Green urban planning for intercultural cities

INTERCULTURAL CITIES
CITÉS INTERCULTURELLES

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Contents

Edited by the Intercultural Cities Unit based on interviews and desk research carried out by Working with the 99%

Cover image:
Alphavector

Intercultural Cities Unit,

Council of Europe, September 2022

Introduction

The last seven years have been the warmest on record (WMO, 2022). The continuous rise in greenhouse gas emissions has increased the frequency and intensity of severe weather events. Beyond immediate destruction and deaths, these phenomena also lead to the degradation of freshwater sources and loss of biodiversity and, in the mid and long-term, result in the decrease in water supply and food security. Besides, although we are all experiencing the effects of climate change, the environmental crisis has disproportionate, and magnified, negative impacts on socially disadvantaged groups who are further exposed to environmental stress factors often linked with urban segregation, unsatisfactory housing conditions, and precarious employment

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) "Sixth Assessment Report, Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis" warned that the earth will reach a temperature rise of about 1.5℃ in the coming years, unless we collectively take urgent and stringent measures to reduce our emissions. The Synthesis report that the IPCC released in Spring 2022 devotes a whole chapter to urban systems and other settlements and calls for a change in urban planning towards more sustainable and environmentally friendly models.

There is indeed a growing recognition of the need for green urban planning and regeneration, and some measures in this sense are already being implemented. The green transition is, however, not automatically equitable, and must be carefully and thoughtfully implemented to ensure its outcomes are evenly distributed. The most vulnerable groups are frequently not included - when not displaced - in interventions or actions that aim to transform our cities. In addition, traditional urban renovation processes often result in communities losing their sense of identity when their environment is radically changed, and there are consequences for minority groups and the diversity of the community, which has an effect on opportunities for intercultural interaction.

This policy brief has been co-written by the cooperative *Working with the 99%* and the Intercultural Cities (ICC) Unit within the framework of the Council of Europe's Intercultural Cities (ICC) programme. It compiles a set of policy solutions to advise local authorities on actions and policies to ensure that the greening of our cities not only creates a more sustainable environment but also becomes a factor in reducing segregation and increasing intercultural interaction. The policy brief further aims to inspire reflection on what cities can do to contribute to a more equitable *green transition*, based on eco-inclusive planning guidelines and inspirational case studies[1].

The document is structured in three parts:

1. Eco-inclusive planning guidelines: measures in the planning of green and intercultural cities;

2. Case examples: practical cases promoted by public bodies and others to illustrate how the eco-inclusive planning guidelines can be implemented in practice;

3. Action guide: a summary of principles that should be put into practice to achieve more inclusive green cities.

It is important to emphasise that all the suggestions presented in this policy brief must be critically considered and adapted by cities given the socio-environmental challenges they face locally. There is no one recipe for achieving sustainability and inclusion in cities. Strategies may vary depending on geographies, cultural and socio-economic contexts, available resources, and many other factors. The inclusive climate transition can take different forms, require various resources and occur at different times, but it always requires great collective commitment across borders.

1 Selected based on an online survey targeted at ICC members (from April to June 2022) and complementary desk research.

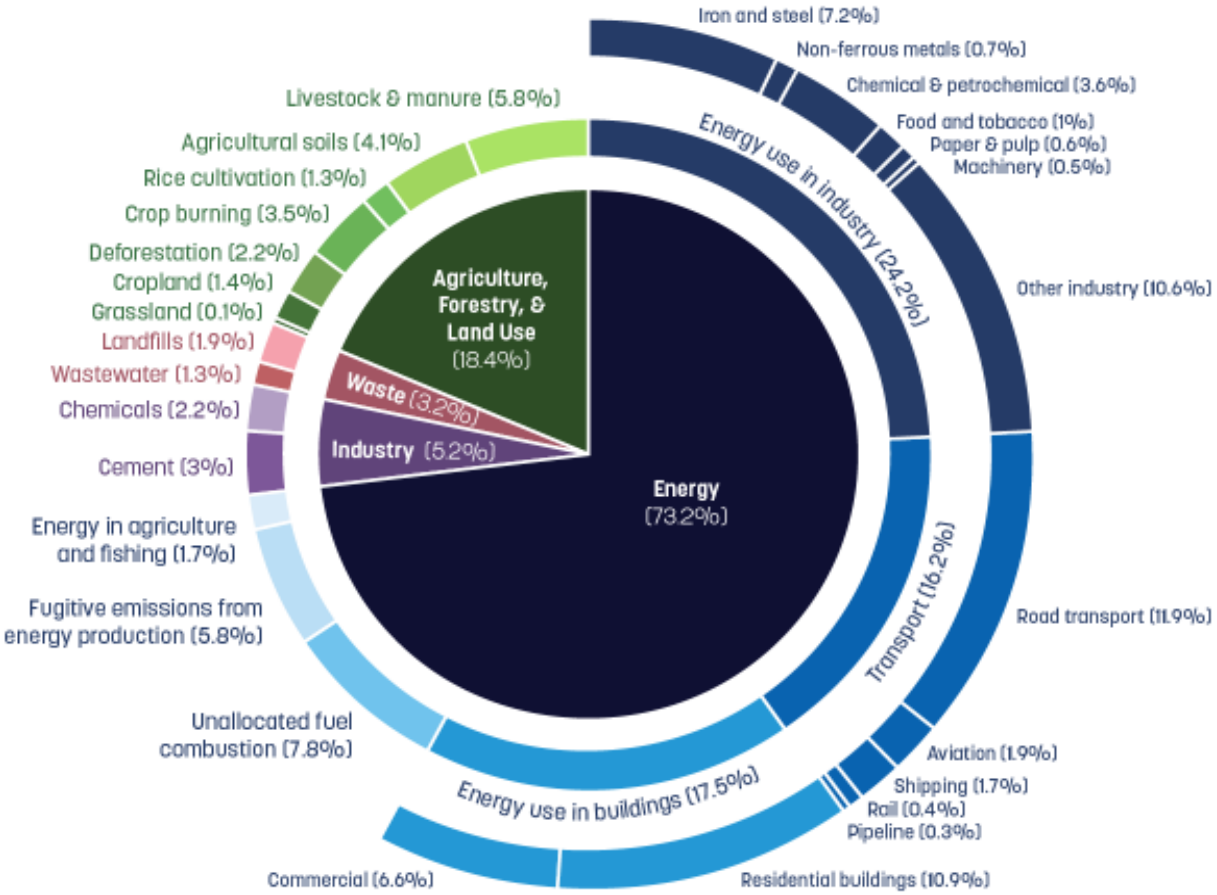
The context

Cities are not delimited spatial units and ought not to be seen as having flat and homogeneous socio-spatial realities. Diverse individuals and groups should be able to meet and interact, enjoy social and public life, share spaces or experiences, on an equal footing. In reality, though, there is growing social and economic exclusion, including spatial segregation, in particular in cities and urban settlements (UN, 2017, p.3).

