‘inform – consult – involve – collaborate – empower’ model provides a useful continuum (see Figure 3 below).

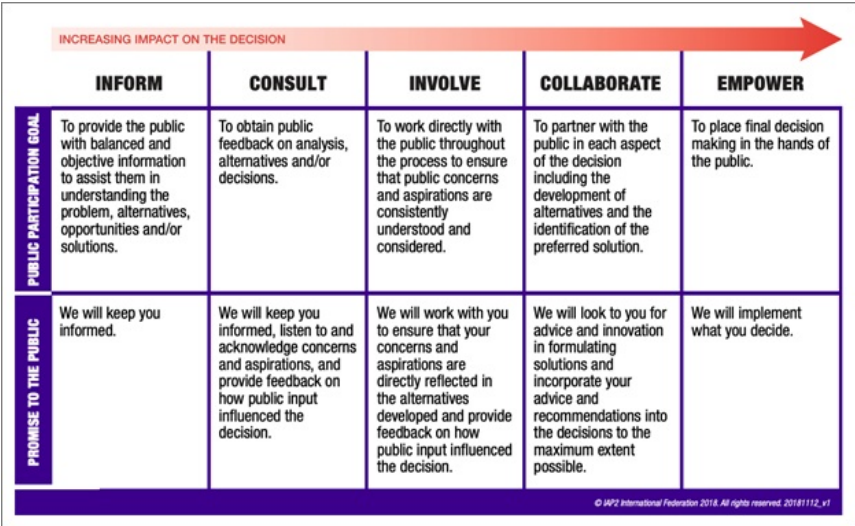


Figure 3: Spectrum of public participation. Adjusted from IAP2 (2018)

Literature suggests that, currently, many participation processes in cities and countries focus on informing and consulting city residents and stakeholders. However, democratic decision-making is about more than just participation (UIA, 2022). Achieving Just Transitions will need deep participation, new forms of co-creation, and more empowerment of all city residents. The distribution of power is therefore important in how we develop our cities (Noll, 2022). Co-creation will help to ensure that different interests are not only analysed or heard by the ‘outside’, but will also ensure that stakeholders are genuinely involved in identifying joint solutions and in any agreements to manage potential conflicts (UIA, Inception Report Democratic Transitions for all, 2023). Co-creation is not only about hearing everyone’s voices but ensuring that all social groups contribute to all types of policies (Adams and Ramsden, 2019).

The 14 UIA projects surveyed all mentioned that they aim to inform and consult, but several also aim for the highest level of empowerment. They don’t just use one level of participation but use different levels at the same time. Informing and consulting can

be seen as preparing the ground for higher levels of truly involving, collaborating, and empowering. The [inception report](#) noted that the higher levels of participation (in the forms of collaboration and empowering) are important for making Transitions to a carbon-neutral and climate-resilient Europe just. The UIA experience presented here suggests that using different participation methods is equally as important as using the 'lower' levels (informing, consulting) for enabling the higher levels (involving, collaborating, empowering).

**Table 2: [Overview of the approaches to participation and levels of participation in the 8 case studies](#)**

		INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
City	Project					
PARIS, FR	OASIS	<p><a href="#">OASIS Posters in the Neighbourhood</a></p> <p>During the co-design phase, the project team put up posters on the entrances of key neighbourhood locations to inform the local community about the project.</p> <p><a href="#">Banners on Schoolyard Fences</a></p> <p>The pupils painted a banner for their schoolyard to inform the local neighbourhood about the construction work taking place in their schoolyard.</p> <p><a href="#">School Board Meetings</a></p> <p>The project team joined the regular School Board meetings (taking place 3 times/year) to keep the teachers and parents updated on the project's progress.</p>	<p><a href="#">School Exhibitions</a></p> <p>The work developed during the co-design workshops was displayed to the entire school community (school staff, parents, and pupils), during an evening event to receive feedback.</p> <p><a href="#">Schoolyard openings-neighbourhood events</a></p> <p>The project team coordinated participatory activities with the neighbourhood to collect ideas for activities in the schoolyard during after-school hours.</p>	<p><a href="#">Co-design workshops</a></p> <p>A core team of 20 -25 pupils / school and their teachers were actively involved in co-design workshops for 6 months.</p>	<p><a href="#">Co-making workshops with school families</a></p> <p>After completing the large-scale construction work, the project team coordinated participatory workshops with parents and children to construct small-scale components of the schoolyards.</p>	<p><a href="#">Schoolyards Co-management Scheme.</a></p> <p>The City Departments and the school communities co-developed and agreed on a specific co-management scheme for the schoolyards, according to which everyone involved had clear and distinct roles. Every school had a schedule that listed every management task, contributor group, and delivery timeframe.</p>

		INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
BARCELONA , SP	GBG_AS2C	<p><b>Permanent School Exhibition</b></p> <p>Every school created posters for the GBG_AS2C project and posted them on the most visible spots on outdoor walls of the school buildings. The posters included photos taken by children (e.g. photovoice method) to showcase the changes that the children saw as the most important and interesting.</p> <p>Any visitor could read and find info on the project's scope, the works / enhancements and the children's preferences.</p>	<p><b>Co-deciding workshops with the children</b></p> <p>The project team ran workshops where experts explained to the children the benefits and the functions / uses of each proposed solution. The children were empowered to decide which blue, green, and grey solutions they considered the most appropriate for their schools.</p>	<p><b>Participatory Evaluation Activities</b></p> <p>The project team designed activities to involve participants directly in measuring the project's impact (e.g. using wearable sensors), particularly focusing on public health matters (air quality, thermal comfort).</p>		
GREATER MANCHESTER, UK	IGNITION	<p><b>Seeing is Believing</b></p> <p>The Living Lab on nature-based solutions and other small-scale projects (ecostreets) provide tangible first-hand experiences.</p> <p><b>Baseline</b> consultation to establish awareness among residents.</p>	<p><b>Citizen Engagement Survey</b></p> <p>To learn what people know about the benefits of nature-based solutions, how they value these and how they can be more engaged.</p> <p><b>Park user Survey</b></p> <p>To learn how parks are valued and used and how people would like to contribute to their maintenance.</p>	<p><b>Regular Workshops</b></p> <p>To form long standing relationships &amp; develop citizens ability to engage based on their specific needs &amp; motivations.</p> <p><b>BAME green sounding board</b> involved members of the BAME (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic communities).</p>	<p><b>Planting for the Planet exhibition</b></p> <p>Co-design with young people; identifying opportunities for co-creation and user generated story telling.</p>	<p><b>Ecostreets</b></p> <p>Local communities apply with their ideas to green their neighbourhood's public spaces, receive support in the planning, decide themselves on the design, and implement it collaboratively.</p>

		INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
SERAING, BE	<i>A Place To Be- Come</i>	<p><b>Comms campaign</b></p> <p>A communications campaign in the parks to promote their use and help people understand how they can become more involved.</p>		<p><b>La Ruche</b></p> <p>Creative hub and a key focal point for all the initiatives in the neighbourhood. Citizens are invited to bring their interests to the centre - support is available from the facilitator (the key enabler) - option to bid for small funding and use of the space.</p> <p><b>Parks Training</b></p> <p>Training local people to be (accredited) park managers as a route to both job creation, retraining, and greater ownership of green spaces.</p>		
BAIA MARE, RO	<i>SPIRE</i>			<p><b>iLEU</b></p> <p>This is the name of a local token, issued for participation in various initiatives. Promotes participation in those who value what they can use the iLEU for (mainly maker space facilities currently).</p> <p><b>Plantathons</b></p> <p>Local action by citizens, organised by the project, to plant trees and plants in key spaces in the city over weekends, getting people more involved in changing the landscape.</p>	<p><b>SPIRE Hub</b></p> <p>Some co-production here for the development of later phases, not really linked to green but more about the design of the hub and maker space.</p>	
Viladecans	Vilawatt	<p><b>Engaging</b></p> <p>Informing city residents using a mobile ice cream cart to get around neighbourhoods &amp; start a conversation.</p>	<p><b>Awareness raising</b></p> <p>Building awareness of energy saving using all available means, such as the Vilawatt song &amp; Vilawatt currency.</p>	<p>Focusing on specific target groups by setting up learning communities for professionals, schools, &amp; residents.</p>	<p><b>Setting up a PPCP</b></p> <p>A public private citizen partnership was set up to govern the project and directly involve business and community associations in governance.</p>	<p><b>Empowering citizens by creating a local currency</b></p> <p>The Vilawatt currency stimulates the local economy and boosts energy saving.</p>

		INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
Turin	Co-City		Consulting communities by inviting proposals through an open call.	Involving civic society organisations in repurposing derelict or abandoned land and buildings.	Co-creating the pact of collaboration with public officials.	Empowering officials to work in new integrated and collaborative ways.  Empowering all residents to believe that they can be an active part of the solution through concrete experiences.
PLYMOUTH, UK	GREEN MINDS	<p>'Love Exploring' mobile application to increase the use of all different areas of the Central Park; the largest green space in Plymouth.</p> <p>Green Minds used this existing app to engage families with content showcasing the park's wildlife (e.g., bees, butterflies, etc.) The aim was to motivate families to visit the park to explore the local wildlife instead of simply just using the playgrounds.</p>	Community Workshops The project team coordinated participatory workshops to define the Masterplan for an area encountering significant urban challenges, primarily focused on safety and lack of green spaces.	Building the 'Rewilding Network'  The project team facilitated the events for this network among interested individuals of different backgrounds and expertise. The network aimed to empower individuals to take immediate action. (110 members in total).	<p>Nature-Based Leadership programme</p> <p>The Municipality designed this module as part of the ongoing Leadership programmes offered to citizens.</p> <p>Established experts in sustainability leadership working with experienced leaders, professionals, and business owners who care about the climate and environmental crises and want to make a difference.</p>	<p>Co-stewardship model for public land – 'Village Hub' enterprise (6 members)</p> <p>This social enterprise was created under the <i>Green Minds</i> co-stewardship model. The Hub is responsible for managing part of the Blockhouse Park.</p> <p>The co-stewardship model is based on the voluntary work of the enterprise and not paid work. However, it is possible to receive funding for the needs of land management (e.g., materials).</p>

## Challenges encountered

Ultimately, in practice, Just Transitions need high levels of public participation to enable the co-creation and co-design, which are assumed, in turn, to enable the more radical innovation and the transformational steps that are needed for a carbon neutral and climate-resilient Europe. These higher-level engagement approaches are in the spotlight in this report as they are still underdeveloped. Cities face challenges when trying to implement them and need to be courageous and open minded to do so. The inception report mentions challenges such as:

- Different national and local governance cultures and their differing structures across European countries can either promote or hamper real partnership approaches and co-creation.
- Administrative procedures at local or higher levels can hinder certain participation schemes. Rigid bureaucracy often imposes regulatory barriers to co-creation, particularly in countries where top-down approaches are dominant.
- The involvement of the community in co-creation and decision-making is often considered as being disruptive to political and administrative processes.
- The reluctance of decision-makers to share power with citizens as well as citizens' lack of belief that a more democratic approach to co-creation will lead to implementing a joint vision of a carbon-neutral Europe are both major obstacles to collaborative decision-making.

The 14 cities surveyed for this report confirm these challenges and add several others:

- **Inclusiveness:** The hardest challenge perceived is to ensure inclusiveness in governance. Certain social groups or citizens may lack the necessary knowledge or skills, including language skills, the time, or are motivated by topics other than climate. Lack of trust also can be an issue. Just selecting action in different areas of the city does not necessarily ensure inclusiveness as OASIS (Paris), Co-City (Turin), and others discovered. Groups with different skills, lacking knowledge on the topic at stake, and unable to voice their concerns and ideas, can be a barrier to more democratic decision making.
- **Complexity:** GBG\_AS2C (Barcelona) found that it is difficult to take all the different interests into account. IGNITION (Greater Manchester) found it difficult to communicate the multiple benefits of the nature-based solutions for climate-resilience that it wanted to encourage to enable informed decisions by the different social groups. OASIS (Paris) struggled with the complexity of public engagement when seeking to sit everyone around the table.
- **Continuity:** After connecting with the different social groups, a subsequent challenge is to keep them in the information loop and ensure their continued motivation and active engagement in co-creation. Citizens may lack the capacity, skills, and time, which further constrains their engagement. OASIS initially struggled because residents lacked understanding and readiness for collaborative processes.
- **A lack of skills, resources, and capacity** in city administrations to lead such co-creation processes and a lack of options to institutionalise collaborative decision-making processes. SPIRE (Baia Mare) mentions, for example, the need for more seed money to develop governance processes and innovative solutions. HOPE (Helsinki) found it difficult to motivate enough people to participate; the amount of work and resources required may have been underestimated, and the general interest in air quality overestimated.
- **Legal frameworks and procedural restrictions** can pose another challenge, as SPIRE discovered, when, for example, the project tried to



establish a local currency token. The excessively long procedures meant that people didn't see any benefits, with the consequence that trust in the solution and engagement dropped.

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## Solutions found

### Create tangible first-hand experience to build engagement

UIA projects have been test beds for ambitious ways to make a reality of widening participation and engaging with people (chapter 2.2.) To illustrate this point Circular South (Antwerp) found it useful to combine co-creation with tangible first-hand experience, such as repair cafes or breakfast sessions. Similarly, the community kitchen in Lille's Tast'in Five offered a venue where the project could exploit other interests, such as caring for nature, well-being, or culture, as a hook to engage different social groups in governance. The results of Manchester's IGNITION project's first four co-designed ecostreets inspired numerous other communities to apply for funding to green their own neighbourhoods.

In an interesting tactic, OASIS (Paris), deliberately left the construction of schoolyards 'incomplete'. This provided the school community with the opportunity to finish them themselves. In 'co-making' workshops, parents and children contributed to the construction of flower beds, benches, teepee tents, play equipment structures, and much more. These activities gave the community a sense of ownership, appreciation, and responsibility for 'their space' and this will hopefully ensure their long-term commitment to them.

### Employ community managers or harness neighbourhood associations and initiatives

Widening involvement by harnessing associations, community or neighbourhood managers, or associations also helps. Greater Manchester's IGNITION project drew on the existing BAME network (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) to ensure inclusiveness reached groups often not involved. Its 'green sounding board' involved members of the BAME community (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic) and other residents and informed different practices in partnership organisations. Other projects used different ways to reach out: Turin's Co-City built neighbourhood houses, or so-called 'Casas de Quartieri', OASIS (Paris), A Place to be-come (Seraing) and others collaborated with local NGOs and other associations, which activated their networks.

Harnessing neighbourhood associations and NGOs can be effective as they have established networks and trust. However, this approach also comes with risks, which need to be minimised by carefully selecting only associations with an appropriate set up. Inclusiveness does not come automatically and some associations may focus on their own interests, their stability, or securing funding. In Turin's Co-City the associations that wanted to be selected to drive the neighbourhood houses were asked to show explicitly how they would ensure inclusive participation. However, as Baia Mare's SPIRE project discovered, this approach to empowerment hits a limiting condition as individual citizens can never have direct control over resources without first forming a formal organisation, which excludes all those who are not in such an organisation.

Using a facilitator, ambassador, or community manager has proved extremely helpful and even crucial to engaging people in co-design and co-decision and ensuring inclusiveness. This was key to A Place To Be-Come (Seraing) and also to Greater Manchester's IGNITION project's ecostreet roll out activities, which used community managers to go into each of the less affluent districts, explore the different social groups, understand their behaviour and needs and to work out how they could be engaged to collaborate in creating their own ecostreets and pocket parks.

Barcelona's GBG\_AS2C project realised that having one permanent 'community engagement manager' to mediate between the various stakeholders (coordination team, school administration, families, designers etc.) is key to overcoming the challenge of unrealistic or conflicting expectations. By appointing a specific person to communicate on scope and provide project updates creates consistency in the communication between all actors and a common understanding of the process and outcomes.

