

Brussels2030 Summer Assembly

Post Report Summary

The **Brussels2030 Summer Assembly** is a key pillar in preparation for the Brussels' candidacy as European Capital of Culture. The **second edition** took place from the 28th of June to 2nd July 2023 and was based at the Halles de Schaerbeek, Maison Des Arts and GC De Kriekelaar. The week offered a dynamic programme with international keynotes, panel debates, co-creation labs, talks, site visits, workshops, installations, performances, and artistic contributions. The aim was to test the initial ambitions, findings and realisations of Brussels2030 against a diversity of experiences and expectations. The aim was also to share and discuss knowledge about the Brussels of today, the cultural practices of tomorrow and the heritage of previous **European Capitals of Culture (ECOC)**. The week-long event was prepared building on the following guidelines and objectives:

INTENDED OUTCOMES

- Preparing the bid for Brussels2030 in a participatory manner: sharing some preliminary ideas, findings and realisations - discuss some key-questions and thematics that need to be further explored.
- Nurture and harvest urban imagination.
- Initiate and reinforce a series of co-creation projects and scenarios.
- Develop a series of tangible outcomes that are reflective of the discussions that took place during the Summer Assembly.

TARGET AUDIENCES

- Brussels youth (6-25 years old)
- Brussels inhabitants (diverse cultural & socio-spatial backgrounds)
- Practitioners & experience experts (associative & socio-cultural field)
- Policy makers, topical experts, institutional representatives...
- Silent/silenced voices – minority groups

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Diverse activities, publics, locations
- Multilingual – inspiring – connecting – activating
- Not a one-off but a starting-point
- Cross-pollination of scientific, artistic and cultural expertise

The Brussels2030 Summer Assembly was organized by Brussels2030, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Université Libre de Bruxelles, Brussels University Alliance, Réseau des Arts Bruxelles-Brussels Kunsten Overleg, OpenLab.brussels, Brussels Studies Institute, Brussels Academy and weKONEKT.brussels. This report provides a synthesis of the activities and discussions that took place during this one-week event. A number of questions and suggestions are formulated that should be considered in the preparation of the Brussels candidature and the continuation of the preparatory process.

facts & figures

The Summer Assembly was structured around three building blocks: inspiration & debate, labs & walks, installations & performances. A different topic was explored each day :

- #1 Cultivating an authentic and vibrant cultural capital**
- #2 Building bridges for a sustainable and inclusive Brussels**
- #3 Designing a European capital for 500 million citizens**
- #4 Brussels as a cultural laboratory for the right to the city**

Over 1000 people took part in the one-week event. Together, they represent a rich snapshot of the Brussels' population and a diverse range of socio-cultural organizations, associations, coalitions and institutions.

INSPIRATION & DEBATE

4 talks & debates
12 hours of discussion
29 contributors
600+ participants

YOUTH TALKS

3 panels
2 hours of discussion
12 contributors
60+ participants

LABS & WALKS

47 activities
100+ hours of cocreation
70+ participating organizations
600+ participants

PERFORMANCES & INSTALLATIONS

15 activities
20+ hours of performances
25+ participating organizations/artists
400+ spectators

BUDGET

	€
total:	50.000
people & organizations:	30 000
logistics:	7 000
catering:	7 000
communication:	6 000

This report summarizes key findings and questions that emerged during the event. They will be further investigated in the coming months. For the full report, see: www.brussels2030.be.

1 Cultivating an authentic and vibrant cultural capital

Brussels has set the goal to become European Capital of Culture (ECOC) in 2030. The first Bidbook must be submitted in 18 months (autumn 2024). Therefore, this second Summer Assembly was a crucial moment to take stock of what has been achieved so far, and what's coming next. How will Brussels2030 succeed in using arts, culture, civic engagement, and urban development as mutually strengthening forces? How will the project connect civil society, artists, cultural institutions, universities, citizens and young people? How will it tie links across communities, institutions, neighbourhoods and scales, in order to cultivate a vibrant and sustainable cultural capital? During the first plenary session, the Brussels2030 team elaborated on the guiding principles of the ECOC framework, and provided an update on the founding pillars and timeline of the Brussels2030 preparatory process.

