What are *Manifestos* and *Impulses*?

Everyone can see the severe challenges we are facing. Our economy is dirty. We exploit and destroy nature. Inequality undermines our democracy and divides people. Technology develops faster than our institutions. Conflicts escalate, humans suffer. Our politicians are unable to take effective action, and public discourse does not produce clear solutions that can be implemented. What shall we do?

First, we need to understand what causes the challenges we face. Then, we can develop solutions that address these causes. To achieve these two goals, we produce *Manifestos* and *Impulses*. *Manifestos* describe our understanding of major challenges and paint a picture of a utopian world without them. *Impulses* are concrete, ambitious and evidence-based proposals which provide politicians with clear next steps to implement the world we want to live in. Both are necessary to unite a diverse set of people behind well-founded ideas.

In this section, we describe what we imagine ideal *Manifestos* and *Impulses* to look like. The second section below, "How are *Manifestos* and *Impulses* produced?", explains the process of writing them.

What is a Manifesto?

A *Manifesto* is a relatively short text with two main goals:

1. setting out our understanding of what causes major challenges in a specific area and

2. describing a vision of a utopian world without these challenges.

A *Manifesto* of this form is necessary because it is often not obvious where our major challenges are coming from. The world is noisy and complex, so it needs to be untangled, and an alternative, more desirable vision must be presented. We believe that such a *Manifesto* must be the synthesis of the contributions of young people, academics, industry experts and other thinkers passionate about the topic. We currently envision six *Manifestos* covering our major topic areas: the economy, society and the law, our living space, education, work and health.

What does a *Manifesto* look like?

Manifestos will be available online and are to some degree interactive. The main body of the text is a collection of short statements, either of fact to provide background or of opinion to declare our position. These can be organized into subsections if necessary. Statements which may be controversial are backed by sources or additional information, available by hovering over them. At the end of each subsection, the *Impulses* we derived from the statements, finished or work in progress, are linked.

How do we decide what goes into a *Manifesto*?

In the process of collecting diverse contributions, conflicts of opinion are inevitable. Whenever such conflicts arise, we invite the parties to discuss their differing standpoints with each other and to provide evidence and arguments in support of their position. In this manner, hidden assumptions may be unearthed and positions can be refined in the light of new facts.

In addition to this method, a few principles guide the decision of whether a position is included in a *Manifesto*.

Rather than mere descriptions of challenges, we aim for explanations of what causes them.

Only if we understand the causes of our problems can we judge the effects of solutions we propose. For example, only because we know that bacteria *cause* infections, we know that penicillin helps treat them (by killing bacteria or preventing their growth). Finding causal explanations can be hard, which is why we need diverse inputs. In synthesizing these inputs, we need to distinguish between statements of fact and statements of opinion.

Statements of fact must be backed by sources and distinguished from statements of opinion

Often, we present facts when we defend our explanation of a challenge. All such facts (e.g., statistics, historical evidence, scientific findings) need to be backed by a reliable source. This forces us to test our beliefs. If no source can be found, maybe we are dealing with a value or opinion rather than a fact?

Some positions are simply reflections of the way we would like the world to be. This is fine, as long as this is made clear. For example, a preference for a car-free city center is an opinion because it can't be "proven" (it's a preference!). But what do we do when different preferences are not compatible with each other?

We strive to find overarching, scientific frameworks explaining the challenges we face.

We always try to understand differences in opinions in a broader context. Are all preferences compatible with larger goals we want to pursue as humans living on this planet? We aim to find frameworks that help us identify sensible larger goals. For example, the "planetary boundaries" framework by the scientist Johan Rockström and colleagues defines, scientifically, how much we can alter our biosphere before it is pushed out of balance, making our planet uninhabitable in the long term. It seems reasonable to respect these boundaries and preferences violating them should be questioned. However, identifying the right frameworks is also an outcome of our discussions and we always avoid being dogmatic.

How can I contribute?

All inputs are appreciated! Whether you want to share your opinion over coffee with one of our Leads of our topic areas or want to get involved in drafting or editing the *Manifesto*, we look forward to hearing from you. Get in touch with the Leads via www.generationendialog.com.