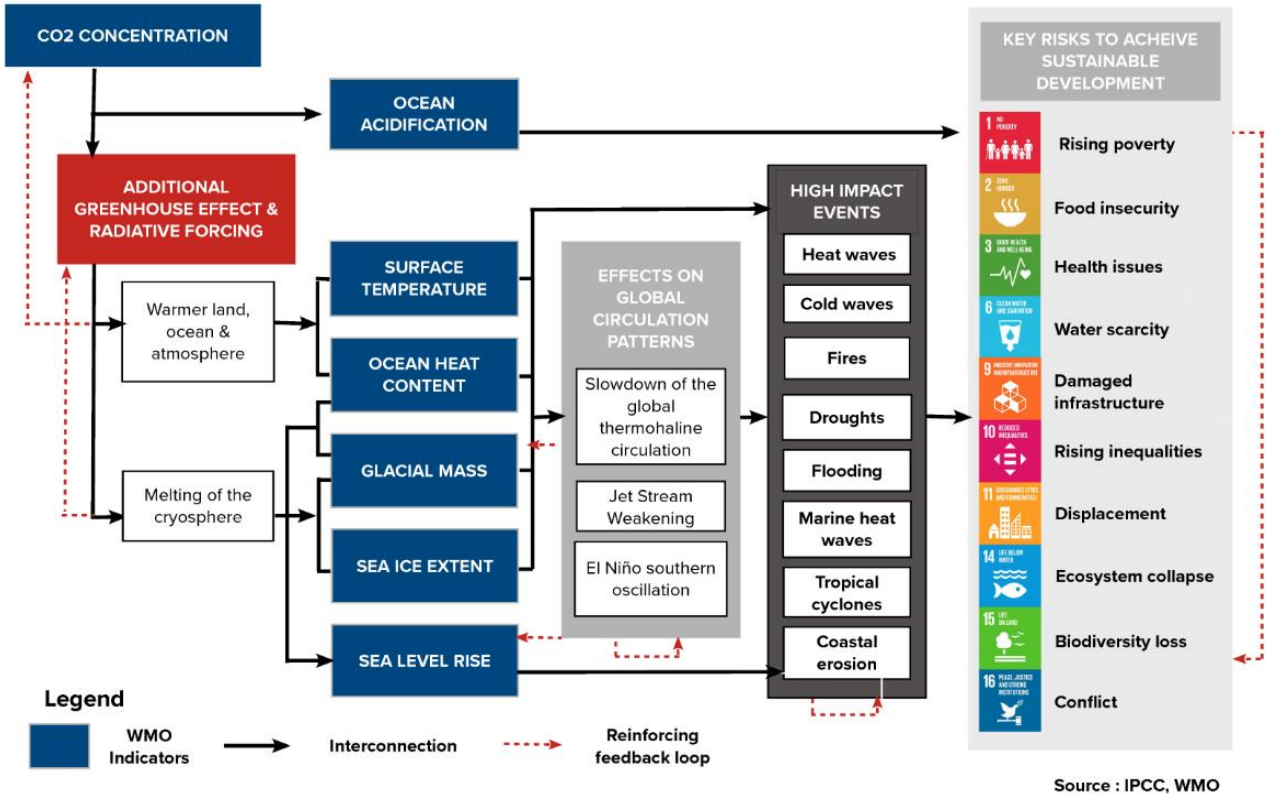
Traditional urbanisation models have indeed been characterised by uneven territorial development due to rounds of revaluation of devalued territories through urban expansion, densification and reconstruction operations, property (re)organisation, selective infrastructure connectivity, and other kinds of territory commodification. On top of the rupture of the ecological balance of our territories, these models have exacerbated the polarisation of socio-spatial conditions and the perpetuation of socio-spatial segregation cycles.

Interdependence between urbanisation and the climate crisis

A significant amount of energy and resources is consumed in urban areas. According to Climate Watch and the World Resources Institute, a considerable percentage of global greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) comes from energy used in buildings (17.5%). Other sectors operating mainly to sustain the current lifestyle in urban environments are also accountable for high levels of GHG, including: transport (16.2%), the metals industry (7.9%), the cement industry (3%), and deforestation (2.2%). There is a clear interdependence between the urbanisation and the climate crisis.

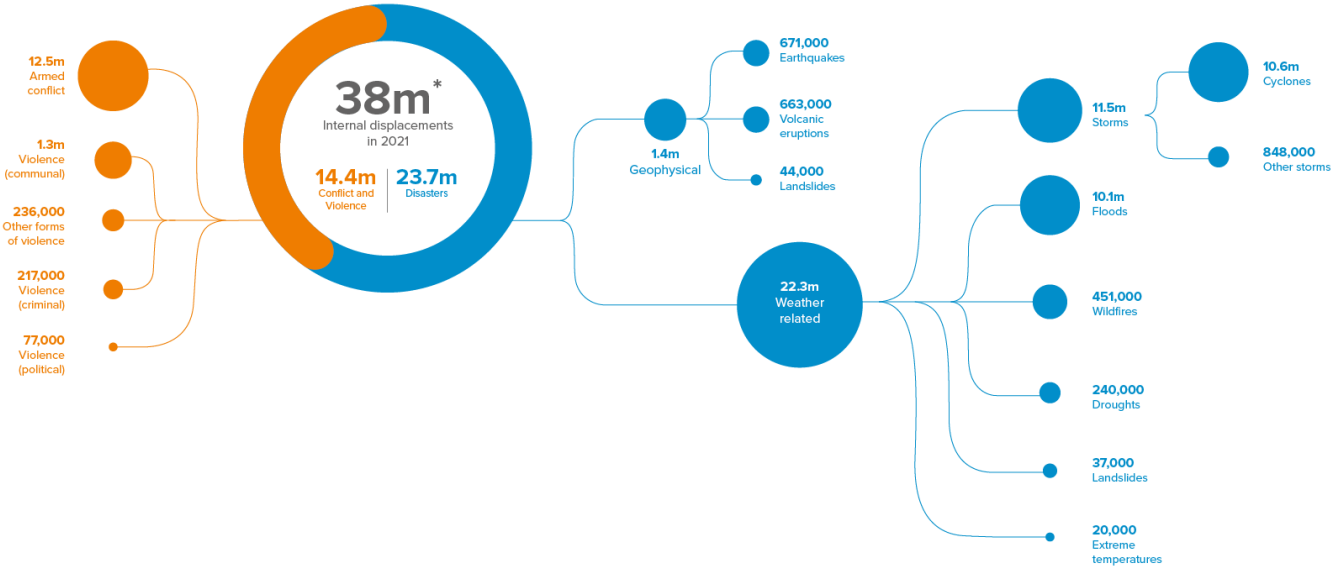


IMG 1 - Global Greenhouse Gas Emissions by Sector (World Bank, 2021)



IMG 2 - Cascading effects of atmospheric CO2 concentrations (WMO, 2022)

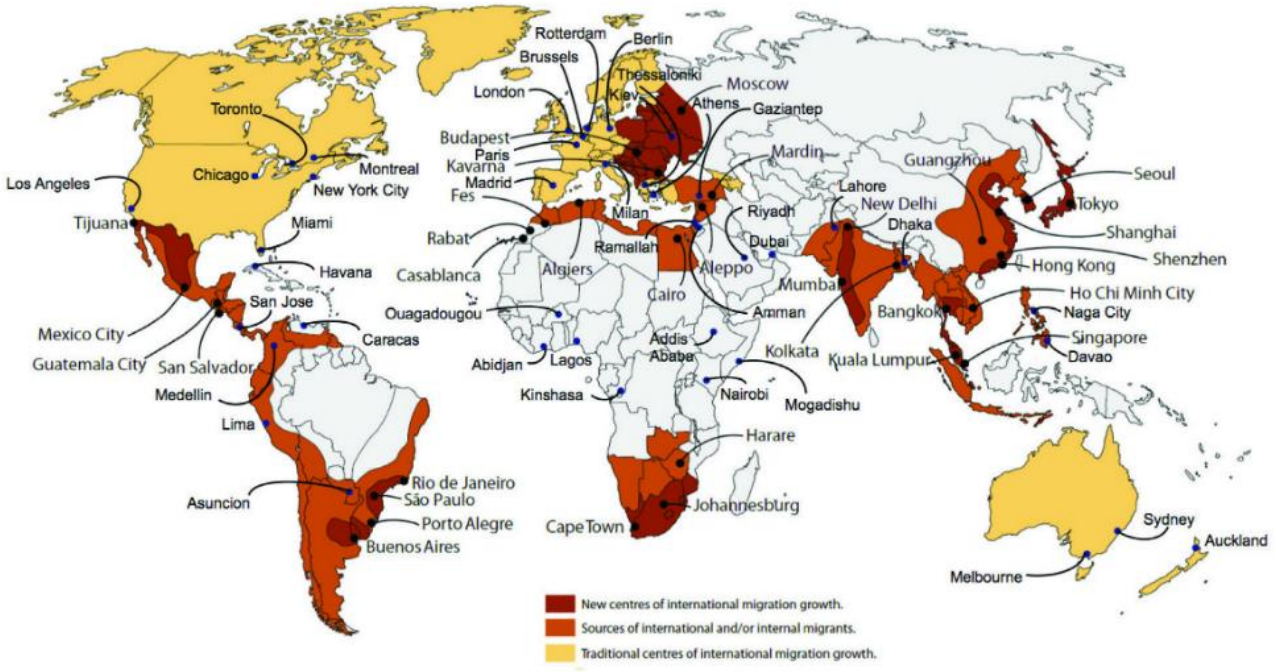
This interdependence is also visible in terms of urban socio-economic dynamics**.** Climate displacement is not simply an abstract theoretical concept: research conducted by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) reveals that in the last decade an average of 23 million people were displaced every year due to natural disasters (IDMC, 2022). Similarly, the World Bank estimates that internal migration for climate reasons could reach 216 million people by 2050 (World Bank, 2021).



