

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

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# Inception Report Democratic Transitions for all

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Climate change poses an existential threat to humankind at a scale where conventional, technological and governance approaches are insufficient and need innovation. Deep systemic changes and transformative actions are needed (European Environment Agency, 2019). The [European Green Deal](#) acknowledges this need and seeks to address it in transforming the EU into a modern, resource-efficient and economically competitive carbon-neutral continent. Net neutrality of emissions of greenhouse gases is to be achieved by 2050 (European Council, 2019). At the same time, these changes are to be achieved while no person and no place is left behind.

## Setting the scene



OASIS, Paris (FR)

### Just Transitions in its EU context

Climate change poses an existential threat to humankind at a scale where conventional, technological and governance approaches are insufficient and need innovation. Deep systemic changes and transformative actions are needed (European Environment Agency, 2019). The [European Green Deal](#) acknowledges this need and seeks to address it in transforming the EU into a modern, resource-efficient and economically competitive carbon-neutral continent. Net neutrality of emissions of greenhouse gases is to be achieved by 2050 (European Council, 2019). At the same time, these changes are to be achieved while no person and no place is left behind. The transitions must be just and inclusive (European Commission, n.d.). In addition to the Green Deal priorities and the [European Climate Law](#), the commitment to Just Transitions is also reflected in the EU's adherence to achieve the 17 [UN Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) and existing priorities at EU level, e.g. in the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#) and at the heart of EU Cohesion Policy. The [EU Climate Pact](#) as part of the European Green Deal invites the civil society and all other stakeholders to support and implement the Green Deal.

The [Just Transition Fund \(JTF\)](#) is one of the pillars of the EU's Just Transitions mechanism in support of the Green Deal. It supports Member States in transitioning to a climate-neutral economy in a fair and inclusive way. It

focuses action on those citizens most vulnerable to the transition, carbon-intensive business sectors, and territories (Member States and regions) most dependent on fossil-fuels. Furthermore, the [Climate Action Social Fund](#) (CASF) addresses Just Transitions with a focus on the 'social and distributional challenges of Union's green transition' arising from the changes to emissions' regulations in the housing and transport sectors, targeting citizens most at risk of the transition to climate neutrality.

Cities are highly important for localising the Just Transitions in Europe as cities and towns are the places where most people in Europe live. Consequently, cities have a central role under the new Cohesion Policy objectives, particularly, under [the Policy Objective 5](#) 'Europe closer to citizens by fostering the sustainable and integrated development of all types of territories' (European Commission n.d.). To date, more than 10,000 local and regional authorities committed through the [Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy](#) (CoM) to reduce their greenhouse gases by 55% by 2030 and adapt to the climate change consequences. They also committed to do so while engaging their citizens, businesses and governments at all levels through the design of a Local climate pact. The EU Mission on [Climate neutral and Smart Cities](#) and on [Adaptation to Climate Change](#) both link with the Covenant and support cities further. For climate change adaptation actions, an EU Policy Support Facility developed by the CoM aims to ensure that resilience is achieved in a just and fair way.

### **The possible contribution of UIA projects**

As made clear in the previous section, the topic of Just Transitions has a significant role in design and implementation of urban projects in the continent. As such, even if not run under the topic of Just Transitions, many of the 86 UIA projects that are operational since 2016 offer a diversity of concrete approaches to implementing Just Transitions. These are being explored on how urban authorities can facilitate Just Transitions so that no one is left behind. With Just Transitions we mean the diverse and complementary approaches needed to achieve a fair, inclusive climate neutral and resilient economy, addressing at the same time environmental, social and economic issues.

While these transformations concern all parts of the society with diverse sectors involved (industry, agriculture, IT, etc.), three specific areas have been selected for analysing UIA projects' approaches, tools, promising practices and other relevant city strategies that can support the work of urban practitioners and managing authorities of mainstream programmes in implementing Just Transitions. These are:

- Skills for a green future,
- Making the Green Cities affordable for all, and
- Democratic transitions

### **This report**

This report focuses on the Democratic Transitions element in supporting the Just Transitions for a carbon-neutral and climate-resilient Europe and thereby, calling for new forms of participatory governance. The three sub-topics are closely interrelated. Transitions that are affordable to all will enable people of all income and knowledge levels, ages, gender and different capacities to participate actively in democratic transitions by co-creation and active participation in decision-making. This will ensure to make the Transitions just and inclusive, allowing all to benefit from new jobs and green renewal (Figure 1).