### Design interactive engagement processes

UIA projects have often used co-creation activities, on a small scale, to re-design urban areas or processes in the city because these offer a way to collaborate and, by the same token, empower participants. Such activities can provide practical experience, create trust, build confidence and capacities, which can then be scaled up as more democratic governance approaches to deliver Just Transitions. Košice 2.0 (Košice) and IGNITION (Greater Manchester), for example, used Hackathons in which citizens work together in a limited time frame to develop ideas and solutions.

Košice 2.0 also developed Design Sprints, which in the future could also address climate topics. Sprints allow citizens and stakeholders to participate in designing urban areas, bringing in their own perspectives and ideas. Moreover, participants from different fields learn and apply new collaborative techniques this way. Trust in the process is built when the city takes residents' ideas seriously and continues to develop the models and plans with workshop participants and stakeholders from the business and academic sectors. At the same time, participating citizens learn about the climate and about other challenges. The inclusiveness of the process depends, however, on how well all social groups are enabled and motivated to participate.

Greater Manchester's IGNITION enabled residents to design their ecostreets. It supplied information, held interviews in the street, ran workshops, and provided hands-on-support with building work - and residents had the final word on the design.

In Paris, OASIS realised that getting the timing of the participatory activities right is critical to achieving effective engagement. Ensuring a meaningful sequence for the engagement activities (from the core users to the broader public) is the key to success and the project adjusted the timing of certain activities accordingly. Baia Mare's SPIRE project noted that there is a risk that people engaging in a Board or playing some part in forming a plan could expect that it is implemented by the city directly. If this is not intended and the process and conditions not clearly communicated, this can lead to frustration and loss of trust and engagement.

### Establish a common understanding of the project



Climate change can be a vague term for audiences beyond scientists. In community participation activities, it is crucial to describe the impacts of climate change in ways and terms that are thoughtfully tailored to the characteristics of the audience. Barcelona's GBG\_AS2C team encountered an unexpected challenge when pupils and teachers became terrified about what the future will look like due to the impacts of climate change. The teacher was shocked, and a few pupils cried. This incident led to a re-thinking of the narrative of the project's environmental component and its re-structuring around messages of hope and of the great potential of collective action to change the future. Green Minds (Plymouth) worked with the Devon Wildlife Trust to develop tailored apprenticeship programmes for parks staff, trainees, key volunteers, and community groups. This practical and participative programme shows an effective way of introducing the concept of nature-based approaches in the design and management of a city's green spaces, training the participants to adopt this approach in their everyday tasks, and embedding this methodology in all future apprenticeships.

### **Apply visualisation and other tools and tailor them**

Citizens need sufficient knowledge to take informed decisions. Moreover, enabling all social groups to participate in co-creation requires appropriate and target-group specific participatory tools and approaches. When Greater Manchester's IGNITION project found it difficult to communicate the multiple benefits of the nature-based solutions for climate-resilience, it developed different tools, including web-based apps and tested whether gamification could help people to understand that nature-based solutions offer multiple benefits - and encourage them to apply the idea in their lives. A better understanding of the complexity and impacts of chosen solutions can help people to take better decisions, rather than just follow their gut feeling or (perceived) personal interests. Knowledge and understanding can be a way out of the dilemma between catering to all possible interests and tackling the overarching challenge of climate change. It offers a hope of convincing people to change their behaviour and forego some 'personal interest'.

In the case of OASIS (Paris), meaningful engagement with children was needed. Therefore, from the project's logo and illustrations to the language and methods (collage, models, drawings) used during the workshops, the messages, instructions, and outcomes were tailored to the level of understanding and the needs of the children. To engage the local community, OASIS also used illustrators to sketch the residents' ideas. That gave them the feeling that their ideas mattered and that nothing would be imposed top down by the project. It created trust and increased engagement.