IMG 3 - Internal displacements breakdown by conflict, violence and disasters (2021) (IDMC, 2022)

The destruction of the environment, the unavailability of natural resources and the scarcity of food are among the

main drivers of climate displacement (WEF, 2015)[2]



IMG 4 (right) - Global Diversification of Migration Destinations (IOM, 2015)

It should be further noted that, according to estimations by the Met Office and World Food, even if CO2 emissions are drastically reduced globally through high adaptation efforts, their impact will continue to be asymmetrical for a long time unless the measures taken **are equitably distributed.**[3]

The asymmetrical share of the burden is visible also at the local level where some residents may see their situation worsened by urban segregation. Recent research shows that green strategies applied to urban regeneration often target residential areas of the middle and upper classes or end up in fostering gentrification, which results in an increase in housing prices, contributing to the displacement of low-income families[4].

How can a city drive a more equitable green transition on a local and global level?

The Paris Agreement (UN, 2016) encourage policymakers to pursue efforts towards social justice alongside their attempts at climate mitigation and adaptation. Cities have a role to play in ensuring a fair distribution of goods and adaptation burdens through their green transition policies.

An equitable green transition should articulate and interconnect natural, economic and social systems and goals. For public authorities this means establishing trade-offs between economic, social and ecological developments. By merging these three agendas cities have higher chances to change the habits, power relations and social structures that have held back a fair green transition (Löwy, 2021). A careful design of sustainable and inclusive places helps ensuring a balance between the recovery and preservation of biodiversity and natural ecosystems, and the construction and rehabilitation of urban infrastructures that allow for an equitable response to resident's

[2] See also Environmental hotspots and migration (Warner et. al., 2010) and Food Insecurity and Climate Change (Met Office and WFP, n.d.)

[3] See also Inequality and climate change vicious cycle (Islam & Winkel, 2017) and Economic losses from weather-related disasters, 1995-2015 (Islam & Winkel, 2017)

[4] See also "Greening cities – To be socially inclusive? About the alleged paradox of society and ecology in cities" (Haase, D. et.al, 2017)

social needs. These issues should be placed high on the political agenda and benefit from the adequate allocation of resources.

In addition, an intercultural city is also committed to valuing diversity through public discourse, and to take into account the needs of a diverse citizenry in policymaking. "The New Urban Agenda acknowledges that culture and cultural diversity are sources of enrichment for humankind and provide an important contribution to the sustainable development of cities, human settlements and citizens, empowering them to play an active and unique role in development initiatives" (UN, 2017, p.4). Realising the "diversity advantage" through urban planning requires undertaking positive actions that preserve the diversity of places and public space as assets. This includes also a public discourse that contributes to improving the image of marginalised neighbourhoods, recognising and valuing the diversity of individuals and groups in the city and in its public spaces. Lastly, it requires a framework for regeneration which respects and sustains the identity and culture of the original community, amplifying local culture and integrating change within the social fabric as a way to promote sense of shared belonging in places.

It further calls for ensuring the right of the population to participate in decisions on urban development in a participatory manner. The use of participatory approaches in all stages of the urban planning and design process can also be very helpful in making sure local needs are met. These can be very varied and range from the need for safe movement (including walking, cycling and high-frequency transit) to the need for access to food and essential services. The need for public spaces for mental, physical and immunological health must also be considered, together with the need for fair and adequate housing, and the need for public spaces that can host social services for schools, libraries, religious and cultural institutions, for example.

Finally, addressing the impact of climate change at the local level should also entail a multilevel and multistakeholder negotiation of urbanisation on a more global scale. In fact, the projects that benefit one territory can have negative impacts on a neighbouring location; similarly, local problems cannot be solved through local resources only.

When engaging in urban planning and regeneration, public authorities should therefore look as far as possible beyond administrative borders.

Eco-inclusive urban planning guidelines

Green urban planning implies the acknowledgement of the value of biodiversity not only in the 'wild' but also in our cities. Green public policies should therefore conceive nature not as a mere commodity for human consumption, but as having an essential value that must be protected and preserved for future generations.

A first step in this sense is to consider green and water resources as non-commercial goods and for access to them to be shared fairly by the population, regardless of administrative boundaries and land ownership.

The second step is to take into consideration the place of nature in urban planning and design by investing in the restoration and preservation of natural ecosystems, thus securing their ability to deliver services that are fundamental to human health and well-being (eg. food, water, pollution control, recreational services, wastewater treatment, etc.).

For the green transition to become equitable, public authorities should pay particular attention to the way in which, and means by which, the benefits of increased urban biodiversity will be shared among the population.

This includes securing everyone's access to natural spaces and services that foster health and well-being, as well as the fair distribution of the relevant economic benefits, by containing the expansion of urbanisation and eliminating physical and institutional barriers that hinder social justice in daily life.

The next chapters propose five steps that can increase the ability of cities to carry out eco-inclusive green transition.

Step 1. Empowering urban green spaces

Green spaces play a key role in the eco-inclusive transformation of our cities since they provide opportunities for meaningful intercultural encounters and exchanges, while providing a starting point for the green transition. For instance, a better management of the green spaces already present in the city can contribute to increase the presence of wildlife including birds, insects and other species of flora and fauna. In terms of human well-being, urban green spaces help reducing heat islands during heat waves. The collective design of urban green spaces can also enhance cultural experimentation and promote a community-based governance which increases a sense of belonging and contributes to fostering a pluralistic city identity. Applied to urban planning and regeneration, the intercultural cities core principle of fostering meaningful intercultural interaction means promoting the positive benefits of intercultural identities within the neighbourhoods and encouraging social encounters and the development of relationships with no imposed barriers, by welcoming a range of users in inclusive public spaces. This can be done with the creation of spaces to facilitate both casual encounters and more structured activities and events that promote social interaction between all residents.

In order to take advantage of, and expand, the intrinsic potential of existing green spaces, local authorities should carry out an exhaustive mapping of the city's green resources, and conduct surveys of the multiple services they already provide. This will simultaneously help in the elaboration of a strategy to leverage the ecosystem services of outdoor urban space and guarantee equitable access to their benefits.

The preservation, regeneration and maintenance of existing urban green spaces should be prioritised over the construction of new ones, thus reducing the extraction and production of new resources.