SPEAKERS: Fatima Zibouh (Brussels2030), Jan Goossens (Brussels2030), Roeland Dudal (Architectural Workroom Brussels), Astrid Begenyeza (Brussels2030), Joke Quintens (WETOPIA) - **HOST:** Julie Bertone (VUB)

TAKEAWAYS

- The ambition to compete for the ECOC title in 2030 could serve as a **unique opportunity to tie links and join forces beyond existing divides**, building on the ambition to collaboratively prepare a brighter future for Brussels, its residents, workers, visitors.
- The values that are central to Brussels2030 are: inclusivity, sustainability, solidarity, democracy, diversity, and equity. The project aims for much **more than just coziness and consensual city-marketing**. The ambition is to inspire and support necessary processes of cultural, artistic and urban transformation, instigated by essential coalitions of artists, cultural workers and a diversity of city-makers.
- Molenbeek will hand in the candidature for Brussels as European Capital of Culture. However, the entire Brussels Region will carry and propagate the project, and all 19 municipalities should benefit from it. Molenbeek-Brussels2030 (MB2030) aims to **create a dynamic that cuts across the entire region**, with its different language communities, cultural and social groups.
- The Brussels' bid as European Capital of Culture will not build that much on clearly defined projects, exhibitions, concerts, or theatre productions. Rather, the candidacy will propose **a set of ingredients and a guiding framework** that should enable interested parties to participate in a diverse range of co-creation processes in the months and years to come.
- Being attributed the ECOC-title is not the only nor ultimate goal. Much more important is the preparatory process that is already in full swing, the **encounters and collaborations** that will be inspired, the change-dynamics that will be cultivated.
- The **European jury needs to be convinced about the Brussels' candidacy**, based on two Bidbooks that are to be brought in resonance with six evaluation criteria: the long-term impact of the project, its European dimension, its participatory dimension, its capacity to deliver, its governance model, and its cultural-artistic ambitions. All worksites that are developed in order to articulate the Brussels2030 vision/ambitions (e.g. through SpeakUp Brussels!, Future Places, This Is Us – This Is Brussels), will need to respond to the ECOC-criteria in order to prepare a legitimate bid.
- During the Q&A, the **importance of quiet urban spaces and moments of social reflection** were mentioned. Questions arose about how **divergent and potentially conflicting needs and interests** would be taken into account and worked with.

2 Building bridges for a sustainable and inclusive Brussels

The second plenary session explored how to get everyone on board in processes of urban transition and transformation. Louise Carlier argued that not everyone is equally influential or heard when it comes to urban planning and renewal, emphasizing the need to deliberately search for ways to include the needs and wishes of minority groups. Marie-Fidèle Dusingize questioned the issues of inclusion, participation and representativity. She called for greater involvement of the African diaspora, by providing spaces that allow for autonomous artistic production. Nadia Casabella talked about the need to support existing organizations on a more structural basis. She argued that inclusive participation should be strived for from the earliest phase of urban renewal projects. At the same time, she said, it is important to always remain mindful not to cause harm when asking people to be involved.

SPEAKERS: Louise Carlier (LOUISE-lab, ULB), Marie Fidèle Dusingize (U Mons), Nadia Casabella (ULB)
- **PANEL:** Cherine Layachi (Atelier Urbain), Marie-Lucia Vruz Correira (Lieux d'avenir), Wim Menten (51N4E) - **MODERATOR:** Roeland Dudal (Architecture Workroom)

