

WRENCH

Whispers of Time

Heritage as Narratives of Climate Change

D5.7 | People's Plan for taking care of the living heritage, in the face of climate change AN OUTLINE

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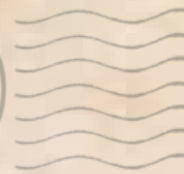
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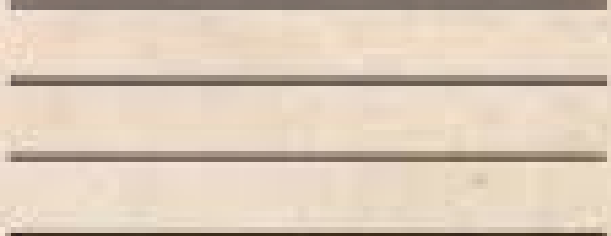
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A Belmont Forum Project



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Introduction

Climate change is the great challenge before us. Too often the discourse on climate change focuses on two levels: the scale of international agreements between states (the COPs) or the individual scale. Either the great of the Earth will save us or the choices each individual will make with his or her wallet.

What is missing is a reflection on collective action, community choices, needs and practices emerging from the grassroots.

Climate change is already having an impact on heritage, be it material (such as monuments, historic buildings, museums, archives, but also rivers, mountains, soil) or intangible (practices, knowledge, habits). Technological solutions are needed to protect tangible assets and research is needed to preserve intangible ones, but heritage cannot become an object to be observed under a glass bell jar.

Heritage is a living part of the community, a space that creates identity and tells stories about the past and future of a place.

This is why we believe that we need to start from the communities to tackle climate change by combining sustainability and social justice. Even when it comes to heritage, communities must be at the forefront of decision-making processes.

If heritage embodies the collective memory of a community, it is crucial that that community has a say in how to mobilise those memories in and against climate change.

The WRENCH project invites associations, individuals, local institutions and the entire community to participate in a collective planning process to write many people's guides on how to deal with climate change in relation to the living heritage.

Each people's plan will be the result of a participatory and democratic process of discussion through workshops open to the public.



Methodology

What is a people's plan?

Among the many approaches to urban planning, one stands out for its emphasis on engaging people directly in the planning process from the grassroots.

This approach applies to spaces of all scales, from individual buildings and city blocks to entire neighborhoods, cities, and even larger regions.

At WRENCH, we embrace this approach, recognizing the critical importance of three key pillars in the creation of a people's plan.

First, **there needs to be a community**: a group of people who either live in or are connected to a space and care for it, each bringing their own perspectives. This group can include residents, workers, public officials and others who have a say in the area.

Secondly, people must agree to engage in a process where the primary outcome is not merely a document. More importantly, the **process itself** should **foster change** in the community and **create a reciprocal learning opportunity** for all involved.

Third, the process must remain **democratic, open and inclusive**, prioritising the involvement of people directly affected by the decisions at the heart of the plan.

In this framework, **what is a people's plan for taking care of the living heritage, in the face of climate change?**

We believe that there are no one-size-fits-all solutions.

The principles and actions for preserving living heritage, as well as the very concept of what constitutes living heritage, must be grounded in the specific context.

However, we can suggest some **common methodological tools** to outline a series of steps that may **guide each community in finding its own way forward**.

On the following pages you'll find some tips for organising, reporting and reflecting on the collective workshops that can be organised to produce the community plan and people's guide.

The first workshop: what to do?

an example of a programme for a two-hour meeting

15 minutes | **Registration**

You should bring a contact sheet with logos and a privacy waiver where we collect the following information. Change what is (here) with contextual information

- First & Last name
- Do you live/work in the (name) neighbourhood? (Y/N)
- Organisation/body
- Email/contact
- Consent to the use of the data produced during this workshop for scientific and dissemination purposes, to the publication of the audiovisual materials produced during this workshop and to be co-authors of the 'people's plan' (Y/N)

15 minutes | **Brief round of presentations the participants**

Ask people to tell others:

their names, if they live/work in the neighbourhood and if they are part of an organisation.

