

# I AM THIRSTY

THE CLIMATE COMMONS – WHERE SOIL, PEOPLE, AND PLANTS REGAIN TIME AND SPACE TO THRIVE

## J'ACCUSE...

### OPEN LETTER FOR HYDRICAL JUSTICE

THE LATEST IPCC REPORT – PUBLISHED IN 2024 – IS UNEQUIVOICAL: THE CURRENT TRAJECTORY IS LEADING US TOWARD A WARMER AND DRIER CLIMATE BY THE END OF THE CENTURY. THIS MEANS THAT THE CLIMATE COMMONS, WHERE SOIL, PEOPLE, AND PLANTS REGAIN TIME AND SPACE TO THRIVE, ARE AT RISK.

This is no longer a distant scenario, but a concrete, burning reality. Critical thresholds have already been crossed. Alarming signals are everywhere, in all territories. EXTREME DROUGHTS, MEGADRIES, ACCELERATED GLACIER MELT, DEVASTATING FLOODS, OCEAN ACIDIFICATION, ROCKY DROUGHT COLLAPSE. The climate is destabilizing – and with it, geopolitical conflicts. In Europe, Bulgaria recently blocked the flow of water to Greece, breaking a decade-old cross-border agreement essential to irrigating the Ebro plain. The same year in Kosovo, an explosion destroyed part of the Blue Lagoon canal, cutting off drinking water for thousands and sparking a new crisis between local authorities and international institutions. Meanwhile, agricultural tensions continue to rise in Spain, where water transfers between regions – particularly from Aragón to Catalonia – are rekindled by persistent drought. These examples are not isolated incidents; they are the harbingers of a harsh future, where access to water becomes a power struggle, a source of instability, a tool of oppression. That is why, through this letter, our ambition is to call to spread out, to denounce, to name the reality as we live it, and it imposes itself on us, and so, we act.

J'ACCUSE THIS CENTURY OF ALLOWING THE CLIMATE TO SPIRAL OUT OF CONTROL. WITH NEITHER URGENCY NOR CONSCIENCE, POLICYMAKERS HAVE CHOSEN TO TURN PLANETARY WARNING INTO A MECHANISM OF DEFENSE. A DRIVER OF DIVISION, WHERE WE SHOULD BE HEALING, THEY DID DEEPER WHERE WE SHOULD PROTECT. THEY SELECTED THE WEAKEST, THE MOST VULNERABLE, AND LEFT THE WEALTHIEST TO BUILD THEMSELVES SHELTERS, SAFE HAVENS FOR A PRIVILEGED FEW, TO THE DETRIMENT OF THE COMMON GOOD. EXCESSIVE CONSUMPTION OF WATER, THE MOST VITAL RESOURCE, THIS COMMON GOOD NOW TURNED PRIVILEGE. WATER IS NO LONGER SHARED – IT IS COINED, SOLD, MONOPOLIZED BY THE RICH. INDUSTRY, THE MOST MOUNTING TENSION AND VIOLENCE, LET US BE CLEAR: WATER IS NOW A STARK INDICATOR OF CONTINUOUS CONFLICT. WHERE ADVERSITY RUNS DRY, IT IS INDUSTRIAL CONGLOMERATES THAT HOLD THE LAST DROPS, WHERE RIVERS CROSS BORDERS, STATES LOCK THEM DOWN LIKE FRONTIERS – WEAPONIZED. POLITICAL TOOLS OF TURNING WATER INTO AN INSTRUMENT OF BLACKMAIL – A RESOURCE THAT KILLS BY OMISSION, FOR THOSE WHO CONTROL WATER, CONTROL LIFE. AND THOSE WHO WITHHOLD IT, KILL.

In the face of this, it is urgent to place HYDRICAL JUSTICE at the heart of our territorial decisions. Public policy must recognize that access to water, to coolness, to living soil, is not a luxury – but a FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT. This right must be made operational, tangible, and enforceable – by giving soil, water, and plants the same legal weight as urban planning. We must no longer think of the city as an impossible machine, but as a porous, regenerative, resilient ecosystem. We must stop opposing the built environment and the living world, and instead weave them together into a fertile, habitable, healing fabric. It is at this local, concrete scale that we have chosen to act. In the FONT DEL GOS neighborhood, at the foot of the Collserola Natural Park, a fragmented edge of Barcelona, disconnected from urban flows, suspended, dry, forgotten neighborhood. And yet – a promise: its very name, "Font del Gos", evokes a source, an ancient trickle of water. A hydro memory still alive, ready to be reactivated.