TAKEAWAYS

- **Brussels has an extensive, distinctive and highly appreciated cultural-artistic offer.** Various communities shape this into a colourful palette. However, not everyone sees its/their contribution translated into financial, infrastructural and/or socio-organizational autonomy and recognition. Brussels2030 can be a lever for change on that front as well.
- **Representativity and genuine participation** should be strived for from the earliest phase and at all levels of the project. At all times, attention must be paid not to cause any harm. Paternalism and opportunistic dynamics should be avoided. The ambition should be to **foster agency and equity**, building on the ideal of giving all involved the possibility to self-organize and share responsibility for our city's future.
- Brussels2030 should not focus on bringing newness and innovation. Rather, should it help **improve what already exists, with and for those living and working in the city/region**. It is necessary to honor what already has proven to work well and start building from there. **Transparent and effective procedures** are needed to connect diverse initiatives and ensure sustainable change.
- An inclusive city is a hospitable city, providing **structures of care and solidarity**. Not everyone is equally equipped for taking part in processes of collaborative city-making. Attention should be paid to processes of invisibilization, marginalization and exclusion. Well-considered guidance and support are needed to **keep minority voices and the needs of the most vulnerable groups on the agenda**. The expertise of Brussels' socio-cultural organizations and workers needs to be mobilized and valued in this regards.
- It is important to **reflect on everyone's role and positionality**: Who has the authority to make decisions and why? Whose voices are represented? Who is absent and why is that so? What can be done to also articulate the needs of those who lack the resources, skills or power to participate in negotiation, planning, co-creation and development processes?
- **Dealing with the complexities that inclusion and cosmopolitanism bring about** demands time, resources, and a great deal of readjustments. In the end, inclusion asks for a re-distribution of power. It's about blurring the boundaries between who's there to decide and who's there to adopt a decision.
- Lots of projects have already been initiated in this preparatory phase. Each one of them holds a potential for contributing to the ambition of collectively rethinking the urban environment, prepare a more desirable future for Brussels and its inhabitants. What matters now, is to tie links and foster cross-connections. This will allow to **work towards more long-lasting results and effects**.

3 Designing a European capital for 500 million citizens

Does the European project still evoke dreams? Does it spark social imagination? Is it inspiring big ideas and brave aspirations? The third plenary session opened by asking whether the European promises of peace, solidarity and collaboration are not fundamentally in danger. How can we create connections between a plurality of citizens, living in a multitude of places, in these worrying times? How can Brussels2030 be an engine for a renewed European imaginary? Environmental and social justice activist Chloe Mikolaczjk argued that solidarity, empathy, open-mindedness and humility are key to foster social and planetary well-being. Srecko Horvat argued for radical inclusiveness: the need to use this moment of crises to address long-standing contradictions, with the aim of not only imagining different futures, but also to act on those dreams.

SPEAKERS: Srecko Horvat (Diem25) & Chloé Mikolajszak (Green seeds project) - **PANEL:** Edward McMillan (The Bridge) & Georgia Brooks (The Nine) - **MODERATOR:** Marion Berzin (Brussels Academy)

TAKEAWAYS

- Brussels is sometimes called a laboratory for the future. However, Brussels is above all a home to many people. A place where people work, spend time with their loved ones, or grieve for their losses. The **strength of Brussels2030 is that it builds on a participatory process** that seeks to involve all those people: youngsters, people without secure income or residency, people of colour, digital nomads, native Brussels residents.... **Everyone is invited.**
- To inspire a more desirable future, Brussels2030 will need to **express solidarity, open-mindedness and humility**. The project must apply truly inclusive forms of decision-making, allowing different people to have a say, building on a diversity of needs, wishes and desires. Radical inclusion (providing voice and agency to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged) asks for a critical **reflection on acquired privileges**. These should be openly discussed. Without any taboos.
- It's not enough to come with a beautiful image or convincing story. Change requires concrete actions. **The dreams, utopias, and desired futures that Brussels2030 inspires will need to be acted upon.** Change is always political and cannot be achieved without having to work through contradictions or active resistance against undesirable futures. Brussels2030 must **build on a tryptic: dreaming, acting and resisting.**
- Europe has always been an international/global project. Today, more than ever, this calls for a **humble, honest and decolonial attitude**. Moreover, if we want to make Brussels the European capital of imagination, **a number of structural problems will have to be tackled urgently:** rising inequalities, failing democracies, climate crisis, wars...
- Working for a better future involves **moving beyond the familiar and the trialed-and-tested scenarios**. The ambition for Brussels2030 should be to **challenge existing realities and have tangible effects on the here and now.**
- Any democratic decision-making process involves protest, resistance, disobedience. Brussels2030 will need to provide space for critical reflection and **foster encounters beyond established norms and conventions**. This cannot be done without friction or discomfort. Artistic practices and forms of expression can make it easier to **think through difficult thematics, explore unknown territories and develop unusual imaginaries.**
- Although ambitious, preparing for **a different future is not impossible**. First, because most people are not dreaming the impossible, but long for obvious things such as a liveable work-life balance, a healthy living environment, affordable housing.... Moreover, many **important actions are already initiated and supported by lots of brave people, day-in-day-out.** Brussels2030 must build on their experience, courage and hope.