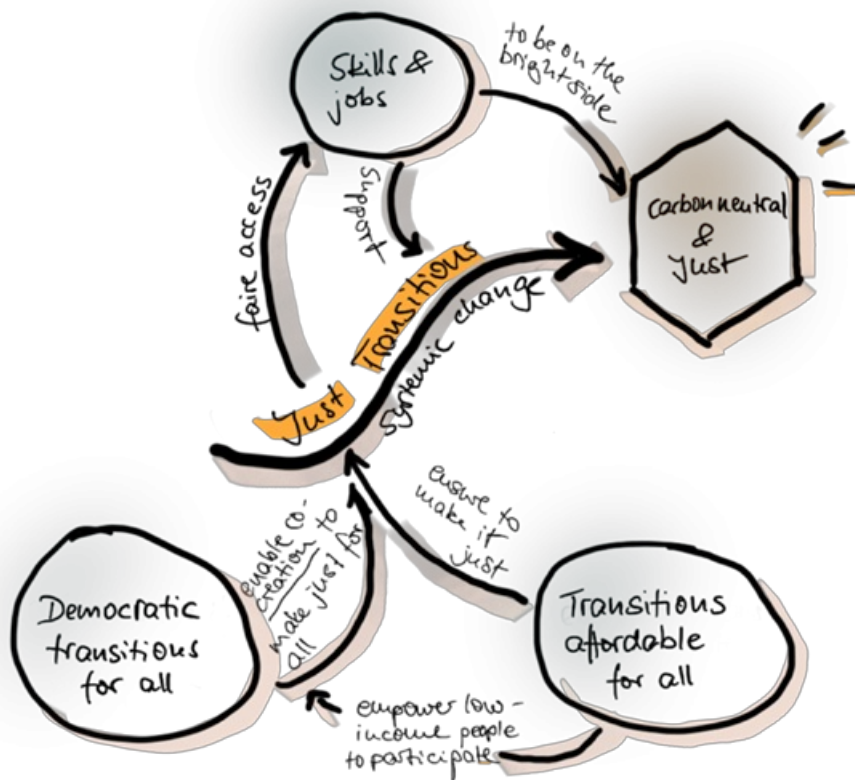


Figure 1: The three selected sub-topics supporting Just Transitions and their interrelationship

## Democratic transitions and cities

### What are democratic transitions and why are they needed?

Tackling climate change requires deep systemic change in society (European Environment Agency 2019). These changes will affect all stakeholders and population groups – some will benefit from new business ventures and jobs; to others it will pose the risk of energy poverty, unemployment, health problems and other burdens. Hence, their active involvement in policy-making and implementation is essential to ensure the burden of progressing towards carbon neutrality, a goal that will benefit all groups of the society equally, is also shared by all fairly. Urban Sustainability and effective climate action at the appropriate scale will therefore not be possible without bringing all citizens on the journey (EEA, 2021). Policy and action on climate change should be approached as intertwined with action towards social and environmental justice, because environmental inequality and unequal exposure to impacts of climate change leads to social inequalities. Co-created climate actions involving different citizen groups in appropriate ways have high chances to be also “just” in nature. Hence if “justice” is not considered in designing new green infrastructure for example, it can exacerbate existing inequalities, create new ones or even preserve an unequal status quo. (Zacharzewski and O’Phelan 2022).

The [New Leipzig Charter](#) calls for an integrated approach to urban development that requires the involvement of the general public as well as social, economic and other stakeholders in order to consider their concerns and knowledge. The idea is that the engagement of all urban actors will strengthen local democracy. According to Anthony Zacharzewski, President & Director-General at Democratic Society, “There are democratic decisions that aren’t just, but you can’t really have just decisions that aren’t democratic.” (Zacharzewski and O’Phelan 2022).

This report emphasises on the need indicated above to involve citizens actively and broadly in Transitions towards a carbon-neutral and climate-resilient Europe in order to make these transitions just. It concentrates explicitly on citizen engagement and involvement as a key element of Just Transitions processes. While it will be embedded in a wider stakeholder participation process including various other organisations in the form of partnerships, this particular focus is also motivated by the fact that there can be partnership without participation but not participation without partnership (Adams and Ramsden 2019).

