



Manifesto

for

sustainable

territories



Manifesto



This manifesto presents an inspiring reference framework to all professional stakeholders of sustainable city and communities. It aims at being a landmark for drawing sustainable community evolutions, conceiving resilient projects, and feeding democratic debates. Neither a binding reference nor a charter of good practice, this manifesto may be rallied to support or discuss the conception of technical measures, economic projects, public policies, or mobilising citizens. This manifesto is constantly evolving and is open to the most recent scientific input and regular contributions from practitioners from sustainable communities.

Today, it is calling for the sustainable development logic to be broken, the philosophy and contradictory nature of some of whose goals have only resulted in reversing the destructive paths of our planet's habitability so far.

Crossing the biophysical limits determining habitability on Earth, those anthropogenic activities do destroy life, upset ecosystems and unsettle the major biological and geological balances which allowed for human civilisations to flourish. They jeopardise the latter's future and, more generally, the diversity and liveliness of life on Earth at large, on which we fully depend and for which we are now liable.

Faced with unprecedented health, socio-economic and environmental issues, we urgently need to redefine what a genuinely sustainable community is, by giving up anthropocentrism to start with considering humans to no be longer above but amongst other living beings, involved with a balanced ecosystem, hierarchy-free, in which their fates are intrinsically bound. Being both the perpetrators and victims of current environmental upheavals, it is our collective responsibility to break free from an unsustainable development model, based on unbridled resource consumption exceeding the Earth's physical capacities.

This concerns everyone: States, companies, associations, citizens, local communities... Thanks to their skills and their closeness to the population, the latter has a crucial part to play in the environmental transformation intensification and increasing resilience of communities. These necessary changes are an opportunity to make inhabitants and public and private players come together for new collaborations, for a better quality of life for all and serving life.

A sustainable community looks after all its inhabitants, ecosystems, infrastructures, public areas, companies and employees. It supervises a fair distribution of its resources and efforts to be made for the purpose of necessary transformations as part of its collaboration with those other communities it interacts with.

Interconnected, it networks, cooperates, and shares efforts. It integrates all issues linked with environmental and social transformation, at all levels, from buildings to the actual community, and over time, from daily management to planning.

There is no single sustainable community model: if, faced with worldwide issues, transformation goals must be universally shared, the turning point being particular to local context (historical, geographical, environmental, heritage-related, cultural, socio-economic...). Each community should be able to rely on the precise inventory of its assets and weaknesses, making up a progressive and co-elaborated diagnosis with all stakeholders. This means that political, economic, trade union and association leaders as well as all citizens must be trained on global environmental issues, associated with socio-environmental transformation dynamics.

Sustained and constant dialogue should allow for public, private and civic initiatives to emerge for the benefit of both local and general interest.

As far as possible, guidelines, objectives and projects should be monitored over time by means of adaptive and iterative project management, which assesses the effects of the actions implemented collectively and progressively, taking into account rebound and secondary effects and co-benefits, in order to understand the dynamics underway, adapt if necessary, redirect and report back.

#Sufficiency : responsible communities

The stakeholders of a sober community redefine its prosperity to comply with the planet's biophysical limits, securing the social balance, fair distribution of efforts and welfare of all living beings.

Their priority is to avoid, reduce then assess the life-long consequences of projects prior to any decision-making. Such an assessment should lead to renounce the most harmful projects. Restraints in consumption and harvesting the "fruit of the Earth" is a constant objective. Such "happy frugality" secures a safe, fair and sane living area.

They significantly reduce energy consumption, consolidate energy system efficiency and replace carbon energy with renewable energy. They reduce waste production at the root and develop a circular economy favouring repair, reuse and maximisation of existing uses.

They cut down on environmental, chemical, plastic, noise, and light pollution.

They drastically reduce direct and indirect greenhouse effect gas emissions and resource consumption, and they equip themselves with transmissible indicators, easily acquired by all so each single person can measure his/her own effects.

They demonstrate technological discernment and moderate and responsible use of digital technology, guaranteeing the security of personal data and ensuring the overall

ecological benefit of each of the digital solutions for optimising urban services.