SPIRE (Baia Mare) found that a graphic record kept during different meetings was as an effective tool for capturing and reflecting ideas back. This 'life-visualisation' supported the discussions by showing missing points or conflicting interests, which triggered new ideas and helped to re-shape solutions.

### **Ensure some quick wins and early visible results**

Co-creation can also be undermined if people don't see results quickly. People will often need to see some progress to feel further engaged and continue to trust the process. If short term solutions are not feasible on the main topics then other quick wins can be explored to maintain citizens' motivation. Circular South (Antwerp) offered citizens small concrete tasks of use to them in their everyday lives, which provided them with positive feedback to their participation. In Baia Mare's SPIRE, after consultations and co-design workshops, participants got involved in Plantathons. These intensive planting activities created visible results and a sense of ownership and pride in the area. Participants often returned in subsequent planting sessions. A Place To Be-Come (Seraing) observed the same positive feedback loop with growing vegetables, caring for flower beds and other such activities as part of its work to

develop and promote parks.

Introducing a local currency or reward system for citizens can be another quick win at an individual level. Local currencies already have a long history and have been used by cities for transformative programmes since Wörgl in Austria in the 1930s, where the local currency enabled large scale job creation projects. A couple of the UIA projects found this a good way of increasing engagement. Vilawatt (Viladecans) developed the Vilawatt currency, which is worth 1 EURO and can be earned by signed-up residents as a reward for their energy savings. This can then be spent to pay local taxes and other charges as well as at 400 businesses in the city. This money stays and circulates in the local economy and generated a significant multiplier effect, to the benefit of the local economy. The Vilawatt is now the most widely used alternative currency in Spain operated by a city. With Lahti's CitiCap, citizens whose mobility emissions remain below their personal quotas are offered cheaper public transport or bicycle maintenance services via an online marketplace. Antwerp's Circular South invented Circules, which residents could earn for scoring well in an individual and group challenge on reducing residential waste. Circules is a way to show people the tangible benefits of energy saving, sustainable mobility behaviour, caring for greenspace, or recycling. It has proven to offer an effective way to get people thinking about climate change topics. When they see a direct benefit for themselves, this can make people more open to necessary climate action in general. Low-income groups in particular can benefit from such schemes as a change in behaviour provides them with vouchers and monetary advantages. As Alicia Valle, Chief Executive of Viladecans said, "Energy efficiency was not a talking point in the city before the Vilawatt project, now everyone is aware of it".

### **Explore the options such as citizen budgets and grant programmes**

Citizen budgets are already used by several cities across Europe. A certain amount of the city's budget is set aside, and citizens decide, for example by voting, how this will be used; this is often by prioritising projects. While this is empowering citizens, these are often only smaller projects, and the inclusiveness depends on how well all social groups are encouraged and provided with the information they need to be able to participate. Košice 2.0 (Košice) set up a grant programme, 'Inovuj ty', to support innovative ideas. Under this programme, city residents could apply for their preferred projects through open calls and implement them with financial support and mentoring. Their projects are linked to the city's needs and aim to improve urban services, public spaces, community buildings, etc. HOPE (Helsinki) empowered residents by enabling them to vote for a selection of local air quality improvement projects to be implemented.

### **Use culture and arts action as a vehicles**

SPIRE (Baia Mare) did not just use simple graphic recording to visualise different interests, conflicts, and results. The project engaged artists to mirror and reflect conversations back. This way, the artwork and graphics were actively used in the sessions to stimulate discussion, rather than as a mere record. This proved to be a lively and effective interactive technique that people could more easily connect to.

The aim of CAMINA (Almería) was to ease the integration of social groups and foster residents' interaction with the project in three different neighbourhoods, where different minority groups predominate – Roma, people from the Maghreb countries, and Sub-Saharan people – by changing their mindsets. Interaction between these areas is low due to mindsets. By collecting cultural and historical stories and building a circular cultural walk through three ancient neighbourhoods, the project attempted to build a new narrative that promotes integration and the inclusion of minority groups. This built a foundation for social laboratories on culture and co-design, where citizens come together and create their city. The physical routes connecting different ancient areas created a cultural itinerary which was the basis for the 'Novel Collective Narrative of Almería', a historico-cultural reconnection with the city's past. It was created by gathering local testimonials and experts to bridge the diverse and multicultural communities living in the city. CAMINA successfully fostered participation and got people talking to each other and this could also be a basis to bring in other topics, such as climate change.