However, green spaces in cities are commonly disjointed fragments that fill densely built urban environments. Connecting these spaces can help mitigate the loss of biodiversity and could potentially not only create new "corridors" for species but also act as bridges for people to meet and interact (see the case example in Armenia, Colombia).

A municipal network of green spaces across neighbourhoods can be put in place by setting up new natural and semi-natural spaces between the existing ones, with different formats and scales including everything from big parks, green promenades and green squares to urban gardens, green playgrounds, urban flowerbeds, roof and mural gardens. This kind of ecological corridor provides unique opportunities to (re)connect – through ecological infrastructures - segregated neighbourhoods to other areas of the city, and to make the former more attractive.

This kind of intervention can be further empowered by applying existing legislation or ad hoc regulations also to private green spaces, so that they are preserved and integrated into the municipal strategy.

Other technical aspects to be taken into consideration in the design of a municipal network of green spaces might include:

- the strategic distribution of permeable soil in the city so that rainwater is filtered on natural terrain, and the risk of flooding is mitigated.
- The implementation of cooling corridors, by taking into account the prevailing winds, so as to ensure natural ventilation throughout the cities. Although these corridors do not necessarily have to be "green", their effectiveness increases exponentially if they are.
- The incorporation of water resources in the cooling corridors, as well as in all other urban open spaces. However, this action should not resort to water circulation systems with high energy consumption. Cities should rather design passive water circulation systems (implementing energy production devices for their self-sufficiency) and, whenever possible, they should use and enhance existing natural water resources. A way to do this is to uncover existing watercourses that were often covered in urban planning operations in the 20th century.

As a complementary measure, cities can promote the afforestation of peripheral areas of the city. These areas can act as oxygen pockets, helping to control the temperature in the city, and prevent the occurrence of natural disasters, while providing well-being and a healthier lifestyle to the residents.

An inclusive planning and management of green spaces will also include making sure that these are accessible and welcoming for all residents. Cities should therefore pay attention to secure an equal distribution of green spaces across the city, taking into account not only their quantity but also their size and quality.

Very often the most attractive green public spaces and facilities (such as large gardens, squares, sports grounds, playgrounds, open-air amphitheatres and even libraries, etc.) are concentrated in the central or most densely builtup areas of our cities, while neighbourhoods in the outskirts are kept aside from regeneration programmes. However, for a green transition to be truly inclusive, urban space renovation actions should prioritise the most disadvantaged areas of the city (see the case example in Valencia, Spain).

Working on the establishment of a municipal network of green spaces can be a solution to this issue, as it will enable local authorities to take the whole municipal area into account and to involve all residents in the co-design of diverse and multi-scale green spaces that contribute to the consummation of a mixed-uses city at the neighbourhood level (see the case example in Freiburg, Germany).

Accessibility is another criterion to be taken into account in the planning phase. Public green spaces in an intercultural city should be designed to be accessible and welcoming for everyone, i.e. suited for people of different ages, genders, identities and capabilities, allowing for free cultural expression, and promoting intercultural mixing and exchange. These spaces should therefore be compatible with a diversity of uses, through social, leisure and sports activities. There are several ways for cities to set-up inclusive green spaces:

- envisage the creation of different types of spaces suitable for large group meetings, as well as for more intimate gatherings or walks (see Chandigarh Master Plan, India, at 'Some other case examples').
- Equip the green spaces with street furniture that represents the diversity of the population and responds to their needs.
- Foresee sport equipment that is suitable for any kind of physical activity, adapted to different ages, genders and access needs. In addition, there should be spaces for encouraging the creation of new intercultural sports - for example through removable sports furniture (such as goals, nets, hoops, and obstacles, among others) that can be repositioned freely by users.
- Foresee enough space for leisure activities, including space for sharing food and drinks, as well as for casual and impromptu meetings (see Leeds Our Spaces Strategy, UK, at 'Some other case examples').

Lastly, particular emphasis should be given to spaces specially designed for children, including through portable or flexible street furniture.

Urban green spaces have great potential for protecting biodiversity and improving the quality of life in cities. They favour the symbiosis between nature, human beings and the urban environment.

Step 2. Setting up a urban mobility network

Urban mobility refers to the movement of people within a city. A good urban mobility system can contribute to a better quality of life and increase accessibility to/within the city. There are three main types of urban mobility: collective, individual and freight transportation. Public authorities can act on the collective and public mobility systems to promote greener and more inclusive cities.

A good public transport system, made available at an affordable rate, can contribute to reducing the use of individual transport and, consequently, the greenhouse gas emissions while providing opportunities for interpersonal encounters. A well designed public transport system can also reduce physical and social segregation, by connecting neighbourhoods and places in the outskirts with other services, facilities and leisure areas available across the city (see Increasing urban mobility and providing affordable housing, Brazil, at 'Some other case examples').

An eco-intercultural public transport system will be based on a municipal mobility strategy that takes into account both the ecological needs and the goal of inclusion. This requires at least the following:

- Take into account the city at large: ensuring wide, easy and affordable connections in the city and between

territories (see the case example in Tallinn, Estonia, + Aubagne and Etoile Regions, France). The public transport network should provide equal services everywhere in the city, ensuring a fair number of connections to all districts, as well as being adapted to all users, including people with disabilities and socially disadvantaged users. Among the factors to be considered, the mobility strategy should pay attention not only to physical connections (how the infrastructures connect the urban network) but also to the temporal connections (how they connect in terms of arrival and departure times).

- Be designed collaboratively in a participatory manner: public authorities should set up focus groups in each neighbourhood to map the existing infrastructures and compare those with the specific transport needs.
- Propose a diversified offer: transport modes for a diverse city should be as much as possible diversified and adapted to a variety of infrastructures such as roads, waterways, rail (underground or surface), walking paths, and bicycle lanes.
- Electric scooters, electric cars and bikes should be offered for renting to residents at a privileged rate.
- Encourage the use of more sustainable transport: cities can further provide for the needs of cyclists on certain roads, impose speed limits on cars everywhere in residential areas, or offer incentives to people who leave the car at home. Buenos Aires, Argentina has integrated the development of a network of safe cycle paths within its public transport strategy. Other municipalities have increased the space for bicycle storage as a way to incentivise the use of bicycles (see Bike de Boa + Cycling City, Brazil and Portugal, at 'Some other case examples'). Some cities are implementing other innovative solutions to encourage more sustainable and inclusive urban mobility such as creating a public carsharing system, implementing a "Park and Ride" system (see Advanced Park & Ride Network, Spain, at 'Some other case examples'), increasing the availability of bicycle rental, exchanging PET bottles for public transport tickets, equipping public transport to be able to store and take bicycles are just a few solutions among many others.

It should be noted that the proper functioning of an urban mobility network requires investments in infrastructure, including good traffic management and safety (for example, good signage), the training of staff and public officers, and a urban pedagogy adapted to the ecological crisis that is affecting our societies.

Moreover, it is important to carry out routine monitoring and evaluation of urban mobility strategy to make sure it is adapted to changing needs and takes into account technological innovation. Finally, local authorities may greatly benefit from the setting-up of a specialised body on urban mobility that includes not only the specialists but also representatives of civil society organisations.

Step 3. Re-using public facilities, services and spaces

Public facilities, services and spaces are essential to the proper functioning of cities and often shape the identity and image of our territories. When they are well distributed, they contribute to sustainable economic growth, community cohesion and well-being of the population. Managed in a sustainable way, these facilities can also generate public value and contribute to a fairer use of urban resources.

An intercultural city must be organised around the central value of the equality of residents, which means non-discrimination in physical, social and visual accessibility of the public space, and of course equal access to the activities that are carried out in there.