For the purpose of this study, we understand that:

Transitions are democratic, if all groups of citizens are able to access information equally and are empowered to be heard, to listen to others' needs and wants, and to co-create and co-design actions towards a carbon-neutral and climate-resilient Europe.

### Why are cities important?

Cities and towns are the places where most people in Europe live. It is in cities and towns that the impacts of climate change and the Transitions towards carbon neutrality will be most experienced. Additionally, city residents' behavioural patterns will have a significant impact in Europe's future and will determine the level of implementation of the Green Deal in practice. Cities are the places where the EU, national, regional, and local policies are implemented and where Just Transitions are made possible. A multi-level governance approach is therefore needed to connect city residents to the national and European level. Under the new Cohesion Policy objectives, cities have a central role. For example, under the Policy Objective 1 'Smarter Europe', the Policy Objective 2 'Greener Europe', and since local governments are closest to citizens, also under [the Objective 5](#) 'Europe closer to citizens by fostering the sustainable and integrated development of all types of territories' (European Commission n.d.). With more than 10,000 local authorities having signed the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, cities are also in the lead in climate action.

On the other hand, cities also combine high concentration of multiple vulnerabilities to the climate phenomena. With the potential to implement radical local experiments that can be tested, upscaled and improved, therefore contributing to effective socio-ecological transitions is not only possible, but also desirable for cities. They operate as a place for innovation, co-creation and participatory citizen-led actions, using technology and space (European Commission-Joint Research, n.d.). As the New Leipzig Charter underlines, cities can act as "laboratories for new forms of problem-solving and test beds for social innovation" (EU 2020). Hence, cities can lead the way on how to engage citizens and become role models.

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## Opportunities and challenges to implement democratic transitions

### Opportunities

Overall, Democratic Transitions aim to ensure inclusive participation and fair treatment of different citizen groups making the Transitions 'just'. Much research work has demonstrated the beneficial effects of inclusive participation approaches on the acceptance and sustainability of actions. While this effect is expected for participation in the form of co-creation, investigations on two Dutch municipalities found already a positive effect on strengthening local democracy by informing and consulting citizens. People experienced more responsibility for public matters, their engagement increased, and they started listening to different opinions – at least for those participating (Michels and De Graaf 2010). Choosing higher levels of participation, such as working in partnership to co-create concrete solutions may foster an even better understanding, knowledge, and ownership of the measures, thus, increasing the sustainability of the developed solutions and possibly more changes in behaviour (C40 Cities). Participation helps to fulfil high expectations and quality of planning projects by including citizens' needs, local knowledge and perspective. (UIA 2022).

As the main users of public and private spaces and services in the city, citizens hold valuable local experiential knowledge on what the needs are and what solutions could be. This can be a valuable asset for local (adaptation) planning and implementation and complements the knowledge of planners (UIA 2022; C40 Cities).

Co-creation with citizens and other stakeholders is assumed to enable also more radical innovation and transformation steps that are needed for the systemic change necessary to reach a carbon neutral and climate-resilient Europe. A condition is that such processes bring everyone on board with open minds. Solutions can then go beyond top-down driven incremental changes and instead, enable the more radical innovations and transformative solutions that are needed (Noll 2022). Therefore, it will be necessary to go beyond helpful but stand-alone tools such as citizen assemblies or participatory budgets and integrate these in a broader vision on what society and democratic governance in the context of complex climate change might mean. The complexity of climate change challenges requires a governance approach that is much more about empowering and bringing people along on a journey together with governments under a systemic perspective (Zacharzewski and O'Phelan 2022).

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### Challenges

Citizens and other stakeholders are affected in different ways by transitions. The ideas of citizens, local

authorities, local politicians, and other stakeholders of what should happen in the city and how just transitions should be implemented are diverse. In some cases, they are even conflicting. Citizens are a heterogeneous group and hold different interests and are diverse in terms of needs, expectations, skills and abilities (UIA: [Make the transition affordable for all](#) Inception Report, 2022).

Certain groups may not have the resources, time, technical means or the knowledge to contribute to participatory processes in the way these are organised (Kotsila et al. 2020; Shelton 2018; C40 Cities n.d.; UIA, 2022). Ideas for projects and development may be vetted with the broader community, where diverse voices and priorities are represented. The question is who will have control over what is finally implemented? (Shelton 2018). Those who are the loudest? In fact, decisions in a city are not only made by the government but by multiple public and private actors that influence the path a city takes (Zacharzewski and O’Phelan 2022). How can it be ensured that all groups are heard and contribute in an equitable way?