## Build innovative partnerships

Vilawatt (Viladecans) created a public-private community partnership (PPCP) for the governance of energy efficiency in the city. The executive body was established as a local energy operator with a remit to use city assets, such as school roofs, to generate solar power. It involves the community and the private sector directly. Citizens therefore had a say in decision-making and become energy operators themselves. Establishing the PPCP as a non-profit organisation under the Spanish law had to overcome certain barriers; two associations – one for citizens and one for businesses, had to be created so it could operate.

Co-City (Turin) developed 'Pacts of Collaboration', a model adapted from Bologna. At the time of writing, 55 Pacts of Collaboration had already been signed. Under a Pact, local community organisations work with officials from the city to draw up a feasibility plan for the space or building in the neighbourhood, including regenerated open spaces for use as community gardens, playgrounds, schoolyards, or sports facilities. This co-design phase enabled the feasibility of the proposal to be assessed; further work to refine the plan; the assessment of risks and assumptions; and to allocate resources. A good example is Beeozanam, which is a large horseshoe shaped, 2 storey former foundry building from the 1930s. Its regeneration included a large rooftop terrace area and horticultural garden, an artspace, and the colocation of health and wellbeing facilities. A future phase will renovate former dormitory accommodation used by Fiat for migrant workers. The inclusiveness of this approach depended on the ability of the community organisations to ensure the inclusive participation of citizens.

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## 3.3. Impacts of engagement on individual behaviour and climate action

How can individual engagement increase awareness, understanding, and lead to lasting changes in behaviours, and thereby contribute to societal change?

This section explores the behaviour change at the individual level that different forms of engagement and co-creation/co-decision can elicit. In addition to laws, bans, and incentives, active engagement and collaboration can be key to changing people's behaviour. They can help people through a learning-by-doing approach to increase their understanding about the needs and challenges of Just Transitions and to give them the skills they need to be able to act. As they become more knowledgeable from co-creating with planners and implementing actions, active residents develop ownership of the achievements and feel motivated to change their own behaviour. This process can have a domino effect, leading to a context that is more fertile for change and action - and more projects - thereby further increasing the opportunities and incentives to change behaviour at an individual level and ultimately contributing to climate change action. When analysing the UIA projects, it appears that this type behavioural change/process has not been explicitly measured to date, except in Green Minds (Plymouth), which developed an evaluation method with the University of Plymouth to assess the impacts of its apprenticeship programme on participants' change of behaviour towards nature in green and blue urban spaces. The HOPE project (Helsinki) observed that, "We have no way of knowing this, and it is still too early to see if there will be a change. Our method of doing follow-up user surveys for our activities should have been organised differently from the beginning of the project. Climate issues were not our target or theme." Nevertheless, behaviour change and support for climate action can be tested for and assessed by expert evaluation.

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### Individual behaviour changes

The UIA projects surveyed agreed that their participatory action had had an influence on behavioural change at individual level or was likely to have one soon. Learning by doing is seen as an important mechanism because it increases knowledge and awareness, which could then be applied in people's daily and working lives. This is true of the multiple interactive workshops, the design sprints in Kosice 2.0 (Košice) or Hackathons. In A Place To Be-Come (Seraing), active citizens from the area involved in managing and

maintaining parks and greenspaces became ambassadors, helping to promote respect for the parks among their peers and in the wider community.