4 Brussels as cultural laboratory for the right to the city

The fourth plenary session explored in what way arts can contribute to the process of urban transformation. Brussels is a diverse and dynamic city that boasts an incredible artistic scene. However, the city's institutional organization and complexity is not always supportive of its cultural production. What practices and platforms could be developed to express the unique Brussels identity? How could these support the social, ecological and decolonial transitions that our city needs to make? How can we create a creative coalition blending artistic autonomy, cultural inclusion, and urban transformation? Sjoerd Bootsma, artistic director of the cultural triennale Arcadia, shared his view on how becoming Capital of Culture can be a driving force for regional change and resilience. In the case of Leeuwarden 2018, it fostered an uplifting dynamic transforming a rural area without much ambition into a vibrant, connected and proud community. Matthieu Goeury is the new director of Les Halles, Schaerbeek. He presented his vision and ambition with this venue, building on three guiding principles: partnerships, accessibility and interdisciplinarity.

SPEAKERS: Sjoerd Bootsma (Arcadia) & Matthieu Goeury (Les Halles) - **PANEL:** Leen Rossignol (GC De Kriekelaar) & Yves Goldstein (Kanal) - **MODERATOR:** Lynn Tytgat (VUB, weKonekt)

TAKEAWAYS

- People, communities and societies need arts and culture, especially in times of increasingly disruptive changes. They offer space and inspiration that allow people to **work and long for something different, to think of who we are and imagine who we could be together in a different manner**. That's the extraordinary power of art, its connecting and transformational strength.
- Finding common ground, demands time and lots of consultations around the question: "What should our city look like in 20 years from now"? Once the shared desires, needs, things that people yearn for are found, one can start developing a connecting project and **mobilize people around a goal that transcends pettiness and navel-gazing**.
- The uniqueness of projects such as ECOC is that they can foster collaborations that would not have been possible without an external force. The European framework allows to **shape a horizon that inspires the collective good and gets different people and communities involved**.
- A more difficult thing is that **ECOCs ask for two somewhat conflicting strivings: glamour and local relevance**. You need to shine brightly, and make sure that 'the whole world gets to see what is happening'. At the same time, you need to make sure that all initiatives are locally anchored, found relevant and important by the people who work and live in the city. **If those two demands can be brought into synergy, great things can be achieved**.
- Socio-cultural projects need to **relate to the socio-cultural environment they are embedded in**. Daily realities should guide the reflection about how, with whom and why Brussels2030 and all its initiatives are set-up. In order to positively impact Brussels and its inhabitants, their well-being and living together, Brussels2030 will need to **combine artistic and societal, local as well as international relevance**.
- The power of change often resides in small movements and gestures. Allowing people to spend more time together, to get to understand one another better, test-and-trial novelties, laugh, cry, and be touched by a shared experience. This **togetherness often brings beauty and worth**.