Defining democratic participation processes is itself a challenge as different stakeholders have diverse interpretations of how these should be designed. It is often not clear for participants how to reach a democratic decision when there are diverging and conflicting interests (UIA 2022). Nevertheless, given the imperative that is to reduce emissions, a balance needs to be reached between community-led bottom-up and government-led top-down decision-making.

Different national and local governance approaches and their differing structures across European countries can either promote or hamper real partnerships between the general community and the politicians and co-creation. Administrative procedures at local or higher levels can hinder certain participation schemes (UIA 2022). Rigid bureaucracy often imposes regulatory barriers to co-creation, particularly in countries where top-down approaches are dominant (Kotsila et al. 2020). Here, an involvement of the community in co-creation and decision-making is often considered as being disruptive to political and administrative processes; hence, participation usually remains at the level of information sharing (C40 Cities). Information sharing is considered as the lower level of influencing the decision-making according to Arnstein’s citizen participation ladder and the International Association for Public Participation’s spectrum of public participation (figure 2), which ranges from informing to consulting, involving, collaborating to empowering (Arnstein 1969; IAP2 n.d.). Reluctance of decision-makers to share power with citizens as well as citizens’ lack of trust that the democratic approach of co-creation will lead to implementing a joint vision of a carbon-neutral Europe both pose major obstacles to higher levels of participation and thus, more effective and democratic governance (Kotsila et al. 2020).

		INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION				
		INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL		To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC		We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

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Figure 2: IAP2 Spectrum of public participation. (Source: IAP2 n.d.)

Transitions to climate neutral societies will require far-reaching societal changes that will deeply affect societal structures and the everyday life of individuals. Democratic participation is therefore the cornerstone to enable these changes to be effective and sustainable. However, establishing a broad democratic governance requires more complex actions and deep changes in the existing governance models, which are probably of higher magnitude than changes at the technical level towards carbon neutrality and climate resilience. Switching to these new forms of governance requires time and effort that once established, are expected to work effectively and efficiently. Societies and political systems are however dynamic and thus, the democratic governance approaches need to be carefully applied and adjusted where necessary. An additional challenge is the current shortage of facilitators to lead such complex processes in cities and in multi-level governance processes across Europe. Such capacity will need to be greatly expanded (Zacharzewski and O’Phelan 2022).

The climate crisis is currently intertwined with other crises, increasing the need for Just Transitions but also posing new challenges for cities. During the COVID-19 pandemic cities and local communities have taken extraordinary measures with significant social and economic consequences to reduce risks and protect citizens. The pandemic has at the same time made clear how the inclusion of resilience is imperative in any long-term strategy of a city, and how city planning, design, access to green areas, efficient public services, and quality housing are all central to the wellbeing of citizens. Furthermore, the war in Ukraine poses shortage of fossil fuel, the risk of energy cuts and a high increase in energy prices affecting citizens as well as businesses. Low-income people are among the groups that are threatened by greater energy poverty as a result. [REPowerEU](#) is the European Commission's ambitious plan to make Europe independent from Russian fossil fuels well before 2030, which will challenge local governments and their governance dynamics even further. Reducing energy consumption at the local level will require a collective effort -- that will test the robustness of our local governance dynamics and open up new opportunities for collaboration (Gonzalez-Piloyan 2022).

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## Early lessons learned on citizen participation from the UIA projects on Climate Adaptation

While all UIA projects use some level of participatory approach, their focus tends to be on the main topic of the call for projects under which they have been selected (based on the 14 topics of Urban Agenda for EU). City practitioners from the six UIA projects on climate change adaptation exchanged on this topic in the policy lab on Citizen's engagement and participation organised at the 2022 UIA conference "EU cities acting for just transitions and climate adaptation" in Seville. City practitioners discussed how they had managed participation in their UIA projects, the challenges they had faced and which solutions they had found and brought up the following initial recommendations to ensure inclusive and deep citizen engagement. Their lessons are not only relevant for climate change adaptation but for urban Just Transitions in general. These can serve as a starting point for the further exploration of a wider range of UIA projects:

- Cities need to analyse their socio-spatial practices through the lenses of different citizen groups such as of different age, genders, abilities, socio-economic background, ethnicity and religion, and then design and choose multiple tailored forms and tools of participation to make these needs heard and work towards jointly agreed democratic decisions.
  - The city will need to bring forward the local knowledge of citizens on the urban space with appropriate participation tools and processes and combine this knowledge and ideas with planners' knowledge to develop measures that answer all stakeholder's needs and are supported in the long-term. Choosing co-creation approaches to concrete solutions may pose challenges to planners but creates better understanding, knowledge, and ownership of the measures, thus increasing their sustainability. Participation helps to raise expectations and the quality of planning projects.
  - Successful and sustained engagement also needs sufficient resources. In addition, a central contact point, like a guardian or neighbourhood manager with a clear mandate and resources can be very effective in bringing all stakeholder groups and their interests together and develop balanced solutions that correspond to citizens' needs.
  - While participation approaches need to be diverse and tailored to the expectations of the citizen groups, the overall engagement process needs to follow a holistic perspective, e.g., on how to tackle climate change in principle. This enables a focus on the engagement of all groups towards the overall targets, to mitigate conflicts and promote synergies and thus find balanced solutions.
  - The purpose of participation needs to be clear from the beginning and the process carefully planned. The right tools and approaches as well as the timing for different citizen groups should be selected. Setting clear rules for the discussion helps to create consensus and avoids false impressions and disappointment.
  - Building mutual understanding and trust is essential and requires finding a common understanding and sharing the knowledge for an active participation. This involves careful and unbiased listening and mediating where needed. Working with people who are locally anchored in communities enables better access to citizens and hard-to-reach groups.
  - Administrative procedures at local or higher levels can hinder certain participation schemes. It requires will and creativity to find adapted solutions that fit the administrative set-up [and work for citizens] or adjust the framework (UIA 2022).
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## Democratic Transitions - what does it need?

The lessons learned and solutions developed in UIA projects across the different topics will be explored under three interlinked dimensions of Democratic Transitions that would further lead to Just Transitions:

**Fostering citizen's participation** to enable their meaningful involvement in the city's **collaborative decision-making**, which creates conditions and incentives for **behaviour changes at the individual level** (see Figure 3 below).

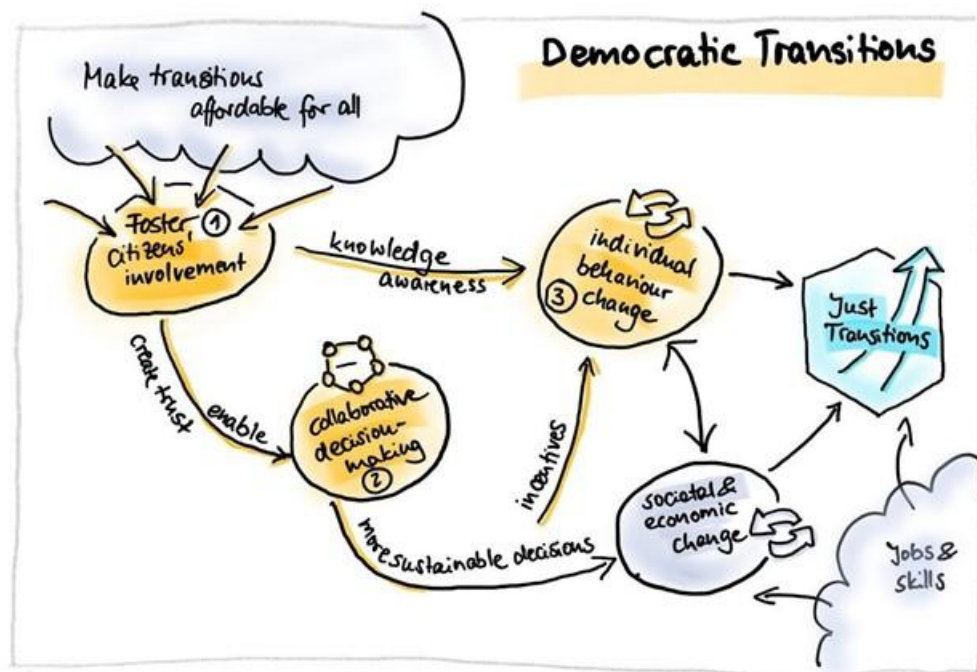


Figure 3: Dimensions of citizen engagement in democratic transitions

### Fostering citizens' participation

In this section, we will investigate the ways projects choose to engage with diverse groups to ensure inclusivity and democratic participation for children, elderly, parents, ethnic minorities, disabled people, women, migrants etc. This first focus builds on the learnings of the [Make the transition affordable for all](#) capitalisation activity. Local authorities need to play a key role in identifying vulnerable and often excluded groups by various means (ICLEI 2022). They must implement measures concerning the identification and selection of participants, the structure of meetings/activities and power distribution to assist the different groups by carefully selected and tailored involvement approaches (Adams and Ramsden 2019).