15 minutes | **Introduction to the WRENCH project and the planning process**

Explain to the participants why they're there and outline the steps we'll take to produce the community plan and people's guide.

30 minutes | **Focus on the neighbourhood or a larger region (wider area)**

Participants, possibly organized into groups of up to 10 people, write their ideas on post-it notes and then collectively discuss their contributions to four key categories. This is done by responding to a series of questions (displayed in four sections on a whiteboard), and, when possible, marking their ideas on a map.

- Perception and memories of the neighbourhood: How do people live in this neighbourhood? What are the good and bad things about the [name] neighbourhood, the good places and the bad places? What did you like and is no longer there today?
- Ideas for the future: What would you like for the future of the neighbourhood?
- Effects of climate change on the neighbourhood: How is climate change felt here? Are there floods, heat waves, water bombs, etc.? Are there parts of the neighbourhood (streets, squares) that are most affected?
- Climate change mitigation: What do you think it would take to mitigate climate change here in the neighbourhood or perhaps to adapt?

The first workshop: what to do?

an example of a programme for a two-hour meeting

30 minutes | **Focus on the building or the block (focus area)**

The participants, still organised in the same groups, write their ideas on post-it notes and then discuss their contributions together as before, but at a more detailed level.

- Perception and memories of space: What do you know about the [name] building? What does this place mean to you, to the neighbourhood, to the city?
- Ideas for the future of the space: What would you like to see happen in this place? What activities would you like? How would you like it to be managed?
- Effects of climate change on the space: In your opinion, is the building affected or has it been affected by climate change? Do you feel that there are visible signs?
- Counteracting climate change: How could the building be adapted to the effects of climate change? How could the building be used to make our community more resilient and aware of climate change? How should activities in this building be conducted to better manage water, energy, food, waste, green spaces, other resources?

15 minutes | **Collective final summary and next steps**

Each group, through a spokesperson, shares in a few words what has emerged salient, and a next meeting is scheduled to share the first draft.

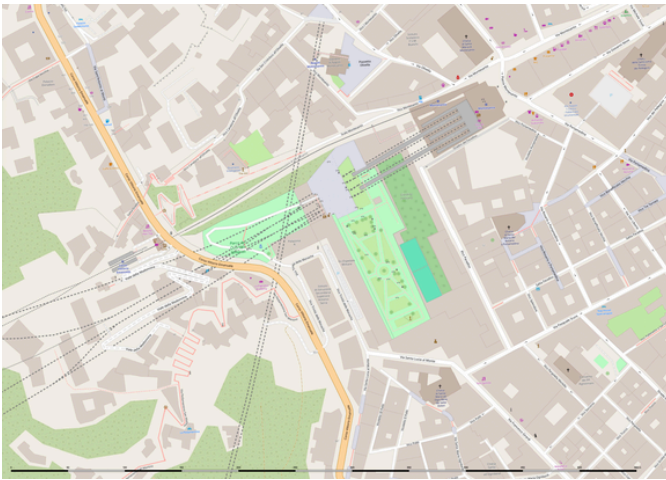
It is important to have a coordinator/facilitator for each group, who may also be the one(s) who prepare(s)/organise(s) the meeting, collects and analyses the materials and write(s) the first draft

Check-list for preparing the meeting

what to bring with you



- A contact sheet with logos and a privacy statement for registration; pens and nametags if many participants are expected.
- Whiteboards or flipcharts, post-it notes, markers for group exercises; the list of questions to be asked
- Possibly maps of the wider area and the focus area, which can easily be produced using OpenStreetMap.