Guidelines for public investment in urban goods (including for reuse, prioritisation of social values, and extension of life of public buildings) should be agreed in partnership with all relevant stakeholders. A participatory approach to the design of these strategies can be particularly helpful to make sure that all public facilities present in the territory are properly used and exploited, and universally accessible (see Preston Bus Station, UK, at 'Some other case examples').

One way to increase the number of public and collective spaces and facilities in the territories is to open up unused or under-frequented spaces to community-led activities and organisation. This can be done by delegating the management of public space in specific areas to community-based and/ non-profit community organisations (see the case example in Naples, Italy). This can be done by awarding greater responsibility and control over a public

space's governance to its users, by engaging with all diverse sectors of the local community, encouraging volunteering and local groups to organise into registered associations that reflect the diversity of the area.

Self-governance initiatives can be encouraged in accordance with criteria that will include at least the collective mapping of needs, the participatory design of the public space management strategy, and a low ecological footprint of projects' activities. The advantages of these community-based approaches are multiple: they legitimise the community use of the public space; they promote community leadership of the public space; they help preserving built spaces and produce social value by creating a collective sense of responsibility (see Hackney Bridge, UK, at 'Some other case examples').

Some incentives can be given to encourage these initiatives to sparkle. Their kind and amount will vary depending on the execution capacity, available financial resources, quality of spaces and their needs for maintenance. The creation of instruments that regulate and/or finance community and/or private initiatives has been a solution in some cities, for instance through participatory budgeting. In some cases, community-led organisations have been allowed to submit projects and ideas for reusing public spaces and buildings, and to receive a financial incentive for their management, in addition to the right to use them free of charge (see the case example in Paris, France).

Old public buildings (often schools, theatres, concert halls, artists' residences, etc.) whose conditions of maintenance no longer allow them to serve the purpose for which they were initially conceived, can be repurposed for other uses that fit residents' present needs, provided the necessary conditions of security are met. Cities dealing with the challenge of insufficient public built spaces can further capitalise on underused areas - such as the roofs of public buildings - to create additional services for the population (eg. urban gardening, production spaces and artistic and cultural expression, spaces for children, among others).

To ensure quality in use, public places should always include open green spaces for public use, shaded by trees and freshened by water, whenever possible. This is particularly important for public places intended for long-term activities such as schools, libraries, and coworking spaces, among others.

Some cities are further encouraging the use of specific spaces by different kind of users at different times (see Écoquartier de Bonne, France, at 'Some other case examples'). This sort of multi-functional space can easily accommodate activities such as local markets, artistic production, sport activities, community meetings, art exhibitions, public debates, among others (see Can Batlló, Spain, at 'Some other case examples').

Finally, children and young people can greatly benefit from an eco-inclusive offer of public spaces and facilities, in particular spaces to play after school, to study, use for cultural and artistic activities, and ways to take safe routes from home to school.

Step 4. Regenerating the industrial districts

Technological progress, changes in industrial processes and the expansion of cities are a particular challenge in areas that were designed and built in a specific historical period and following an economic model suited to entirely different priorities and needs, the sustainability of which is now under question.

From specific industrial buildings to wider areas such as industrial districts, private industrial parks are part of the urban landscape and, as such, they should be taken into consideration through a comprehensive eco-inclusive urban planning. On the one hand, there is a need to rethink industrial processes so that they become more sustainable. On the other hand, cities can profit from the re-appropriation of idle industrial equipment that could - with careful consideration - be reused based in many cases not least on the cultural value they have as shared heritage.

Industrial districts are living, self-regenerating metabolic systems, in which a balance of resource inputs and outputs to minimise potential environmental impact on the territory should be sought. Public incentives can be allocated to research in innovative solutions for more sustainable industrial processes.

Some cities are testing solutions consisting in the creation of urban infrastructures for the exchange of materials

and energy and the valorisation and redirection of resources from the industrial area to other functional areas of the city. More generally, public policies can leverage solutions and adopt measures to encourage the mitigation of the negative impacts of industrial processes on the health and well-being of neighbours. Some other instruments may help regulate and/or finance the reuse of industrial equipment and promote the ecological restoration of the surrounding environment.

Many cities are implementing specific plans for the renovation of this type of industrial zones, through land use planning based on industrial symbiosis and integration systems (see National Industrial Symbiosis Program, UK, at 'Some other case examples').

Some other cities have introduced green areas (wooded paths and wetland areas) in industrial districts, as a way to mitigate noise, air pollution and the production of heat islands.

Another widely-used territorial planning instrument is the integration of industrial areas into the urban fabric of the city. These measures make it possible to connect industrial areas to everyday urban life, integrating them into the urban mobility network and, possibly, expanding the creation of new public spaces. One way to do that is to design a green corridor around the industrial areas in order to support biodiversity restoration, and concurrently to expand public space for leisure and sport (see the case example in San Sebastián, Spain).

Step 5. Securing fair and sustainable housing

The right to housing is one of the central pillars of human rights and it is protected by many international instruments and national legislative instruments. Article 31 of the Council of Europe European Social Charter, for example, commits state parties:

- to promote access to housing of an adequate standard;
- to prevent and reduce homelessness with a view to its gradual elimination;
- to make the price of housing accessible to those without adequate resources.

At the local level, housing represents one of the most crucial urban goods in terms of achieving equity and socio-spatial justice. In addition, making fair and adequate housing affordable to everyone contributes to fairer land tenure and use as well as to increased levels of well-being.

In ecological terms, housing also has an impact on the surrounding environment, not only in terms of the materials and energy used/consumed in its construction or rehabilitation, but also in its ongoing energy consumption and contribution to energy emissions but because it is

Public policies are one of the key instruments in efforts to mitigate imbalances in access to housing and to improve levels of well-being. In addition, eco-inclusive housing policies need to be considered as part of the wider environmental and social model of urban design, and be anchored in social dynamics specific to the territory in question.

These policies should therefore integrate different disciplinary perspectives in order to incorporate local perceptions and aspirations (see the case example in San Sebastián, Spain), and address at least the need to: guarantee everyone's access to decent and fair housing; extend the meaning of housing to habitat, going beyond the "house"[5]; solve the issue of insufficient size of the housing stock and improve its ecological performance; and to prevent discrimination in access to housing, among others. Specific attention should be given to the situation of vulnerable families and group that do not find adequate housing through the private market.

The participation of a wide variety of local actors is useful for mapping and information purposes, identifying needs, carrying out continuous monitoring and maintenance of the housing stock (see the case example in Freiburg, Germany).

[5] Expand the meaning of housing beyond the built house, but include all the surrounding space with good conditions of access to basic needs in the construction.

Cities are testing a variety of measures to secure affordable housing. They can for instance specify the level of affordable housing provision in all new housing schemes; they can encourage public-private partnership and co-operative models for affordable and participatory housing; they can adopt housing provision laws or regulations in which housing companies expand their housing units geared towards a stronger emphasis on low-income households; they can regulate the private sector to reduce speculation and introduce rent controls. This includes controlling the number, quality and location of homes used for tourism, and securing mechanisms to facilitate access to housing for vulnerable families and groups.

Several solutions also exist in terms of addressing the issue of insufficient housing stocks. Some cities have for instance increased the supply of public housing by providing a mix of housing tenures to improve affordability through new building and purchase. Some others have – on the contrary - prioritised the rehabilitation of public or idle buildings (see Cooperative Movement, Uruguai, at 'Some other case examples'). The advantage of this approach is not only that it increases the availability of housing facilities, but that it also makes use of existing resources, thus reducing the footprint represented by new constructions.

Housing should also be seen as an opportunity for increased social and territorial inclusion. For this, it is important that public authorities take measures to prevent the negative effects of gentrification[6]. In fact, the potentially negative impact of a gentrified urban regeneration on lower-income residents may be devastating since it is likely to create a rent gap, which may affect affordability of housing, which can result into the displacement of original residents, to the point of their exclusion or segregation.