labs, walks, installations & performances

OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES & ACTIVITY HOSTS

- 1984 is now! – Jafar Hejazi
- 2 (t)huizen 1 museum - BELvue
- 2030 à pied / 2030 te voet – walk.brussels
- A Futures Palimpsest for Brussels: Speculating 2039 with youngsters – VUB/EhB
- A shared/disputed cartography of Brussels' hypercentre – BRAL/ARAU/EBxL
- Arpentage d'un quartier populaire - Avanti Pogge !
- ART inclusive – Lasso/PLAzey/De Kriekelaer
- Atelier Quartier – Ultima Vez
- Ateliers de gravure intergénérationnels - CENTRALE
- Au nom de quoi résister ? – Musée de la Résistance
- Auberge Cabaret Bethleem – La Pointe
- BILDY Home Rebellion - Espacetous
- Bridge stories - CineMaximiliaan
- Brussels voices - It all depends on who you ask – commissioner.brussels
- Brussels2030 Jam! – Muziekacademie Schaarbeek
- Bruxelles, avec ou contre les immenses ? – Syndicat des Immenses
- Building Blocks for Future Spaces - Architecture Workroom Brussels & LOUISE-lab (ULB)
- Co-creating a more sustainable urban future : the case of Brussels' urban mobility - VUB-Mobilise
- Co-cr er des sc narios et contre-narratifs face   un symbole contest  – Brussels Studies Institute
- Come2Art: Art-based Citizenship – Culture Action Europe
- Common Fields - Laura Viale & Sevie Tsampalla
- Coudenberg Sound Box - Palais de Coudenberg
- Cirque au Balcon x Kookmet - Cultureghem & Pierre de Lune
- Cycle & toile - V2Vingt
- Dada Data - FARI AI for the Common Good Institute (VUB/ULB)
- Denaturing the city's future - LOUISE lab (ULB)
- Design de la reparation - ESA SAint-Luc - Bruxelles
- Doubt your eyes: unearthing botanical pasts and futures - Super Terram
- Festival global de la Marelle - Valentin Wauters & Pierre Lognay
- Fractures invisibles - Women in Art
- Futures worldbuilding lab for youngsters - BrusselAVenir
- Grief in the city, new rituals and collective care - Rouwcollectief
- Habiter la d mocratie Bruxelloise gr ce au cin ma participative - Centre Vid o de Bruxelles
- In the lee – The City is Our Playground
- Jus Sanguinis - Espirito Mundo association
- Ketmet, speelplein voor jong en oud - Cultureghem
- La Rue Royale fait son Cin ma - RenovaS
- Learning(with)Plants in Brussels - Brussels Health Gardens
- Less Walls, a Brussels Love Story - First Move Productions & The City Is Our Playground
- Mind The Night: les Nuits de Demain - Conseil Bruxellois de la Nuit
- Musee du Capitalisme - Museum van het Kapitalisme
- On the Independence of Congo - Barbara Drazkov & Pytshens Kambilo
- open.streets - Ultima Vez, Kanal, Filter Caf  Filtr  Atelier, BOOST!center, Peeping Tom
- Play the city : imagine Europe - Brussels Academy, Arts et publics, Larsh Universit  Polytechnique des Hauts de France

- Radio Poétik - Park Poétik
- Récits d'une Belgique imaginaire - BELvue
- Repenser l'Économie - Atelier Fresque
- Speak Up Brussels! - Brussels2030
- The Female Gaze/ Let's talk about us in the city - Laura Wipler & Lena Müller-Naendrup
- Thinking locally: how to address climate migration? - AffluentE
- Toekomstwijken voor Brussel : de Noordwijk - Brukselbinnenstebuiten
- Tram 20.3.0 Talks - BrusselAVenir
- Trip of the Futures movie screening - BrusselAVenir
- Tuin Editie Club1030 – GC De Kriekelaar
- UrbeURBanisme Émotionnel - La Concentration Asbl
- Verkiezingskoorts? On prend la température de la culture ! - RAB/BKO, EBxl, Culture et Démocratie
- Visite du Matrimoine du quartier Brabant-Nord-Saint-Lazare - RenovaS
- VOLTA X BRIKABRAK w. Omegaqa
- What if we don't see the other? – Women in Art

SYNTHESIS OF TAKEAWAYS

- The Summer Assembly mobilized **a diverse range of Brussels organizations, artists, professionals and citizens**. During the labs, walks and performances, a variety of expectations and concerns were shared regarding Brussels2030. Themes that emerged as key challenges include Brussels' poor build infrastructures (degraded, inaccessible, unhealthy...), unsafe neighbourhoods (dark, tough, dirty...), segregation and inequalities (on the basis of language, age, ethnic-cultural background, gender, sexual orientation, class...). The need to **work towards an authentic project** was highlighted, building on what is already working well, and with an aim to address real needs, respective of differences as well as human and environmental limits.
- The strength, uniqueness and attractiveness of Brussels lies in its diversity, the **unique combination of life experiences, languages, forms of expression**, the multitude of initiatives (both small- and large-scaled, grassroots and institutionalized, short- and long-lived, planned and spontaneous...) that are making this city/region. To do them justice, **more coordination, collaboration and communication is needed** between the various governments, administrations, communes and communities. Brussels2030 should serve as a connecting platform, fostering creative synergies and solutions.
- Participants in the SA prefer to self-organize rather than being surveyed, consulted, let alone directed or presented with a *fait accompli*. In that sense, they also want to be given the **opportunity to co-shape the European Capital of Culture**. Urban co-creation is acknowledged as a suitable approach not only to inspire, but also help realize big dreams, building on diverse needs and expectations. By bringing diverse perspectives together, people also learn to look at their city in a different manner, and gain a better understanding of other people's views, lifestyles and demands.
- Brussels2030 needs to fully embrace and reflect pluralism, help connecting different 'schools of thought', combine diverse methodological approaches, and fostering **moments of perspective-sharing, cross-pollination, and critical-constructive reflection**.
- Brussels2030 must **care for the little minds and souls**, those who all too often fall beyond the reach of urban renewal initiatives: the homeless, unemployed, illiterate, elderly, sick... If they are not taken into account properly, they will suffer from it.