Our project draws on this singular situation – between city and mountain – by reactivating the natural water flow descending from Collserola: capturing, slowing, filtering, antiseptic. Water is no longer drained – it is harvested. Terrain becomes resource, slope becomes city. The project shifts everyday practices from open-air drains to planted filters, from sewers to green clothes. We design simple, low-tech, reproducible systems: rainwater tanks, buffer basins, planted canals, permeable surfaces – a series of micro-interventions that, taken together, become a tangible piece of climate justice. We are not here to impose a model, but to offer a framework for action, a way of thinking, a way of living. A resilient method – one that can be appropriated by the residents of the project, we offer a grounded, sensitive, and replicable territorial approach. WE RESPOND TO AN EMERGENCY: TO TURN WATER INTO AN INSTRUMENT OF PROTECTION, TO PREVENT THE COLLAPSE OF THE LIVING. But above all, we aim to restore ecological agency to the territory, to return the power to inhabit, through governance, mutual cooperation, shared decision-making. WATER, CONTROLLED BY A FEW, RESILIENT, AND DESIRABLE TERRITORY.

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## PARIS AGREEMENT TARGET

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While some areas within these neighborhoods are sporadically green – particularly in wetter zones – the surrounding hills remain largely dry and sparsely wooded. These areas are mostly made up of scrubland or dry grasslands, which are highly vulnerable to prolonged droughts.

In the more affluent neighborhoods, homes often feature private swimming pools and use significant resources to cool down or water gardens, further exacerbating inequalities in access to water. Conversely, in working-class areas, the combined effect of limited vegetation, poor thermal insulation of buildings, and urban heat reflection makes heatwaves particularly hard to endure, especially for aging populations.

The distribution of public facilities – an essential system for heat and space through the city – also reveals a critical lack of water points throughout the Font del Gos Park. In the face of increasing drought, these already marginalized territories are becoming less resilient, less livable, and less attractive. This is especially true for the neighborhood of La Font del Gos.

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emerging from a fundamental principle: water as a socio-climatic catalyst. In Font del Gos and Cal Notari, the project reweaves a fragmented landscape into a living territory of care and regeneration. Faced with drought, aging populations, and the slow erosion of infrastructural neglect, it proposes a response rooted in hydrological justice – reweaving the memory of water to shape a future of inclusion, fertility, and resilience.

At the edge of the Collserola Natural Park, these neighborhoods are paradoxically cut off from both nature and the city. Topography, infrastructure, and administrative borders reinforce their isolation. Cal Notari, an informal and precarious settlement, lies within the PEPRAT protected perimeter – subject to strict environmental regulations, yet excluded from public investment. The project takes a clear stance: no displacement. It works with the land, not against it, redefining borders through care rather than exclusion.

The strategy begins by tracing the hydrological memory of the site – both natural and anthropic. A series of low-tech interventions are deployed: planted canals, rain gardens, and retention pockets manage the scarce water available during the driest months. These devices slow runoff, enable infiltration, and restore the soil's capacity to hold moisture. Over time, they rehumanize the maquis landscape and support ecological succession toward denser, more resilient cork oak systems.

A central intervention transforms a former asphalt parking lot into an Earth Fabrika and a community-run tree nursery. Managed by the residents' association, the nursery grows cork oaks to revegetate the hillside and urban fabric – enabling the right to shade to all, regardless of density or background. Beneath the terrain, a subterranean reservoir collects rainwater and runoff, creating a thermal mass. Above it, a public square, cooled by evaporation, becomes a vibrant gathering space for residents, farmers, and visitors. A new bus stop anchors the square, connecting the neighborhood more closely to the rest of Barcelona and

marking the start of a hydrological promenade into the park. Around the new square, essential programs take root: a small school, a shared meeting room, a pharmacy-procure and a hydrological library. These are not simply amenities – they are spatial rights: the right to remain, to coolness, to access care and knowledge, and to actively shape one's environment. The tree nursery, run by and for the community, isolates a regenerative cycle: trees planted by residents, sold are replanted, and new commons emerge across the slopes and streets.

The system is both circular and inclusive. Rainwater is captured, stored in the underground reservoir, and redistributed to cool public spaces, irrigate vegetable gardens, and sustain a closed-loop waterway system for the nursery. Earthworks sculpt gentler slopes, easing mobility for elderly residents and creating shaded areas for play – microclimates tailored to protect the most vulnerable. Soil is probed. Trees are planted. A network of care emerges, regardless of status or origin.

Hydrological justice becomes part of daily life. Rooted in the principles of the Hydric Justice Charter, the project asserts the right to shared resources: to stay in place and to regenerate with the land. It values what already exists: the people, the knowledge, the terrain. And it offers a model that can be replicated across similar urban territories – transforming dry, marginal edges into fertile, inclusive, and resilient commons.

From storm to root, from slope to square – water leads the way.

## BARCELONA - LA FONT DEL GOS