By considering this potentially negative impact, local authorities can ensure their policies and practices are designed to protect those more at risk of housing vulnerability and displacement.

Concerning the need to increase the percentage of environmentally sustainable housing, local authorities should consider providing financial and technical support to the renovation of housing units. This will not only bring benefits in terms of collective reduction of energy consumption, but also help tenants reduce housing costs through more energy efficiency.

Some cities are encouraging and supporting the participatory design of environmentally friendly multifamily housing buildings equipped with solar energy and photovoltaic panels. In addition, implementing collective energy production and biological waste management systems in public neighbourhoods with multifamily housing, such as collective cogeneration systems, can be a driver for more meaningful intercultural interaction.

To improve the thermal comfort of residents, many cities are now investing in the design of green surfaces in buildings (occupying the roofs and the walls) which also helps combating the creation of urban heat islands.

The quality of housing is also determined by the facilities surrounding it and its vicinity with the city centre. Ensuring access to affordable transport for local residents, by making use of planning interventions such as zoning and masterplans, and providing for easy and safe walking and cycling routes to enable access to facilities and services may help reverse the trend of suburbanisation and – at the same time – avoid the formation of closed residential areas that are not integrated with the rest of the territory.

Using the same logic, it is possible to design collective spaces for community activities such as a market for local products, artistic and cultural production, sports activities, community meetings and meals, residents' assemblies, among others, together with the population of each neighbourhood (see Gannochy Lifetime Neighbourhood, Scotland, at 'Some other case examples'). Abolishing walls and gates around external residential areas, will make them open and accessible to all residents from all over the city, thus also increasing the quality of housing and habitat conditions.

[6] Gentrification is defined by Tom Slater – Professor of Urban Geography at the University of Edinburgh - as "the spatial expression of economic inequality". The ICC programme as conducted a thorough policy study and issued a policy brief to assist cities in preventing this phenomenon.

Case examples

Trends in implementing strategies for greening cities are perceived as ingredients for urban renewal or revitalisation. They are, in many cases, market-oriented developments with a view to provide satisfactory economic returns and often are not accompanied by policies to ensure equitable access to the benefits. However, the case studies presented in this chapter are initiatives which strive to create equitable cities. The case studies below were selected to showcase what cities can do and inspire future - and inclusive - public policies. The case studies aim to contribute to achieving fairer, more democratic and people-focused cities, including greater awareness of the impacts on geographic spaces.

The selection illustrates concrete projects which align with the steps presented in the policy brief, namely the creation of more green spaces, the establishment of urban mobility networks, the increase and development of public facilities and services, and the regeneration of industrial districts and housing neighbourhoods.

Armenia (Colombia): implementation of a corridor as a structural connectivity

The "Microbasins and Protected Urban Areas Integrated Zoning and Management Plan" was implemented by the municipality of Armenia, Colombia, designed to respond to the pressure on these areas caused by land use conflicts. In addition to the forest becoming fragmented over time, habitat and food for wildlife had also been reduced.

Ecological connectivity was foreseen for the creation of 27 conservation corridors crossing the urban section in the zoning plans of the municipality, as a strategy of structural connectivity and landscape rehabilitation. Through a participatory process involving consultation and institutional coordination, it was possible to contribute to the restoration of forest ecosystems and the collective assimilation of natural areas.

Topics: Open spaces; natural environment preservation; green urban city corridor; education

Reference: (UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights, 2010)

Valencia (Spain): transforming abandoned waterfront areas into inclusive and innovative public spaces

After hosting America's Cup and F1 Grand Prix Race editions in the early 2000s, investments were attracted that boosted the rapid growth of the La Marina waterfront in Valencia, Spain. On the other hand, high debts were left behind and facilities abandoned after the events. In order to deal with that situation, the Government of Spain, the Regional Government of Valencia and the Valencia City Council joined forces and set up the Consorcio Valencia 2007 (CV07) with the aim of drawing up a new plan to reuse idle facilities and revitalise underused spaces. The aim of the project was not to increase touristification through hotels or other infrastructures for huge events, but to transform the area into public spaces and facilities open to inhabitants and local organisations.

The plan was carried out through a participatory process, such as the Surem La Marina Lab project in 2018, in which activities were realised with a group of 50 young people between 12 and 14 years old. This innovative educational project aimed to aggregate the contributions of young people in the strategies based on collective creation processes to design an inclusive and innovative waterfront public space.

Topics: Open spaces; urban planning and policies; participatory process; education

Reference: (Consorcio Valencia 2007 website, 2018)

Tallinn (Estonia) + Aubagne and Etoile Regions (France): providing free public transport access

Several cities are providing universal access to public transport. The city of Tallinn in Estonia and the region of Aubagne and Etoile in France are implementing dedicated policies to grant free public transport (especially to the most vulnerable population) with the view to enabling easier access to facilities, green spaces, services and socio-economic opportunities.

In addition to reducing social segregation and connecting segregated neighbourhoods, this policy also responds to

the need to reduce the use of individual transport and, consequently, lower down greenhouse gas emissions.

Topics: Urban mobility network; policy and research; collective public transport; free transport

References: (SMARTA - Rural Shared Mobility website, n.d.) and (UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights, 2010)

Buenos Aires (Argentina): cycling in urban mobility

The use of bicycles as a form of transport in cities has increased everywhere, as shown also by a study focusing on Buenos Aires, Argentina, were users (especially women) have turned to bicycles thanks to increased investments in bicycle infrastructure by the municipality and public incentives.

In Buenos Aires, an urban plan was implemented to develop a network of safe cycle paths which was then into the public transport network. As a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, the use of bicycles was further boosted. In addition to providing a healthier and more inclusive urban mobility alternative, biking combats traffic congestion and reduces incidents, pollution and carbon dioxide emissions in the city.

Financing the setting up of safe cycle paths is one of the main challenges the municipality had to face. To overcome this hurdle, measures are being taken in partnership with the private sector, such as the installation of bicycle racks in companies or in front of the residents' housing. Another private measure is the "Let go" programme, which aims to teach children and adults to ride a bicycle safely in traffic.

Topics: Urban mobility network; urban plan, cycling; health and wellbeing

Reference: (USE - Urban sustainability exchange, n.d.)

Naples (Italy): transforming abandoned properties into urban common areas for the community

One of the biggest challenges in cities is expanding access to public facilities and services. In many cases, strategic measures are developed for the reuse of abandoned or unused built public and private spaces. An interesting case study is the creation of a network of local communities (the public-civic partnerships or PCPs) in Naples, Italy, in 2011.

The project aimed to create a local network to informally manage public spaces in various areas of the city and transform them into spaces for artistic exhibitions and support services. In short, the project reactivated these unused spaces by recognising them as common urban good for the community.

To achieve this goal, the city of Naples developed a kit of innovative public tools and models of community-led governance.

Topics: Public facilities and services; governance; civic space; abandoned spaces; social inclusion

Reference: (Cooperative City Magazine, 2021)

Paris (France): a temporary occupation to make a space with mixed and varied uses and people

Another example, but this time a non-governmental initiative, was the temporary occupation of an old hospital in Paris between 2015 and 2020. One of the largest temporary occupations in Europe, the "Les Grands Voisins" initiative implemented mixed and varied uses in an extensive and idle plot of land, measuring 3.4 hectares. During five years, a multitude of people lived, worked and shared the spaces.

Some of the initiative's objectives were to make temporarily unused spaces useful; to settle down and live together; to open a space for people in precarious situations in the centre of the city; to create open spaces for emerging working practices; to offer a place for free cultural and artistic experiences; to promote interactions between different professions and disciplines; to provide structures for citizen engagement; and to build a reactive economy and a new management model.