UIA projects – some finished and others still running – have experimented with ways to activate citizens to support the implementation of Just Transitions. **UPPER (Latina)** involved often neglected groups, such as people with addictions, with mental health challenges, immigrants, Roma people, and people with disabilities, for co-designing green spaces. The participants and other local actors such as schools' representatives, cultural or community centres or private landlords became key players who can proactively protect, manage, or restore natural ecosystems. **TAST'in FIVE (Lille)** identified the needs and wishes of different groups during co-creation workshops and established a users' committee to regularly voice the different interests. **OASIS (Paris)** invited ambassador pupils to redesign their schoolyards in creative co-design workshops. Together with teachers they went through a detailed analysis of the different areas of the yard and came up with a first-use map. While primarily working with school students from 3-15, the project also reached out to their parents and grandparents as well as other groups in the neighbourhood for the opening of the schoolyards on Saturdays. Mixed group work can help to take the other's perspective and create understanding for the different needs. **A place to be-come (Seraing)** organised nature-based training for greenspace improvement, thus, reaching a wider audience and creating credibility in the eyes of local actors. **IGNITION (Greater Manchester)** organised an eco-street competition where local communities could submit and implement their ideas to green their back-alleyways or neighbourhood squares. That activity will continue beyond the project and will even focus more on deprived neighbourhoods. **Košice 2.0 (Košice)** wanted to engage different groups by the You Innovate! grant program that invited citizens and community groups through open calls to work on a specific challenge related to public service provision. A Mobile Urban Lab unit visited public spaces in the city and engaged with citizens to mobilise ideas and reach out to people who are not necessarily part of the normal innovation ecosystem. **SPIRE (Baia Mare)** used a mix of methods, such as questionnaires and digital surveys, "Plantathlons" and the SPIRE hub Makerspace to include groups that are difficult to reach in Baia Mare (such as young people, children and their families).

Different JPI Europe activities have showed that arts and culture can play an important role to reach different groups that are usually difficult to involve and help them to voice their issues (Noll, 2022). It can help to create new narratives and passion to make liveable cities. Creativity is also needed for the economy, partnerships etc. (Zacharzewski and O'Phelan 2022). A lesson learned from testing arts and cultural actions for engaging citizens is that it is worthwhile to step back from the local authority's perspective to engage citizens and instead explore citizens' possible motivations to participate. These can then be used as the vehicle to engage and empower them

and ensure a real impact.

Supporting this lesson learned, **IGNITION** (an UIA climate adaptation project in Greater Manchester) found that green space and nature can be best communicated through health and social benefits and increasing attractiveness than by climate resilience benefits themselves. Going beyond the original topic (adaptation) and using other benefits of the proposed nature-based solutions for climate-resilience as arguments helped to motivate and engage many more stakeholders. **CAMINA (Almeria)** was inspired by participative storytelling experiences developed in New York and Detroit's so-called Story Bank and sought to build a new narrative of the cultural heritage involving a diverse and varied range of ordinary people. **HOPE (Helsinki)** used citizen science approaches to engage members of the public – volunteers from within the community - who each carried an air quality monitor to generate geolocated data on how individuals experience air pollution, which related directly to citizens' health and quality of life.

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## Collaborative decision-making by involving citizens

Acknowledging the diversity of citizens groups once again, we continue to investigate the inclusive governance and into the ways to deliver co-design/co-decision-making with these different groups. While democratic collaboration can happen between organisations, which is best described as a partnership approach, here the focus will be on citizens.

Currently, many participation processes in cities and countries focus on informing and consulting citizens and other stakeholders. However, participation of the public does not automatically generate democratic decisions (UIA 2022). Achieving a Just Transition will need deep participation, new forms of co-creation and more citizen empowerment. The distribution of power is therefore important in how we develop our cities (Noll 2022). Co-creation will help ensure that the different interests are not only analysed or heard from the "outside", but also reaffirms that stakeholders are genuinely involved in identifying joint solutions and agreements to manage potential conflicts (UIA, inception report 2021).