- **Transforming Brussels for the benefit of its residents** asks for an investment in more accessible, inclusive and democratic public infrastructures and social services: housing, public toilets, benches, drinking fountains, parcs, sports infrastructures, public transportation, health care, etc. **The legacy of Brussels2030 should be reflected in better living and working conditions for all Brussels residents.**
- Young people want more emphasis on and appreciation of diversity. Today, they do not always feel welcomed because of their ethnic, cultural, socio-economic, linguistic... backgrounds. They don't always feel heard or taken seriously. To reach and engage a more diverse audience - including youngsters - ambitious steps forward are needed. Brussels2030 needs to **improve accessibility of and recognition for the diversity of cultural-artistic practices, offerings and expressions** that are proposed by the diverse Brussels communities, coalitions, alliances and individuals.
- Artistic co-production allows to involve silent voices. It offers a means to **explore complex issues in a playful manner**, making it easier to involve people who are not used or feel uncomfortable to speak-up. Artistic practice and expression connects people, even around more difficult topics such as loss, grief, death, violence, abuse. **Brussels needs more shared and connecting spaces and initiatives.** Brussels needs more care and solidarity. Brussels2030 could serve as a great lever in this regard.
- Both winning and losing the title of European Capital of Culture will affect the future of Brussels. Brussels2030 therefore comes with great responsibility. Expectations, hopes, ambitions and stakes are high. **Not seizing this momentum is not an option.**

youngsters on stage: let's talk politics

During the Summer Assembly, Youth Talks were organized at the end of the day. Members from the Brussels government were interviewed by a youth delegation coached by Promo Jeunes. The youngsters voiced concerns and expectations of their generation in relation to the future of Brussels. Throughout the day, they went onto the streets to talk to young people in different areas in Brussels (Uccle, Brussels and Ixelles). They listened to their opinions, concerns and dreams for Brussels, and used this input for questioning Brussels' politicians.

On Thursday June 29th the youngsters welcomed **Elke Van den Brandt** (Minister of the Brussels-Capital Region, responsible for Mobility, Public Works and Road Safety), and **Nawal Ben Hamou** (Secretary of State of the Brussels-Capital Region, responsible for Housing and Equal Opportunities). Various issues surrounding Metro 3, housing inequality, social inclusion and protection of young people were discussed.

KEY-TOPICS: The Youth Talks started enthusiastically, with a first question touching upon the major mobility changes in Brussels. The youngsters were curious about how the minister plans to support people who depend on their cars, while also making it easier to use other modes of transportation. They also wanted to know how the minister would go about more participatory modes of decision-making and improved communication with diverse Brussels inhabitants. They then raised the issue of affordable housing, expressing concerns around the observation that newcomers find it very difficult to find their ways in the expensive housing market in Brussels. The youngsters stressed that this is an urgent problem that could get worse by 2030. They also asked what could be done to help homeless people, given the long waiting lists for social housing.

On Friday June 30th they welcomed **Bernard Clerfayt** (Minister of the Government of the Brussels-Capital Region, responsible for Employment and Vocational Training, Digital Transition, Local Authorities and Animal Welfare). He was asked about how to manage our economy in a more equal way.

KEY-TOPICS: During the second talk, the central theme shifted to jobs. The interviewing youngsters wondered how technology could change the job market and how to bridge the gap for elderly and non-native speakers. They also wondered why open-source technology is not used more in city government. Furthermore, they were curious about alternatives to animal testing. Finally, they asked what the future would hold for Molenbeek-Brussels2030 in 2045.