To achieve their goals and manage the common space, the group developed a decentralised governance model for decision-making. Meetings of the so-called "thematic committees" and the Neighbourhood Council took place monthly. There were no costs for the availability of the space and a provision was framed by a temporary

occupation agreement. A business model was created based on three programmes to support management and maintenance costs for the project´s implementation. Profits from housing centres, day care centres and reintegration programmes (social component) were achieved through the availability of facilities at low labour costs (business component) and through programming and shops on the ground floor (cultural component).

Topics: Public facilities and services; social inclusion; governance

Reference: (Le Grand Voisin website, n.d.)

San Sebastián (Spain): peri-urban park and sports area

The city of San Sebastián, Spain, is a case in which parks based on Nature-Based Solutions were set up. A proportion of the parks in the city of San Sebastián are located in its centre and have a dense number of trees. Parque Miramón, however, is located in an industrial area and is one of the largest in the city. The park has safer and more attractive sidewalks, sports and recreational areas.

The construction and expansion of similar urban parks in other industrial areas enabled their use in everyday life and leisure, improving thermal comfort and connection across green areas in the city. The peri-urban park and sports areas were developed in the context of the Adaptation to Local Climate Change plan and were included as a pilot study.

Topics: Industrial districts; built environment; local climate change; public space; parks

Reference: (Nature-based solutions for local climate adaptation in the Basque Country: Methodological guide for their identification and mapping. Donostia/San Sebastián case study, 2017) - Klimatek Project 2016

Freiburg (Germany): housing cooperative creation in the Vauban District

Between 1993 and 2006, the "Vauban Sustainable Urban District" process was implemented in the city of Freiburg, Germany. The city council aimed to restore old military barracks based on the concepts of ecological principles and social cohesion. The initial objective of the project was to overcome the challenges of suburbanisation and the difficulty of access to housing (especially for young people).

The process put in place had a significant range of actors through the setting-up of a series of permanent institutions. As a first step, the NGO Forum was created to articulate the coordination of public participation and the local government to think and make viable proposals for the project's implementation. Secondly, the acquisition of one home was made, and access to public facilities and quality green public spaces based on long-term sustainability criteria were promoted.

After a long process, more than 40 cooperative housing projects were built, which meet the criteria of energy efficiency and bioclimatic solutions. The responsibilities of construction, management and maintenance of buildings were shared between the beneficiaries. Once the first objective has been achieved (through the construction of buildings with high energy efficiency, energy reuse, use of local wood, green facades, etc.), the project has set a future objective i.e. to produce more energy than is consumed in homes, through the 'energy plus' initiative.

Topics: Housing neighbourhoods; built environment; eco-district; cooperative housing

Reference: (UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights, 2010)

Some other case examples

Urban green spaces inspirational practices: ↳ see Chandigarh Master Plan (India, Chandigarh): an urban plan carried out by the architect-planner Le Corbusier, which envisioned a large number of open spaces, green belts, urban parks and neighbourhood parks. ↳ see Leeds 'Our Spaces' Strategy (UK, Leeds): "creation of the new spaces outlined in this strategy and the reimagining of existing public space". ↳ see Taksim Gezi Square (Turkey, Istanbul) + Tahrir Square (Egypt, Cairo): processes of population resistance to maintain public spaces for citizen participation.

Urban mobility network inspirational practices: ↳ see Increasing urban mobility and providing affordable housing (Brazil, São Paulo and Curitiba): an urban plan in which one of the main objectives is the improvement of the urban mobility system through the expansion of public transport modes. ↳ see Advanced Park & Ride Network (Spain, San

Sebastián): the creation of city car parks located close to the public transport system to reduce car use in the city. ↳ see Bike de boa (Brazil, Rio de Janeiro) + Cycling City (Portugal, Lisbon): a collaborative map available on desktop and mobile devices, designed to be very easy to use.

Public facilities, services and spaces inspirational practices: ↳ see Écoquartier de Bonne (France, Grenoble): reconversion of a former military land that was empty to create an extension of the city centre through the construction of a park.↳ see Hackney Bridge (UK, Newham): a multipurpose space intended for the incubation of people and local organisations, for public events, cafeteria and independent retail. ↳ see Preston Bus Station (UK, Preston): rehabilitation of an old urban facility, the Preston Bus Station, whose design reorients the original arrangement of the building to favour pedestrian access at the expense of vehicular access. ↳ see Can Batlló (Spain, Barcelona): an initiative for the recovery of an industrial park for community and cultural activities.

Industrial district inspirational practice: ↳ see National Industrial Symbiosis Program (UK): national program which aims to develop ecological solutions to reduce the use of raw materials (or alternative use) and mitigate climate change through eco-innovation policies of action to achieve a transition to a green economy.

Housing and habitat inspirational practices: ↳ see La Borda (Spain, Barcelona): a Housing Cooperative in which future inhabitants can define the entire project according to their needs. ↳ see Gannochy Lifetime Neighbourhood (Scotland, Perth and Kinross): integration of housing into existing community neighbourhoods with one of the objectives being to improve the air quality of homes and create inclusive community spaces. ↳ see Cooperative Movement (Uruguai): a long and expressive cooperative movement based on mutual help for housing construction and the democratic self-management of maintenance after construction.

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Action guide

As outlined in this policy brief, the built environment has a great influence on the degree of sustainability and inclusion of a city. Green spaces, when designed as inclusive social spaces with universal equitable access, can encourage a greater contact and interaction between diverse groups, and be an arena for community-based collective experimentation and collective cross-cultural identity building. However, this potential is not achievable only through designing features of these spaces. The way urban greening projects are conducted, discussed and decided upon is crucial to climate justice. In other words, there is a set of principles to consider when implementing urban greening actions. The policies that guide the design of urban green spaces should therefore intersect with the policies that frame the participation of all residents and workers in the design and decision-making processes of urban green spaces.

The additional procedural steps detailed below contribute to the city's greening actions with the potential to mitigate inequalities, poverty, multiple forms of discrimination and socio-spatial segregation. These steps establish a broader constructive perspective of urban greening processes, based on the pluralistic collective construction of the city.

Beyond results, the design process of urban green spaces should be seen as a tool to encourage collaboration and mutual commitment in itself between people of different origins, ethnicities, languages, religions, beliefs, sexual orientations, economic origins, age groups and many more.

Before designing…

Representativeness - A city is only truly intercultural if its executive bodies are representative of the diversity of the population they serve. There is still a long way to go in this regard[7] so, first and foremost, it is urgent to include people with different backgrounds in public bodies in charge of urban planning. If necessary and appropriate, a temporary quota system to offset the current imbalance and promote long-term equity should be implemented. Additionally, it is necessary to implement multilevel models of collaborative governance (between local, regional, national, community and global bodies), intersectoral (between different areas, departments and public services), inter-group (including people with different inherited and chosen characteristics) and intercultural (developing interconnections between different countries from different continents that face different issues). It is also essential to recognise multilingualism in governance institutions and eliminate language barriers in urban procedures.