Based on his experience in the ActiveCitizens project, URBACT expert Christoph Gouache argues that if the aim is to work on thoughtful policy-making or co-creation of strategies, it is not about asking citizens to decide the colour of the benches - it is to co-design the future climate plan. Local authorities are still very much in a complaint-oriented mindset when it comes to dealing with people's problems, instead of considering citizens' need as part of the solutions (Gouache 2021). Co-creation is not only about hearing the voices of citizens but ensuring that all these groups contribute to all types of policies (Adams and Ramsden 2019).

**OASIS (Paris)** listened carefully to the school children themselves and co-created their schoolyard spaces with them. Therefore, the pupils actively participated in re-designing and developing the new "usage charter" of their transformed schoolyards. Children are an example of a group that is usually not included in general participation processes. Although one of the project's main objectives was to strengthen the neighbourhood's social cohesion by fostering the development of local citizen initiatives - the envisioned "OASIS collectives" - was hampered by the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak. However, the project managed to find an alternative way to partially achieve the opening of the schoolyards to the broader local community on Saturdays. **A place to be-come (Seraing)** also deployed collective design of public spaces in three workshops involving about 50 residents. Every space was identified and then realised with the support and the collaboration of institutions, local associations and citizens, so that they made the neighbourhoods greener and, at the same time, became an instrument of communication and mobilisation through visible and tangible results. This method slowed the process, but it was beneficial to experiment with possible future participatory actions. In a similar way, **Košice 2.0 (Košice)** launched its Urban Innovation Sphere (UIS) providing a common space for city practitioners to share, test and co-create innovations and develop evidence-based policies that improve the well-being in the city. The project introduces and codifies data-driven policy making to the municipal level by collecting and processing data through CXI (Citizen Experience and Well-being Institute) and its MUL (Mobile Urban Laboratory) and through engaging a wide spectrum of actors in the public, none-profit and private sectors. CXI will be linked to the policymaking and executive activity of the municipality.

Several UIA projects have established public-private partnerships, such as a local public-private-citizen partnership in **VILAWATT (Viladecans)** to promote local energy production and operation and deep energy renovation. **TAST'in FIVES (Lille)** set up an association to test a governance model involving a multiplicity of stakeholders that included the local authority but not in the "command and control" position. It is also envisaged to be the platform where the stakeholders will start building a viable economic model, taking into account financial risks as well as the social added value to be generated and its costs. This model should allow the local authority to be an associated partner so as to guarantee that the general interest and the social objectives are taken on board while allowing the facility to be financially sustainable. **UPPER (Latina)** tested a collaborative initiative of public and private landlords (the Green Areas Bank) to meet the demand and supply of self-produced nature-based solutions. These were co-designed and co-managed with local citizens and stakeholders, while a



People-Public-Private management scheme will be designed for their future maintenance and sustainability. **Yes We Rent (Mataro)** set up a multi-stakeholder housing cooperative, which brought back into use empty private apartments in need of renovation in the city where there is an acute shortage of rental properties.

**CO-CITY (Turin)** used ‘Pacts of collaboration’ as a model for working collaboratively between citizens and public bodies, while **GreenMinds (Plymouth)** proposed new inclusive co-stewardship approaches that empower more diverse communities to get involved in co-production and action.

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## Behaviour change at the individual level

This topic explores the behaviour change at the individual level as a result of different forms of citizen engagement and co-creation/co-decision. Active engagement and collaboration can help citizens through a learning-by-doing approach to increase their knowledge on the needs and challenges of Just Transitions and their skills on developing options to act. With more knowledge from co-creation with planners and implementation of actions, citizens develop ownership of the results and feel motivated to change their behaviour. They may also gain new knowledge that they apply in their private area, such as having co-designed greenspace, they may plant native flowers that support bees and biodiversity in their yards. Furthermore, the decisions are likely to create a societal and economic framework that is more widely accepted and will also provide the opportunities and incentives to change behaviour at an individual level.