They stop urban sprawl and preserve and regenerate fertile soils, by basing territorial planning on the ecosystem services that nature can provide, strengthening and regenerating biodiversity, and preserving and restoring the major cycles (of water, nitrogen, phosphorus, etc.). They prioritise renovating existing buildings and the intensifying of its uses, rehabilitating the city upon the city.

They reduce the need for commuting by bringing jobs, activities, services (public services in particular), amenities and housing by favouring cross-community collaboration and urban/suburban/rural complementarity. They replace carbon mobility with active mobility and public transports.

They conduct a powerful campaign to improve the behaviours and references of local players in the broadest sense: inhabitants, companies, institutions...

#Resilience: adapted and reactive communities

A resilient community should be able to continue to function independently from the chronic stresses and major shocks that affect it, to meet the essential needs of the population and non-human living beings, at all times and irrespectively of daily transformations.

For that purpose, the stakeholders within the resilient community learned and keep on learning from the community's assets and weaknesses, considering past difficulties and crises, by being better prepared for them and enhancing their capacity to absorb them and start anew.

In addition to prevention and crisis management, the stakeholders of the resilient community transform it to restrict the frequency and intensity of impacts: they consequently allow for the evolution of various ways of dwelling, governance, and projects, as well as players' practices and citizens' behaviours.

Addressing the basic needs of inhabitants is secured daily, as are the improvement of their quality of life, the preservation of resources and living beings. Nature-based solutions are favoured to enhance air, water, soil and biodiversity quality. They suggest new town/country solidarity to let resilient, accessible and pleasant communities thrive.

The stakeholders of a resilient community adopt a holistic view of issues and systemic implementation of solutions, by mobilising certain priority levers: actions to strengthen the collective and individual resilience of the population, urban renaturation and

regeneration of natural habitats for wildlife and plant-life, quick adapting to the existing facilities, in line with changing needs, as well as discernment as to the merits of new infrastructures, governance evolution at community scale and the mobilisation of new tools, particularly for upstream project assessment.

#Inclusion: communities for all and with everyone

The stakeholders of an inclusive community fight against all discriminations, social and spatial segregation and reduce inequalities. They protect the most vulnerable, favour a social, cultural, and intergenerational diversity through balanced urban policies and accessibility for all to environmentally friendly modes of transport and public spaces where people can meet, share and show solidarity.

Access to essential services (housing, food, health, education, and safety) is guaranteed within an inclusive community, with specific care for the redeployment of health supply and local health prevention, considering population ageing and environmental evolution. Genuine quality of life is guaranteed regardless of one's age, gender, income, potential disability, origins, or beliefs. Fundamental rights, safety and privacy are respected. Fair access to common goods for all has been established democratically.

The stakeholders of an inclusive community give all inhabitants the opportunity to get information, to train, to become familiar with the major issues at stake and to act for green and social transformation. Everyone is involved in diagnosing, developing, implementing, and evaluating policies and, in general, in the decision-making processes that affect them.

Inhabitants are encouraged and recognised in their capacity to take initiatives. Inclusive communities are eminently democratic. Working together, concerned institutional, economic, civic and academic parties aim to achieve the general interest as the result of a collective construction. Such collective intelligence is put to good use at each step of the socio-ecological transformation and resilience process.

#Creativity: for more collaboration and community complementarity

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Conclusion

This vision of sustainable cities and regions, currently put forward by the French government, local authorities, businesses, scientists and experts within France Ville Durable, needs to be shared, enriched and regularly questioned by public and private stakeholders, citizens, artists and intellectuals.

It should encourage people to act and create a positive vision of desirable, sustainable living spaces. The climate and environmental emergency are here, and so are many of the levers for change. Without reducing our ambitions in terms of innovation, but to in order to see them in a different light to that of the last two centuries, we urgently need to publicise and collectively implement these new visions, which are already widely shared by public and private sector professionals alike, and the solutions that have already proved their worth.

Together, let's speed up the transformation towards truly sustainable, ecological territories !

*'Manifeste pour une frugalité heureuse et créative' ['Manifesto for a happy and creative frugality'], Dominique Gauzin-Müller, Alain Bornarel and Philippe Madec

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State



Private companies



Experts



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