Across all the projects it was noted that co-creation creates trust and opens people's minds to the co-design of other and bigger activities across the city. Co-creation leads to the development of ideas and spaces that speak best to local community needs and aspirations and foster ownership. People also develop an affinity for the solutions developed, as in Greater Manchester's IGNITION: "Six months into the pocket park project, participants shifted from identifying as LGBT people participating in a gardening project to feeling like environmental 'activists' – we think that the different opportunities to engage in the idea of nature-based solutions supported this for the different members of the group". Local community pride and cohesion led, at the same time, to more interactions in outdoor spaces. Furthermore, stakeholders involved in redesigning and co-managing the schoolyards in OASIS developed a sense of ownership and responsibility for their communal space. In Plymouth, Green Minds' goal was to create green mindsets, which implied changing established lifestyles toward more pro-environmental ones. In this respect, its apprenticeship programme and other participative actions worked. According to a recent survey, 89% of people participating in Green Minds activities strongly agreed with the statement "I felt closer to nature" and 93% of participants said that, "spending time in nature was good for my physical and mental health".

Reward systems offer another opportunity. The participation in these schemes does not only provide residents with an individual monetary or other advantages. With their decision to join such schemes, they join a community taking action on climate change. This kind of collaborative action can trigger higher awareness and further active engagement in co-creating a carbon-neutral and climate resilient city; the change in behaviour is thus extended beyond the original scope of the reward.

Circular South (Antwerp) developed an app that allowed participants to track their consumption of electricity and production of waste. The project found participants used less energy and water, reused materials and accumulated and disposed of less household refuse. The campaign on reducing waste was so successful that it was rolled out citywide. Several other UIA projects developed or used reward systems with a type of virtual currency and people decide themselves if they want to make use of them. Circular South (Antwerp) invented Circules, which residents could earn for scoring well in an individual and group challenge on reducing residential waste. The rewards can be used on various activities, such as free swimming, discounts at cultural centres and museums, or at the EcoHuis eco-shop. CitiCap (Lahti) followed a similar approach by rewarding sustainable mobility behaviour; users whose mobility emissions remained below their personal quota levels were offered cheaper public transport or bicycle maintenance services via an online marketplace. HOPE (Helsinki) tried gamification towards the end of the project and gave active participants small incentives and prizes (tokens for free coffee, etc.). This seemed to work well but it required resources and there are some legal and bureaucratic restrictions to giving out prizes.

Vilawatt (Viladecans) expanded the Vilawatt currency from a single district to the whole city and is now the most widely used alternative currency in Spain operated by a city. Developing the Vilawatt currency and making it work required careful design, as well as assistance from an external company and collaboration with the Bank of Spain. However, the longer-term impact of the currency on energy efficiency behaviour has not yet been evaluated. There is some evidence that the gains have often been undermined by the use of additional energy consuming appliances or activities. In Lahti's CitiCap, the results with pilot users were positive, but this could not be extended significantly to other users. This would have required establishing a company to develop the CitiCap-app and the reward system to levels that are attractive for commercial involvement to gain traction. This shows that such schemes need to be considered as one piece in a broader context and be financially attractive to business participants to ensure lasting decreases in energy consumption.

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## Changes in city officials' behaviours

Kosice2.0 (Košice) and others found that city officials also learned from the participatory actions both in terms of new and creative solutions and in terms of participatory and inclusive governance per se, which changed their behaviour and attitude towards future processes. In Turin's Co-City, around 90 city officials and civil servants from 24 different city departments were involved in the project implementation and evaluated positively the enabling role of Co-City as a way to develop innovative sustainable urban development policies and practices.

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## Achieving cities' climate targets

At the same time, the projects perceive the participatory processes as having had some or a substantial positive impact on carbon-neutrality and climate resilience in their cities, particularly those projects targeting this topic. With public participation, new and possibly better climate solutions can be developed. UIA projects offer a number of examples of this: behavioural reward systems, the ecostreets and pocket parks in Greater Manchester's IGNITION, the Design sprints for developing ideas to reduce the impact of heatwaves at bus stops in Kosice2.0, (Kosice) and redesigning schoolyards in OASIS (Paris). Long-term participation and co-creation enable solutions to be constantly refined and improved. In many projects, people's increased awareness and understanding, and their involvement in the development of measures, gave them a feeling of ownership and this led to greater support for the city's climate actions. These positive feedback loops can then ensure high participation in reward schemes, energy communities, and other activities supporting local climate policies.