Examples of OpenStreetMap maps at two different scales (1:500 - wider area; 1:200 - focus area)

Useful tips before/during the meeting

what you need to do to collect usable data

- Arrive **half an hour before to set up the room** and have a **preparatory meeting** with other coordinators, if there are any
- **Record** if you can (ask people for permission before you start)
- Take **pictures** of the whiteboard/flipchart with post-its, the map, the group as they work and a final collective photo



Narratives from the living heritage and ideas from the people

This is the section at the heart of each final plan, where we report the results of the workshops. Here we can describe the pilot site (the focus area, e.g. the building) in relation to a wider area (e.g. the neighbourhood, the city, the region), summarise how it is perceived by the people we have involved in the process, and tell some important stories about the pilot site and its surroundings.

a) Heritage and climate action: why the pilot site matters

Here we can explain why the pilot site (focus area; e.g. the building) is important in the "big picture" of the larger area (e.g. the city, the region).

b) The pilot site in the memories of the people

Here we can summarise the results of the parts of the workshop that focused on the "past".

c) The context today: what is good, what is bad, what can we improve together

Here we can summarise the results of the parts of the workshop that allowed us to collect some information about the neighbourhood/city/region in general (state of access and quality of services, housing, problems of the people living here, what is "special" about this neighbourhood, etc.). The idea is to describe the context in a more general way and with a focus on social and spatial justice before going into the specific focus on climate change

d) The pilot site and climate change: what are the main criticalities

Here we can summarise the effects of climate change, both in the neighbourhood and in the building, as perceived by people.

e) The pilot site and climate change: what can be done differently

Here we can summarise some ideas for mitigation/adaptation, based on the main resources required for the metabolism of the building, the neighbourhood and the activities of the people who live there:

- water
- energy
- green spaces
- waste as resources: composting, reuse/repair, ecc.

Guiding principles for the care of living heritage in WRENCH pilot cases

The idea is to come up with a set of common values, and a list of actions for the short, medium and long term, that can be easily circulated in each local context, translated into English and added to the Living Heritage Platform of the WRENCH project.

In addition to the set of information listed on the previous page, the final report should include the following sections.

Common values: a statement agreed by all participants that makes clear the shared values that will guide the implementation of the plan.

e.g.: This plan will be implemented with a focus on inclusion and respect for diverse groups and minorities, prioritizing class, gender, and ethnicity in evaluating who is involved, who is excluded, who will benefit, and who may be impacted."

List of short, medium and long term actions, who will implement them and with what resources: a table summarising and clarifying how to implement the plan

Suggested format

What to do?	Who will do it?	When?	With what resources?	Notes
Action 1				
Action 2				
...				
Action n				

Actors' network and self-reflection

The plan should also include a list of actors who are already involved and who should be involved in the next steps of the process.

We think it is also important to pay attention to the "more-than-human" component of the plan: what other living beings will benefit or be affected by the plan?

The authors of the plan are all those who have contributed to its creation during the collective workshops and beyond.

Guiding Questions for Ethical Self-Reflection in Engaged Research

1. **Community Impact:** Does the research process lead to outcomes that will positively transform the local community? How can we ensure that these benefits are shared equitably?
2. **Beneficiaries and Risks:** Who stands to benefit the most from the transformative outcomes, and who might experience negative consequences? How can we mitigate potential harm?
3. **Relationships:** Are we engaging all participants as co-researchers, acknowledging and respecting their diverse backgrounds, expertise, and experiences?
4. **Respect and Dignity:** Are we fostering a respectful environment for every individual and the group as a whole, recognizing their unique contributions?
5. **Literacy Awareness:** Are we mindful of the literacy levels and educational backgrounds of all participants, and addressing these differences appropriately?
6. **Epistemic Violence:** How are we identifying and addressing potential instances of epistemic violence, intended as in Spivak's article "Can the Subaltern Speak", as the process whereby the ability of particular social groups to formulate their own epistemologies is systematically denied.
7. **Inclusive Knowledge Sharing:** Are we promoting the sharing of knowledge through a variety of practical tools and methods accessible to all participants?
8. **Bias Awareness:** Are we actively reflecting on our own biases and remaining open to challenges and critiques?

Cfr. TARDIEU, Bruno, HAIG FRIEDMAN, Donna, BENETT, Bonita, RANDELL-SHAHEEN, Stacy, EL REMALY, Maya, & BARBAS, Alicia (2023), The ethics of participatory action research with people living in poverty. *Civic sociology*, 4(1), 57386.

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