**OASIS (Paris)** encourages behaviour change through the involvement of citizens, in particular children, in co-creation. Similarly, **UPPER (Latina)** fosters behaviour changes through hands-on experience during co-design and creating a sense of belonging. Under the motto “Seeing is believing”, **IGNITION (Greater Manchester)** also worked with providing tangible experience to citizens to involve residents of neighbourhoods directly in the redesign of their eco streets based on their own ideas. This approach enabled them to see the change and benefits and consequently use the space differently. They are also expected to reflect more on climate and environmental matters in general. Tools, like the green roof calculator or the nature-based solutions evidence base, also encouraged private house owners to explore the benefits and install them. **GreenMinds (Plymouth)** used best practice behaviour change tools such as an ‘Appreciative inquiry’ in which detailed interviews with public, private, and resident stakeholders were undertaken to understand community needs and develop new networks for integrated service delivery and shared use of resources. **CO-CITY (Turin)** used a Pact of Collaboration to better working with people which will also drive different behaviours.

**SPIRE (Baia Mare)** and **VILAWATT (Viladecans)** used gamification to encourage individual behaviour change. In addition, they used a reward system through a local currency. In a similar way, **WESH (Herleen)** experimented with rewarding citizens who contributed to open space management projects with a digital currency. **CIRCULAR SOUTH (Antwerp)** used a complex set of nudging measures to stimulate behaviour change. A personal dashboard displays real-time data flows from smart energy, water and waste bin meters, helping to increase awareness about consumption. The blockchain-based system used a special online reward and exchange system to encourage circular behaviour. A local energy cooperative enabled experiments with smart energy exchange in line with the availability of renewable energy and a community centre hosted activities on sharing, repairing and reuse of materials and optimised the exchange of knowledge, skills and ideas.

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# Process and methodology

## Research questions

The main research question on Just Transitions across the three sub-topics Skills for a green future, Make cities affordable for all, and Democratic Transitions is:

“What are the main implementation lessons emerging from UIA cities in relation to Just Transitions” and in particular in regard to:

1. What barriers do cities face and how are they addressing them?
2. What key lessons are emerging from this sub-theme for the carbon-neutral future of cities?
3. What successful approaches can be replicated and scaled across Europe?

Under these overarching questions, Democratic Transitions will explore UIA projects under three dimensions:

- Fostering citizens’ participation: In the short and longer term, how can cities identify and activate all citizen groups, thereby building on citizens’ perspective, motivation, specific knowledge and skills; how this involvement can foster innovation as well as a more democratic approach?
- Collaborative decision-making with citizens: How can meaningful co-creation and co-decision processes with citizens be

built and ensured in the long term?

- Resulting behaviour change at the individual level: How can this involvement, contribute to raise citizens' individual awareness, increase their knowledge and lead to lasting changes of behaviours, thus complementing the collective societal changes?

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## Process

This Inception Report has been drafted on the basis of desk research and a literature review. Desk research included a high-level scan of all 86 UIA projects on methods and tools potentially supporting Democratic Transitions and some pre-identified non-UIA projects. Following this a series of key witness interviews with other organisations working in this field was undertaken.

Key witness	Organisation	Main topic
Anthony Zacharzewski and Adriana O'Phelan	The Democratic Society	Establishing deep democratic participation processes, capacity building, supporting shifts in mind sets and participation infrastructure; citizens participation in the EU Mission for 100 carbon-neutral cities
Margit Noll	JPI Urban Europe	Methods of participation such as the programme's Urban Living Labs; European partnership Driving Urban Transitions; Power distribution and the role of other disciplines such as arts and culture
Meline Gonzalez-Piloyan	Covenant of Mayors	Cities' commitment for local climate pacts; EU Policy Support Facility for local and regional authorities in implementing adaptation strategies
Christina Garzillo (planned)	ICLEI Europe	Climate Action and Governance in European Cities
Katerina Fortun (planned)	DG CLIMA	European Climate Pact, Climate change adaptation

Table 1: List of key witnesses Democratic transitions

In the next phase, the fieldwork will start. The list of UIA projects to analyse further will be consolidated and questions for survey/hearings will be developed. City hearings will be organised, which will allow us to dive deeper into how cities organised their participatory processes. In parallel, the context analysis will be deepened to set the lessons learned from UIA cities in relation to other outstanding city examples and the most relevant European initiatives. The research and core questions outlined above will guide the analysis.

In the final phase - analysis and reporting - the findings will be presented with a practical focus, designed to support and inspire cities seeking to facilitate effective citizen participation for Just Transitions throughout Europe and beyond. This will also inform national and EU policy stakeholders on what frameworks and support are needed from their side to facilitate mainstreaming of democratic transition. The end of this phase is planned for April 2023.

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See on UIA website