On Saturday July 1st **Barbara Trachte** (secretary of state of the Brussels-Capital Region responsible for economic Transition and Scientific Research) was invited and interviewed.

KEY-TOPICS: Then came the topic of climate change. The young interviewers wanted to know how science and reducing carbon emissions can go hand in hand. They also wondered how to make our economy more environmentally friendly by 2030 and how technology fits into this. They talked about making academic research more accessible to everyone, not just a select few. Finally, they wanted to know more about better access to mental health care. These questions painted a picture of a young generation eager to make a positive impact on their city, and more broadly: the world.

feedback & learnings

KEEP – what worked well

PREPARATORY COCREATION DAYS : Nice moments of exchange and encounter. Allowed to involve a diverse range of partners, create an opportunity for diverse audiences to co-shape the Summer Assembly (SA) as well as the Brussels2030 candidacy. Contributed to the coherence of the SA-programming.

PROGRAMMING : The diverse programming (mix between cultural activities, key-notes, labs, walks...) allowed to involve a diverse audience, is reflective of the richness and diversity of Brussels' cultural/artistic landscape, and stimulated inspiring exchanges – The Youth Talks with Promo Jeunes and Speak up! were very successful – The closing ceremony was very much appreciated – The interactive approach in the labs and some of the key-note sessions were forwarded as plus – The inspiring speakers and panels – trial with live translation were cited as value added.

EVENT-MANAGEMENT & AMBIANCE : The SA was well-prepared, retro-planning and detailed overview of to-do's per day/person allowed for smooth organisation – Catering was top: high quality food, local, sustainable - Good vibes, open communication, supportive, fun, informal.

VENUES : Les Halles: impressive site, great crew and (technical) support - Maison Des Arts: friendly and very helpful, Diversity of activities, spread all over Brussels was a plus.

FUNDING : Brussels Capital Region, Innoviris, Réseau des Arts Bruxellois – Brussels Kunsten Overleg (RAB-BKO), Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB), Brussels Academy, Brussels Studies Institute (BSI), Les Halles, Maison Des Arts, GC Kriekelaer provided human, financial, infrastructural, and political support.

SYNERGIES : The preparatory process and the SA in itself fostered a broad range of synergies, new collaborations between different urban coalitions, institutions, organizations, actors. The SA also enforced collaboration between diverse academic entities and the Brussels university associations thanks to the fruitful cooperation in preparation of and during the SA.

SUPPORTING STUDENT TEAM : The VUB-ULB-student-team was a great asset, fostering a welcoming environment/atmosphere, contributing to the smooth organization of the event, the documentation of all activities, production of daily journal and post report. The SA provided them with a unique learning opportunity and job experience.

PARTICIPANTS IN THE SUMMER ASSEMBLY : were given an opportunity to discover and participate in a variety of debates, site visits, cocreation labs, performances, installations, They could share their expertise and mobilize their networks as to inspire the Brussels' candidacy, to co-design the agenda, methodologies and initiatives that will shape Brussels2030, to act as critical friends within the process, to develop partnerships and initiatives that help prepare a (more) desirable Brussels, to formulate points of improvement for the next Summer Assembly.

IMPROVE – what can we do better

AMBITIONS : Put forward Key Performance Indicators (PKI's) to move from rather intuitive to more objective forms of evaluation - Better define target audience: who needs to be involvement, for what reasons? Reduce, sharpen the programme. Make choices to improve accessibility - Move from broad orientation towards more targeted topics or ambitions.

PARTNERSHIPS : How to involve bigger institutions/structures that won't participate through an open call? Shouldn't there be a Summer Assembly Curator? – Intensify partnerships with youth associations - Establish structural collaborations with BX1, Bruzz, ... other local/regional media. Explore economic partnerships.

PREPARATORY PROCESS & TEAM : Find a better balance between energy & time invested in the Summer Assembly versus supporting partners and projects outside the event - Better prepare students (coaching, reporting, translation, facilitation, ...) - Respect deadlines & workflow during preparatory months - Rethink who does what according to expertise.

TIMING : Rethink timing: end of season/start of summer might be convenient for partners but less for the broad public - Explore possibility to organise a key-note/debate event in March, and a more cultural/artistic programme in June.

COMMUNICATION : Finalize programme earlier to allow for broader mobilisation - Cross-check guest/ mailing lists to avoid overlap/double communication - Communication should be less academic/conceptual/abstract – Simplify registration form and procedure - Make webpage less messy - Further think through multilingual ambitions (ex. provide programme on website in both NL, FR & ENG).

CATERING : Offer more variation in lunch options throughout the week - Provide food for crew and audience during evening programme.

PROGRAMME : Include more cultural and artistic activities - Re-evaluate key-notes formula – Downscale programming to ensure more adaptability / openness to participate in / mobilize around events occurring outside the SA - Increase visibility and integration of installations / exhibitions - Explore possibility of livestreaming - Move the debate concerning possible unwanted consequences of B2030 candidacy from the margins to the centre (city branding, touristification, gentrification, political/economic hijacking) - Invite more dissenting opinions.

PARTICIPATION/ACCESIBILITY : Aim for more representativity/diversity in audience and programme – Develop strategies to reduce no-show - Indicate the “real” language used during the activities as to avoid linguistic uncertainty - Experiment with new co-creation formats – Increase accessibility for blind people, PMR – Need more involvement of cultural partners, make better use of their programming/artistic expertise.

VENUES : Pay more attention to comfort: heat/size/air circulation – Pay more attention to spatial arrangement: how to create a safe/brave space - Improve signalisation.

The evaluation points were formulated by the Summer Assembly production team members, based on their own experience and participants' reactions during and after the event. Feedback from partners and participants was collected via an online questionnaire. Similar findings and recommendations were clustered under thematical headings.

where to land ?

The question that emerged as a common thread during the Summer Assembly was: **How will Brussels2030 contribute to the creation of shared urban spaces?** Spaces that make everyone feel welcome, capable to participate in, and contribute to the process of city-making. Spaces that allow everyone to be seen, listened to, taken into account and valued? How can the project help **achieve greater inclusion, equity and diversity**, both in terms of cultural, generational and gender diversity, as well as the variety of socio-economic profiles that make up our city? Everyone seemed to agree that this would require **a reflection at multiple scales**: from the street, to the neighbourhood, the city, country, Europe and beyond... Seeking cross-links between those different levels is necessary to truly **transform the city for the better**.

The conversations that took place during the Summer Assembly fueled a reflection about the question: **How can arts and culture help create spaces of commonality?** But also: How can such spaces safe-guard artistic freedom? How can they ensure that artists and cultural workers can practice their jobs in dignified and viable circumstances? One of the questions that regularly popped-up in this regard, was: How not to be hindered by the highly complex institutional context characterizing the Brussels realm? Sustainable transitions and transformations, are only possible with the **active involvement of diverse urban actors**: cultural, political, economic and educational institutions, artists, socio-cultural workers, scientists as well as citizens. However, the fragmented Brussels institutional landscape all too often hampers **cross-sectoral and trans-cultural collaborations**. How can we truly move beyond the existing divides?

There was no consensus about the methods that might allow for sustainable and equitable transitions and transformations. Rather, it emerged that the power of change should be found in a **plurality of initiatives**, ranging from artistic experiments, technological innovations, citizens-driven actions, cross-institutional events... building on networked collaboration and cross-fertilization, but equally resistance and more radical forms of renewal, revolutionary change even.

So, besides the concrete ideas and initiatives that were show-cased, trialed and prepared during the Summer Assembly, numerous questions arose during the five days of encounter, exchange and debate. What links these conversations, is a **shared desire, courage and pleasure** to prepare an ambitious bid for Brussels as European Capital of Culture, and to seize this momentum to **improve the Brussels city and region, for the benefit of its inhabitants, workers and passerby's**.

IN A NUTSHELL

- Brussels2030 should aim for the creation of **safe and welcoming spaces**, fostering sustainable and just urban transitions.
- The project should build on **a multitude of experiments, methods, practices, initiatives**, mobilizing and connecting a diversity of urban residents, workers, city-makers and users.
- The stakes are high at all levels: the streets, neighbourhoods, communes, region... Europe, and beyond. Brussels2030 will need to offer a connecting platform, helping to **align goals and dynamics that play out at various moments and scales**.
- Defining and developing **relationships** with political, economic, cultural and educational institutions is crucial at this stage.
- Dare to **dream and aim high!**