Fair opportunities - Representative democracy should be complemented with direct democracy, through the creation of opportunities for all residents to participate in urban development processes that directly affect their daily lives. Cities should consult all the direct beneficiaries of their urban strategies and involve them in related decisions, as well as promote participatory budgets and referendums under urban green goals and social inclusivity. But it is important that direct democracy is a bottom-up process. In this sense, it is up to cities to create the necessary conditions for community-based initiatives to emerge and assume a legitimised role in the transformation of the city. It is also beneficial to create policies that enforce the urban participation rights of newcomers, and it is important to develop participation channels aimed at the involvement of individuals of all ages, including children and youth in the transformation of the city. At the same time, cites must recognise community movements, such as protests or demand regarding urban developments, as indicators of inequality, exclusion or green urban gentrification, which need to be addressed. In a complementary way, cities can improve conditions for residents to participate in the green transition through the creation of equitable opportunities and access to the green labour market, such as providing digital and ecological training to disadvantaged groups and offering them employment in new sectors of green urban planning and maintenance. In parallel, the inclusive green economy can be leveraged with equitable climate pledges by companies. Cities can provide institutional/financial

7 The results of the survey conducted to the members of the ICC clearly express that the lack of diversity and interconnection of actors in urban processes is one of the main barriers to addressing eco-inclusivity and the goals of the SDGs.

support and legal/fiscal benefits to small local businesses with eco-inclusive practices or research, and, on the other hand, can implement a tax to be paid by companies that have harmful environmental impacts. Public authorities are responsible for articulating public, private and community initiatives, while guaranteeing the right of all residents to participate in urban planning, and promoting free expression and confrontation of opinions, knowledge and methods.

Transparency - Democracy must ultimately be reinforced with equitable access to information about the city's transformation processes by all residents and workers, whether or not they are active participants in the planning processes. It is useful to create binding policies that oblige both public and private entities to share information about ongoing urban green projects, including all procedural, decision-making and budgetary details. Additionally, it is advised to create multilingual, user-friendly and open-data platforms where public and private entities, as well as people from civil society, can constantly consult and update that information. Communication strategies should be evidence-based, however, and should be composed of both raw unprocessed information, so that residents can form their own opinion about urban processes and make informed choices on how to participate in the eco-inclusive transition, as well as by debates among a plural group of people who can offer an informed interpretation of the raw data. Additionally, content on the subject especially aimed at children should be developed and disseminated. This will allow the population to participate in an informed manner in the decision and/or prioritisation of green measures in cities.

While designing…

Resources management - When designing, it is crucial to assess the environmental and social impact of the project, throughout its life cycle. Given that buildings and civil construction are responsible for high levels of natural resource extraction and GHG emissions, it is imperative that urbanisation projects contribute to the balance of inputs and outputs of the planet's resources. For this purpose, cities must guarantee the maximum use of the existing built space and give priority to rehabilitation and refunctionalisation to the detriment of new construction. When this is not possible, the circular flows of materials must be reinforced, opting for used products, recycled materials or locally renewable raw materials, as well as prioritising short extraction-production-consumption cycles. Meanwhile, the dismantling of buildings must be selective, in order to recover constructive elements useful for other constructions, as well as the remaining demolition waste can also be used, for example in public urban infrastructures such as roads or piers. Furthermore, greening projects should directly contribute to the rapid achievement of carbon neutrality in cities. In this sense, cities must design according to high energy efficiency standards, combining building standards with low energy requirements, with short production-consumption cycles of renewable energy. Likewise, short ecological waste management systems should be incorporated into the projects. To achieve these goals, it can be beneficial to develop projects together with research centres, exploring and driving technical innovations in bioclimatic construction, green building materials, renewable energies and bioenergy production systems.

Incrementality - Faced with rapid urbanisation and the increasing speed of climate and socioeconomic changes, urban planning cannot be seen as a strictly linear process. Green strategies, policies and constructions must be incremental and adaptable. They should be designed over time, based on participatory trial-and-error experimentation, such as 'Planning that Learns' or 'Planning-doing' philosophies, as well as using methodologies such as 'Placemaking', 'Urban Prototyping' 'Tactical Urbanism' or 'Urban Acupuncture'. In other words, the planning and monitoring of urban green strategies should be understood as a single circular process and not as separate sequential phases. In this sense, first and foremost, it is necessary to implement uninterrupted socio-spatial diagnostics to constantly survey emerging needs, opportunities, and unforeseen planning problems, and adapt plans accordingly. Similarly, maintenance has to be a structural axis of eco-inclusive design, spreading a culture of attachment, preservation and care for the natural and urban environment. For this, it is essential to define maintenance guidelines in the initial design phase of urban green spaces. Furthermore, the analysis and design methodologies should be composed of both quantitative and qualitative tools, articulating statistical and sensory approaches, to strengthen the capacity to respond and adapt to unpredictability.

Beyond designing…

Programming – Achieving eco-inclusion is not just designing a place but following the development and use of a living system. It is therefore necessary to continuously activate urban green spaces. Cities should create an inclusive sociocultural programme, with clear solutions to improve residents' well-being and address local needs, and not just focus on tourism and leisure goals. For this purpose, it is important to organise cultural, recreational and sporting events in public green spaces, as well as to support their self-organisation within and between the communities. There should be an alignment of activities composed of multilingual projects carried out by and for people with diverse identities, ideologies and/or origins, to promote meaningful intercultural interaction and realise the diversity advantage. Programmes can also be implemented between schools and other institutions (such as theatres, museums, ateliers, workshops, gyms, sports clubs, and dance schools, among others) to attract children and young people to the green space, and simultaneously involve them in the city's intercultural production. All these activities should be equitably accessible to all. For this, it is advisable to reinforce programming in the most segregated areas of the city, and facilitate free access to all cultural events in the city for children, youth and disadvantaged people.

Consolidating eco-inclusivity - Eco-inclusion is also a long-term intergenerational commitment. Therefore, education plays a key role in it. Schools should be promoted as a place for open discussion, interculturality, experimentation and the collective awareness of climate transition equity. Ecology and social inclusion could be themes included in the school curricula, just as the conscious involvement of young people in the just climate transition of cities can be one of the main learning objectives. To this end, schools and urban planning departments should promote joint activities to introduce children and young people to urban green issues. At the same time, it is important to adapt the educational model to the new challenges within the labour market. For this, cities can create public digital literacy programmes and, in addition, provide vulnerable people with essential digital equipment to keep up with the ongoing green digital evolution. In addition to formal education, workshops and awareness-raising initiatives can contribute to the equitable green transition. Promoting collective awareness of the importance of civic engagement in the processes of greening the city and unequal access to resources that allow an eco-inclusive lifestyle is needed. Likewise, it is essential that respect for the diversity of perspectives, approaches and identities is rooted in common sense and practices, as well as the multilateral commitment to inclusion and interculturality. Furthermore, cities can promote awareness campaigns on the impacts of excessive consumption and misuse of resources (such as water and energy) in parallel with campaigns to encourage a healthy lifestyle (covering activities such as food, sports, culture and leisure). These campaigns shall be complemented with workshops that translate sustainability goals into everyday practices, such as resource saving, energy efficiency, renewable energy technologies, circular economy, urban gardening, sustainable cuisine, efficient waste management, and bioclimatic construction, among others. It is important to create instruments that support the adoption of an efficient and healthy lifestyle by the most disadvantaged population.

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Diversity has become a key feature of societies today and is particularly tangible in urban centres. While people of diverse national, ethnic, linguistic and faith backgrounds have immensely contributed to post-war prosperity, inequalities related to origin, culture and skin colour persist, and anxiety about pluralism, identity and shared values is often politically instrumentalised. The challenge of fostering equity and cohesion in culturally diverse societies has become more acute. Cities are uniquely placed to imagine and test responses to this challenge.

The Council of Europe and its partner cities have developed and validated an intercultural approach to integration and inclusion which enables cities to reap the benefits and minimise the risks related to human mobility and cultural diversity. A decade after the start of this work, there is growing evidence that diversity, when recognised and managed as a resource, produces positive outcomes in terms of creativity, wellbeing, and economic development.

The Intercultural Cities (ICC) Programme invites cities in Europe and beyond to explore and apply policies that harness diversity for personal and societal development.

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 46 member states, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

INTERCULTURAL CITIES
CITÉS INTERCULTURELLES

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE