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INTEGRATED LOCAL ACTION PLAN REFILL ATHENS

ΔΗΜΟΤΙΚΗ ΑΓΟΡΑ ΚΥΨΕΛΗΣ

FOREWORD

PREFACE

Athens is a city with an increasing number of empty or abandoned buildings. In 2015, the MoA had counted more than 1600 vacant public buildings, and supported a research with the University of Thessaly that counted more than 150.000 empty private properties. The Mayor of Athens, Mr. Kaminis, had initiated a draft for a new legal framework which would have allowed the Municipality to take an active role in finding funding and new uses for the vacant properties. Through the synAthina platform, we had identified several bottom up activities of community groups that were testing new uses of several vacant spaces, from empty plots to empty buildings, to unused shopping arcades. The sector of civil society was nominated responsible for finding the future use of an old market building in the neighbourhood of Kypseli. The MoA had secured EU funding for its refurbishment, and in 2015, we were asked to find its future use: In search of a new sustainable model for its management, we activated the local community to participate and co-decide the most appropriate management model for it. What was most important was not only to find a particular solution for the precise market building, but to create a new transferable framework for this and other empty buildings in the city. We wanted to pilot a new political practice that would become a point of reference for the future of local government.

The Kypseli Market model, based in involving local communities for deciding its future use, was replicated in Athens in various forms. The open schools project that use the empty school buildings each afternoon, the refugee observatory sector that has to identify new locations for transient refugees and a recent project about empty shops in the commercial center have all in various forms used the dynamic potential of the synAthina community.

The practice of temporary use can be said to have created a relatively accepted municipal culture of civic engagement, rather than a new regulatory framework. The URBACT Refill project helped our newly founded sector of civil society and innovation to leverage various forms of civic engagement that were previously absent from municipality practices. It helped legitimise new practices. The presence of the international community served as an indirect support to build new processes and have them accepted by the local elected community.

Amalia Zepou
Vice Major



URBACT Refill Athens, launched in October 2015, has led to the formulation of a strategy for temporary use – this is presented in the next pages. Refill is an EU funded project which is promoting the idea of temporary use. Refill network outlines the concept of temporary use as: the use of vacant buildings and land by urban pioneers, entrepreneurs and bottom-up initiatives, often resulting in facing various societal challenges and in creating possibilities for social innovation to develop in cities. The cities involved in this network already experimented with the concept of temporary use of vacant places for several years. All partners in Refill – **Ghent, Riga, Bremen, Athens, Poznan, Amersfoort, Ostrava, Helsinki, Cluj and Nantes** – experimented for quite some years with temporary use and each partner developed local instruments to support the concept in their city.

URBACT Refill Athens' **Integrated Local Action Plan (ILAP)** is based on the experience that derives from projects such as Synathina, Traces of Commerce, Agora of Kypseli, etc. For three years members of the team participated in transnational meetings, followed the works of a Deep Dive workshop in Bremen, organized meetings of the Local Support Group that took place in different spaces of the city in Athens and worked on the main actions of the ILAP. Indicative local stakeholders are ULI Greece-Cyprus, Public Properties SA – ETAD, Benaki Museum, Communitism, Unfinished Athens, Urban Planning Laboratory of the NTUA, etc.

The actions that were decided are the following:

SHORT TERM ACTIONS

- ACTION 1:** Launching new consultation methods to break the ice in situations where decision making is stuck in old disagreements – Consultation toolkit
- ACTION 2:** Support a temporary use structure within the Municipality of Athens

MEDIUM TERM ACTIONS

- ACTION 3:** Impact measurement system
- ACTION 4:** Toolkit for temporary use of vacant buildings
- ACTION 5:** Simplified Legal Guide

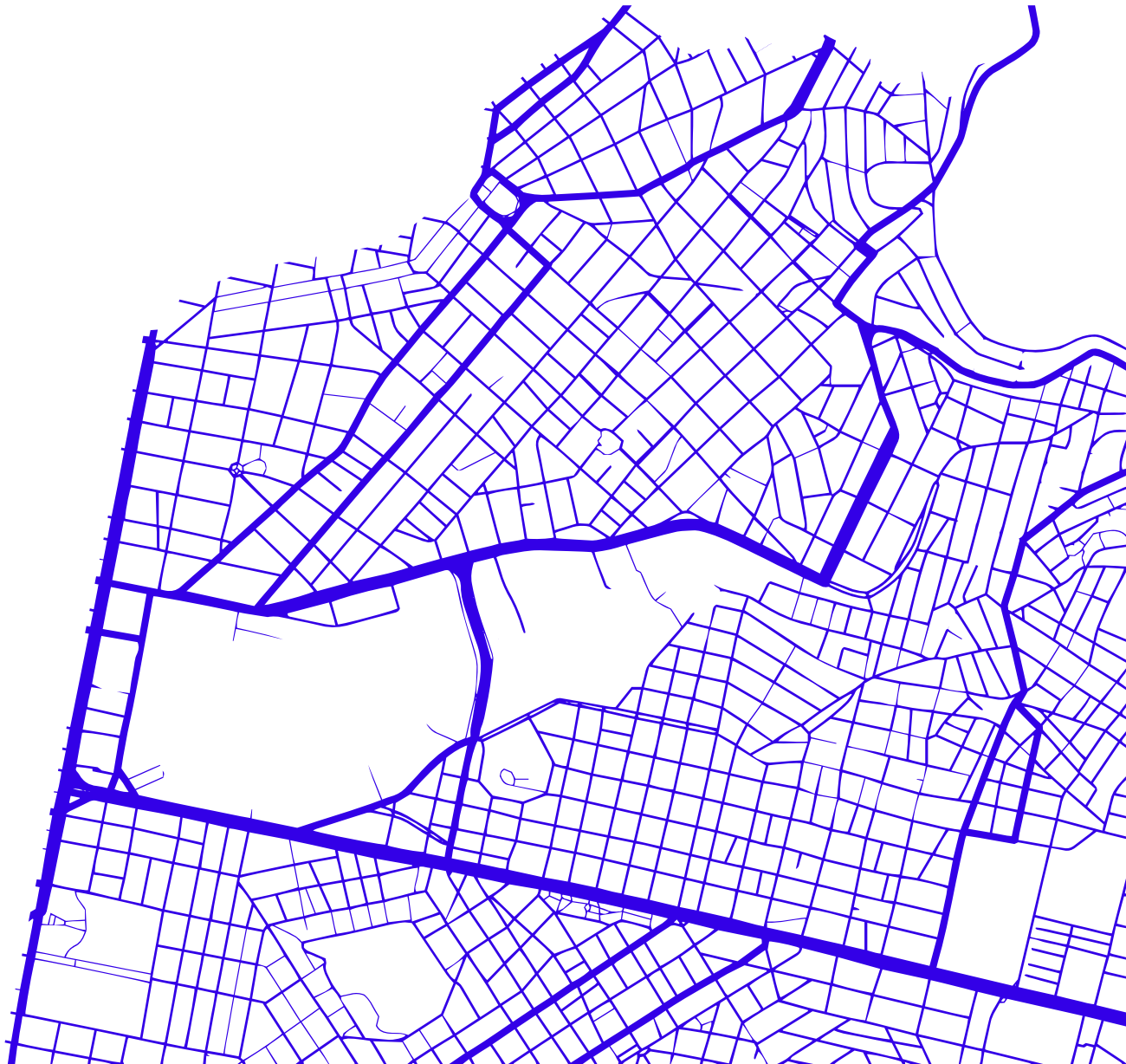
LONG TERM ACTIONS

- ACTION 6:** Setting up a temporary use Funding Scheme through the Social Entrepreneurship Fund

The **Municipal Market of Kypseli** as a testing place for temporary use is considered as a key building for Refill Athens. Following the consultation process which included theatre play practices, an open call process was launched in the summer of 2016, to identify candidates for the management of the Market. All proposals were evaluated by a committee which shortlisted four candidates. In July 2017, the management of the Kypseli Market was assigned to Impact Hub Athens. According to the selected business plan, there will be three main fields of activity:

- Urban Labs: urban development programmes focusing on social innovation and entrepreneurship
- Conscious Mall: actions to strengthen the local economy with emphasis on ethical and fair trade and innovative entrepreneurship
- Culture Hive: cultural and educational actions

The funding scheme and the role of the stakeholders are described below in detail. Lately the City of Athens received an award to implement the proposal “Curing the Limbo” which was submitted to the call of the Urban Innovative Actions initiative of the European Union.



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1a. INTRODUCTION TO ATHENS AND TEMPORARY USE NEEDS

1. CITY CONTEXT AND DEFINITION OF PROBLEM

The municipal authority has been trying to confront social problems connected to the financial crisis Greece is facing through innovative solutions (with strong political support from the mayor) that often include the re-use of derelict buildings. The national economic, social and political instability has had an impact on the well being of citizens, increasing the need for support or even basic needs. There is an increasing gap between the needs of people and what the state can offer. As a result citizens are participating in new community groups that offer support and solidarity to those in need.

The SynAthina platform and the temporary use of a central building at the Varvakei on square as a meeting point for citizens' initiatives can be seen as an innovative approach leading to a different method regarding decision making processes on various environmental, social and economic issues. Many of these innovative ideas have been included in the Integrated Plan for the City of Athens which led to the ITI strategy for the 2014-2020 period and includes measures related to temporary use.

383 buildings were documented as abandoned (partly or as a whole) in a study (2011) on derelict buildings in the municipality of Athens. At the same time, according to the municipal police (2013) 16 buildings – almost all of them belong to the public sector – are squatted. Nowadays the empty properties are estimated to be 1700 in the municipality of Athens. Most of the derelict or squatted buildings consider the areas of Psiri, Metaxourgeio, Kerameikos and Stathmos Larissis. Some of the derelict buildings are used as shelters for the homeless. Apart from that many arcades, shops, etc are not being used in the commercial center of Athens. Still the need for affordable housing and working spaces has been increasing.

The Municipality of Athens created a special mechanism to collect the large input of recent citizens' activities: the mechanism is a digital platform called synAthina which started experimentally in July 2013, and has now grown into an implemented practice in the newly founded civil society sector of the Municipality. There are more than 3000 new activities mapped and it is further being developed to capture even more. Part of this experience is now leading to new action planning initiatives (e.g. in the ITI for the 2014-2020 programming period), new touristic guided tours, graffiti cleaning strategy.

1b. WHY IS TEMPORARY USE A CHALLENGE FOR ATHENS?

The main challenges Athens is facing are linked to youth unemployment, social challenges (e.g. integration of refugees), urban sprawl, heritage management and tourism planning. These are challenges connected to the real estate sector. Apart from the empty buildings 5,5% of the surface in the city centre concerns empty plots. According to the municipal police 16 buildings (almost all of them belong to the public sector) are squatted. Most of the derelict or squatted buildings consider the areas of Psiri, Metaxourgeio, Kerameikos and Vathis Square, areas that are going through a process of change and face the danger of gentrification (e.g. Metaxourgeio and Psiri are hosting an increasing number of AirBnB premises).

The economic crisis and the disruption of the social web have become increasingly more severe and lead to problems with an urban character. The younger generation, who benefited from the positive aspects of globalization, is now facing the harsh aspects of the global economic turndown, a plummeting standard of living and severely limited professional opportunities. The refugee crisis has brought many newcomers to the city. At the same time the cheap rents seem to be attractive to young people e.g. in areas such as Kypseli and Athens is labeled as the “New Berlin” by both Greek and foreign media; this is connected to the attraction of young creatives, the development of a vibrant and youthful art scene (e.g. music, graffiti) but also with the organization of the prestigious Documenta 14 event in 2017. the flagship building complex of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation on the Athenian seafront which will host the National Library and the Opera alongside with the new National Modern Art Museum and a the private Goulandris Art museum.

Affordable places and meeting points on a neighbourhood level is a crucial need. Working on a wider strategy for the re-use of these derelict buildings, plots, etc in the city center has therefore been prioritised by the city authorities. Actions in the so called Commercial Center (Emporiko Trigono), the regeneration of an arcade just behind Syntagma square (Traces of Commerce project), etc were well received both by the citizens and the media. At the same time NGOs working with the refugee crisis need spaces in the city center not only for housing purposes. It is quite obvious that for the city of Athens the empty buildings and shops offer wider opportunities for an integrated approach towards social and economic regeneration. In August 2017 the Ministry of Labour announced a programme for re-using several buildings owned by insurance/social security entities in Athens, while the Ministry of Development has launched an open call for funding the re-use of abandoned municipal buildings with the help of Structural Funds. For the municipality of Athens the most important steps are connected to the UIA initiative “Curing the Limbo” (see next page) which has just been approved and the “Open Shops” Polis Square initiative which will be launched in the beginning of 2018; both are connected to the work of the ULG team of Refill.

1c. WHAT HAS BEEN DONE UNTIL TODAY

These events are shaping a particular dynamic in the city. Through the current social and economic crisis, conditions are being created that bring to the forefront new ways of viewing the role of the citizen, far removed from professional opportunism and the standards of well-being of the previous decade. Grassroots communities, political thinkers, architects, citizens and artists with a need to shape another way of attending the decay of the urban environment were the first initiators. Gradually, the Municipality of Athens started to participate as facilitator in certain projects (e.g. the Traces of Commerce). It has been trying to unlock empty buildings and initiate temporary use projects to support the social initiatives with accessible spaces to meet and organise their activities. Concerning empty plots, similar temporary use approaches are developed. For example in the context of URBACT Sustainable Food the use of empty plots within schools for growing vegetables is now being expanded through the Food Policy Instrument that has been launched in the City of Athens. Many of these innovative ideas have been included in policy documents and strategies e.g. the ITI strategy for the 2014-2020 period. More recently Refill and the issue of temporary use (in connection with the discussion on Refill) has been included in the Resilience Strategy of Athens.

Finally in October 2017 the Urban Innovative Actions proposal of the city of Athens was approved, based on the idea of temporary use. The City of Athens' proposal "Curing the Limbo" is about empowering stranded refugees who have been granted asylum to get out of a characteristic state referred to as "limbo" that has struck a part of the population doomed to months and years of waiting for the next stage in their life. It involves four strategic partners: two international NGOs, CRS (Catholic Relief Services) International and IRC Hellas (International Rescue Committee), the University of Athens and the Athens Development and Destination Management Agency S.A. Many of the LSG members of Refill Athens have committed themselves to this strategy (which was presented in the Deep Dive Study Visit of Refill in Bremen).

1d. WHAT IS URBACT REFILL'S INPUT?

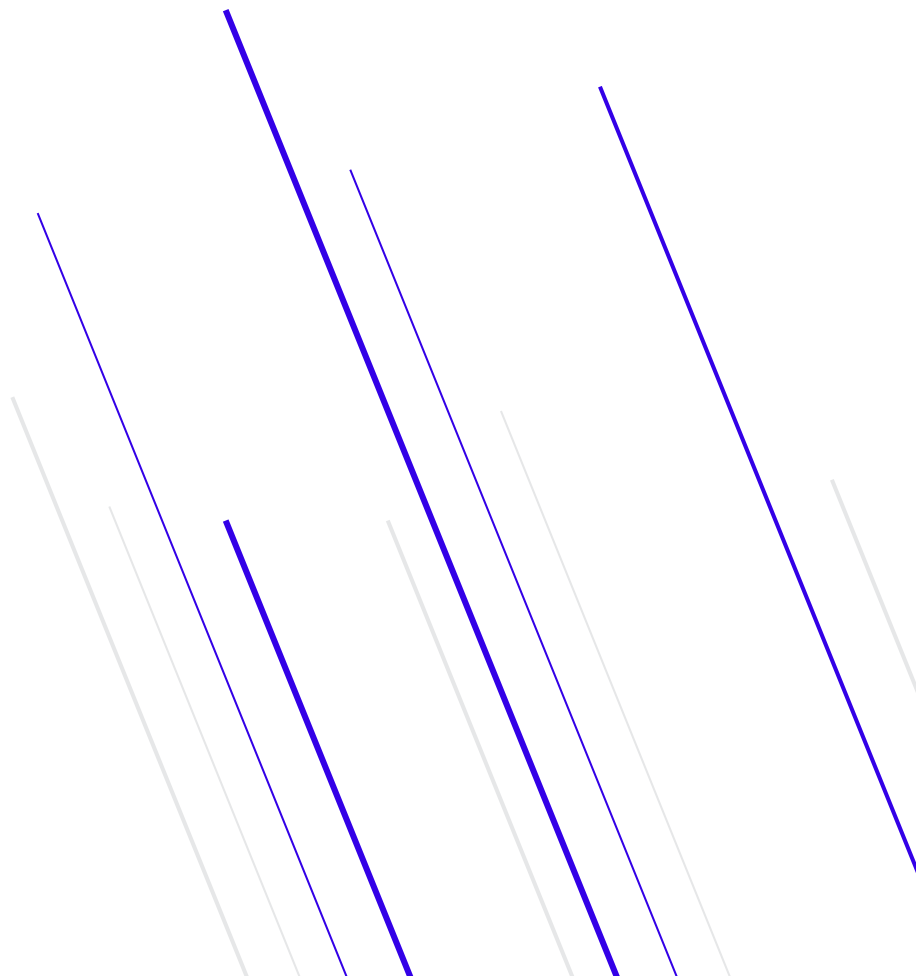
URBACT Refill Athens, launched in October 2015, is reaching its final stage: in March 2018 Ghent will be hosting the final event, while, one month before, a political event will be organized in Athens. Refill is an EU funded project which is promoting the idea of temporary use. As many European cities realise that one of the positive side effects of the financial-economic crisis is the growth of innovative forms of solidarity and commitment at local level, the need for spaces to host those bottom-up civic initiatives in order to co-create solutions for social challenges in an urban context is crucial. Since the concept of temporary use is interacting with many other urban dynamics it creates the right environment for social innovation to develop. Refill network outlines the concept of temporary use as: the use of vacant buildings and land by urban pioneers, entrepreneurs and bottom-up initiatives, often resulting in facing various societal challenges and in creating possibilities for social innovation to develop in cities. The cities involved in this network already experimented with the concept of temporary use of vacant places for several years. Through REFILL all partners aim to capitalise on this communal expertise by focusing on 3 main objectives:

- **Exchange and evaluation of local support instruments**
- **Ensuring long lasting effects of temporary use**
- **Build a more flexible, collaborative public administration**

All partners in Refill – Ghent, Riga, Bremen, Athens, Poznan, Amersfoort, Ostrava, Helsinki, Cluj and Nantes – experimented for quite some years with temporary use and each partner developed local instruments to support the concept in their city. They are now eager to systematize these practices in all possible areas it may take place and to use the power of temporary use to build open, flexible and collaborative governance models. The stakeholders of the Athens strategy, despite the legal difficulties, showed great interest in committing themselves to a strategy that will confront the difficulties connected to temporary use and promote the general idea of making the maximum use of public and private buildings and spaces for social purposes.

One of the important next steps that already is being planned is a pilot initiative called Polis Square (P2) that will test the viability and impact of citizen and culture-led city interventions facilitated by the Athens municipality and will create synergies among multiple stakeholders. It consists in supporting a number of initiatives that will contribute to improving the image of the city, raising the quality of life, producing new products and services and contributing to economic and social renewal, especially in abandoned spaces and neighborhoods, while investing on human capital.

The project consists of five (5) clearly defined strands/ areas of focus that respond to different identified challenges, while being nurtured by the overarching aim of the project. A common communication and engagement strategy is being developed, although different target groups are identified per strand, along with strand-specific social and economic impacts.



2a. FOCUS AND OBJECTIVES

Defining the change we want to see has been the main focus point of the Refill Athens works. In the baseline study ([link](#)) of the URBACT Refill project Athens is presented as a city with many challenges related to its empty building stock. These challenges are –mostly– connected to the current economic and social situation in Greece: austerity has forced national and local administrations to start thinking of ways to make the best use of their assets. Empty buildings are assets that can have a major economic and social impact if re-used, still many obstacles make these efforts difficult. In the next matrix some of the main challenges and possible solutions, as identified by members of the Local Support Group in the nine meetings/workshops/thematic meetings are presented:

CHALLENGES	SOLUTIONS
Different interests by stakeholders	Effective Consultation
Unclear legal framework in Greece	Legal Support and Simplified Guide
Difficulties in matching space to users	Support system
No evidence of positive social impact	Social Impact Assessment(SIA)
High demand for affordable space	Fair selection criteria for new users
Temporary use is seen as a risk	Support mechanism
Lack of information about available space	Documentation and media coverage
Lack of information about potential users	Documentation and media coverage

TABLE 1: CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS FOR REFILL ATHENS

Drawing on the experience of Synathina which already has been working on the notion of temporary space but also on projects and spaces such as Traces of Commerce, Romantso, etc, the municipality of Athens has set high standards regarding the operation of initiatives that can have a strong social impact by using derelict buildings.

During the meetings of the Local Support Group the different obstacles and solutions have been discussed and it has been agreed that URBACT Refill Athens will have **the following objectives:**

1. Create the pre-conditions to host effective consultation processes.
2. Follow processes in order to take the local community's vision and interest into account during the temporary use process in under-used buildings.
3. Provide information and management guidelines for potential users.
4. Work on a model for open calls where the transparency of the process will guarantee.

5. Establish a clear and fair evaluating process that will be based on the social, environmental and economic impacts of the future use and especially on the surplus it will create on a neighborhood level.
6. Focus on Kypseli as a best practice in order to create a future model for temporary use drawing on the Impact Hub proposal.
7. Look into ways to deal with obstacles, both political and legal.
8. Investigate the specific conditions that user groups are dealing with e.g. artist groups that need studio, exhibition or rehearsal space
9. Create a more effective implementation mechanism.

Furthermore the strategy will be connected to the Synathina initiative, but also to other strategies with common objectives (e.g. the Resilience Strategy of the City of Athens). New initiatives such as the opening of the Serafeio complex, the Polis2 empty shops project and the Curing the Limbo UIA initiative are expected to add to the current strategy.

2b. BENEFITS FOR THE USERS AND FOR ATHENS

What are the reasons that make this strategy necessary?

BENEFITS FOR THE USERS

- Access to affordable space
- Opportunity to showcase work to a wider audience
- Co-operation opportunities with other actors and externalities
- New networks
- Temporary use as experimentation opportunity

BENEFITS FOR ATHENS AND ITS COMMUNITIES

Testing what works in a particular area, especially during a period with strong transformations.

From the kick-off meeting of the Refill network in 2015 in Poznan until the end of 2017 the Refill team and the Local Support Group of Athens have been working towards the delivery of an effective plan for the next years. Meetings, study visits and info-days on particular cases, discussions at transnational meetings, etc helped to form the main challenges that had to be dealt with, to prioritise needs and to think of solutions. Finally a set of steps were agreed and worked, leading to six basic actions.

These are the following:

SHORT TERM ACTIONS

- ACTION 1:** Launching new consultation methods to break the ice in situations where decision making is stuck in old disagreements – Consultation toolkit
- ACTION 2:** Support a temporary use structure within the Municipality of Athens

MEDIUM TERM ACTIONS

- ACTION 3:** Impact measurement system
- ACTION 4:** Toolkit for temporary use of vacant buildings
- ACTION 5:** Simplified Legal Guide

LONG TERM ACTIONS

- ACTION 6:** Setting up a temporary use Funding Scheme through the Social Entrepreneurship Fund

SHORT TERM

ACTION 1

Launching new consultation methods to break the ice in situations where decision making is stuck in old disagreements

DESCRIPTION

The Municipality of Athens has actively been promoting innovative consultation methods. One of the methods that has been used in the case of the Kypseli Market and elsewhere is very innovative and effective as it involves theatre play, open procedures and mainstream participatory planning methods. The method in this case was named ART OF PLAY and forms a unique example of how disagreements, confrontations, different interests, etc can be applied as paradigm in other cases as well. Within this action the method will be further developed and tested. During the Refill LSG meetings various methods of participatory planning as indicated in the URBACT toolkit were used as well. The method will be available for other cities in Greece to use.

THE ACTION WILL FOCUS ON THE FOLLOWING:

- Train a group of facilitators in order to be able to organise this participatory method.
- The action will also include fees for the trainers and facilitators and will cover basic overhead costs for future consultation processes.
- Implement the method in different cases and improve the method if needed.
- Asses its effectiveness.

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Synathina

DURATION

18 months

COST

30.000 (training and fees for pilot year)

ACTION 2

Support a temporary use structure within the Municipality of Athens

DESCRIPTION

Refill Athens is first starting with buildings that are owned by the municipality and then aiming at expanding other empty or underused publicly owned and even privately owned buildings at a next stage.

The municipality of Athens has been experimenting with temporary use in buildings such as the SynAthina kiosk, but also in buildings owned by other bodies, with the most characteristic example being the Traces of Commerce. The impact of Traces of Commerce as an initiative was important in triggering the conversation regarding the empty arcades of Athens. It was one of the projects that got attention both by the mass and alternative media. Its various activities (gigs, workshops, performances, projections, speed dating nights etc.) attracted many visitors. It's impressive that many visitors of the arcade didn't know its existence and its history before this project. The owners of the nearby shops, cafes and bars, also, claimed that they were affected as well in a very positive way. Its operation as an incubator was considered successful. This is linked to the fact that some of the initiatives were able to experiment for this short period of time; after the period of experimentation, two participants opened permanent shops to develop their commercial activities in other areas in Athens (a 3d printing lab). This kind of short term lease temporary use is being considered for other similar spaces as well. Also, the second cycle of Traces of Commerce created a small network of young, creative and talented entrepreneurs; many of them are continuing common projects. Synergastirion (which operated as a common space for graphic designers, artists and high quality printing services) was awarded during Greece design awards, "EBGE". For the initiators the first challenge considered persuading the owners who were skeptical about the idea, but the most important difficulty is to find the necessary funding in order to turn the arcade into a space that will be visited on a daily basis not only by the users but also by other groups of citizens.

The important, next step involves ideas or a method that will ensure its financial sustainability (sponsors, mix of commercial and non-commercial uses). In general for the City of Athens this project proved to be a good experiment of a non-commercial temporary use in a very characteristic type of building in Athens and the starting point for the open call and the legal process of "granting" the building of Kypseli Market to social entrepreneurs. Some of the programmed initiatives will include e.g. the "Empty Shops" pilot project that will be launched in 2018 by the municipality of Athens.

According to the above Synathina will upgrade its operation in the field by launching a support structure that will:

- Offer support to the groups and the management team and provide a contact person.
- Providing advice and support to end-users and schedule/programme events
- Connect groups with each other that work with specific challenges (e.g. refugees)
- Cover first period expenses or overheads through the Temporary use Fund (see action 5).
- Connect the demand with the supply side
- Promote temporary use through its media and maintain a website.

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Synathina

DURATION

36 months

COST

No cost (?)

ACTION 3

Impact measurement system

DESCRIPTION

Monitoring the progress of each temporary use project and being able to measure the impact of an intervention is of crucial importance both for understanding the dynamics of the project but also for further convincing the community for the need of temporary use interventions. Therefore a mechanism will be developed that will be gathering real time data and will be measuring the impacts of the new uses. This will be based on the methodology already developed in the context of the Synathina platform which will be enriched with other methodological tools. Apart from that, according to a proposal of the National Technical University of Athens a set of criteria will be set regarding the surplus of a specific future use to the neighbourhood.

This measurement system is based on a questionnaire survey that looks into both quantitative and qualitative data regarding:

- Audience Development (number of people organising or attending an activity, number of references in the local or national media)
- Connectivity (number of other teams being involved, municipality services, experts, etc)
- Image – Promotion–Branding (percentage of event coverage by national /international media, percentage of positive/negative coverage by national media, economic value of media coverage, storytelling on the city, return on investment for marketing campaign).
- Financing and Leverage (sponsorships or donations, private or public fundingMunicipality’s Contribution)
- Regularity (number of events per year, number of first time visitors, etc.)
- Infrastructure improvement (new infrastructure, expenditure on the building, etc)
- Contribution to the creative sector (e.g. new enterprises)
- Transferability (possibility to apply this model to another neighbourhood)

A second level of information can be drawn by also distributing a questionnaire among citizens of the district about the local needs. This will be based on estimating the effects of temporary use on the neighbourhood.

Setting up a measurement system also needs a group that will ensure that the data will be gathered and published. So, apart from the above, in connection to Action 2, a website will be launched that will offer the opportunity to the wider public to access the main findings.

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Synathina
National Technical University of Athens
District Council

DURATION

36 months

COST

90.000 Euro

ACTION 4

Toolkit (or Business Plan) for temporary use

DESCRIPTION

Apart from having a support structure, it is necessary to create a roadmap that will help both the owners and the users to work on a temporary use plan that will be effective and sustainable. Drawing on the pilot case of Kypseli Market and the pathway that was followed there, a toolkit will be delivered as soon as the first period of operation of the Kypseli Market has been evaluated. The toolkit will be distributed both in a printed and electronic version.

Based on the procedure followed in the Kypseli Market and its relaunching after a bidding procedure for the management team was decided, a procedure for this type of buildings will be decided and standardised. This will be described within the toolkit for temporary use, a text that will be a contribution of the City of Athens to the wider discussion of the future of European cities (e.g. in the context of the EU Urban Agenda). Regarding Kypseli Market, the call that was published indicated the specificities of the re-use of the building. Directions were given regarding the percentages for each type of use. So a common space of 450 m² is dedicated to short term events such as cultural exhibitions and pop-up markets, while the shops are given a specific function (31%- 150 m² for cultural uses, 31 %- 150 m² in uses connected to the social economy, etc).

Each applicant interested in running the project had to send a short proposal, followed by a more detailed plan for the finalists of the second stage. The municipality is providing the spaces within the Kypseli Market in exchange of the management team's commitment to ensure positive impact in the neighbourhood and the city. The project will be operating on the basis of a non-profit character, e.g. reinvesting any profit made in the running of the Market. The municipality is providing the space for free but the management team has to be able to finance its operation.

The winning bid was selected by the committee of experts appointed by the Mayor for the contest; their decision was based on the following criteria:

- Economic sustainability potential of the proposal
- Realistic approach of the final proposal
- Innovative and unique character of the proposed management plan
- Potential synergies that will be developed with the local community
- Variety of open activities and events that will involve various population groups
- Involvement of new creative groups of the city

The winning bid, by Impact Hub, includes a general vision for the Market and set of actions that have the form of a detailed business plan Its first year of implementation serve as a test with valuable lessons for next similar cases. It included a survey and has a clear vision for each type of use: ideas such as the “Conscious Mall”, the Urban Labs and the “Culture Hive” (as described in the strategy).

Based on the experience and the evaluation of the first year of operation a toolkit for temporary use will include the following:

- A guide for everyday management
- An indicative asset management plan
- An indicative Business Plan
- Guidelines for publicity and involvement of different population groups

It is important to create the conditions so that the initiative keeps up with an integrated approach (social, environmental and economical) and evaluate results from the different stakeholders' points of view and draw lessons.

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Synathina
ULI Greece and Cyprus
Input from the Oxford Brookes University team

DURATION

18 months

COST

15.000 Euro

ACTION 5

Simplified Legal Guide

DESCRIPTION

One of the major obstacles and risks that have been pinpointed during the Local Support group meetings is related with the legal obstacles. Therefore the idea of creating guide with basic points to take under consideration was seen as a priority by all the members of the Local Support Group of Athens.

Special attention will be given to a Check list of what e.g. regarding the characteristics of the space (capacity, etc), access, security (fire security, electricity supply, emergency exits, lift security, etc), noise, toilets, etc. Another issue that has to be looked carefully is the right to sell drinks/food, etc. Finally the most important issue to solve is the procurement procedures which have to be planned in a way that will not allow delays.

The Simplified Legal Guide will need the co-operation of a wider team of lawyers in order to be delivered.

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Synathina
EATA
ULI Hellas-Cyprus
POMIDA

DURATION

6 months

COST

15.000

ACTION 6

Setting up a temporary use Funding Scheme through the Social Entrepreneurship Fund

DESCRIPTION

Hosting temporary use initiatives in empty buildings comes with important costs, therefore the need for a funding scheme that can provide microfinance to the users is necessary. The experience of initiatives such as the Traces of Commerce showed that even the coverage of the overhead costs (electricity, cleaning services etc.) are important for the project to kick off. In the case of Kypseli it is estimated by the managing team that the yearly costs for the proper operation of the market are appr. 80.000 Euro.

For the future projects and depending on the type of building it is important to be able to support the first steps, e.g. until the first year's costs could be covered by a fund that will be operated in the context of the Synathina. Apart from the financial support to new ideas or initiatives of temporary use can be covered on the basis of a procedure that will involve a pre-evaluation procedure and a follow up mechanism (based on ADDMA's experience). The proposed scheme is connected to the Social Economy Strategy of Athens and the creation of a Fund for social enterprises. The Fund can also be linked to the Resilience Strategy of Athens.

A special group that will be profiting from this type of funding are artist groups that need studio, exhibition or rehearsal space.

DELIVERY PARTNERS

Synathina
Athens Development and Destination Management Agency (ADDMA)
Public Sector Organisations
ULI Hellas-Cyprus
Resilience Office Athens

DURATION

36 months

COST

300.000 Euro (25% from sponsors)

4. FUNDING SCHEME

The commitment and work done by the stakeholders during the preparation of this strategy has been on a voluntary basis, still many of the next steps will need to be funded as there is expertise and specific work involved. Furthermore it has been realized that temporary use initiatives cannot easily kick off without the coverage of some first costs, therefore a funding mechanism is sought as described in Action 6.

The budget that is presented in the matrix is open to changes in the next period.

	TOTAL COST	PUBLIC FUNDING	SPONSORSHIP / OTHER
Action 1	30.000	30.000	-
Action 2	-	-	-
Action 3	90.000	90.000	-
Action 4	15.000	15.000	-
Action 5	20.000	10.000	10.000
Action 6	300.000	225.000	75.000
TOTAL	455.000	360.000	85.000

5a. THE MAIN STAKEHOLDERS

Since the strategy will be focusing on municipality owned buildings in order to pass on the experience to other buildings as well, Synathina and the City of Athens will hold the key role in the implementation. Other stakeholders from the public and private sector will also have a role in the implementation, either as active participants with an allocated budget or as partners in the implementation.

SynAthina will be acting as the coordinating body. It already works with different projects, combining different topics: solidarity, public space, education, refugees & Immigrants, economy, children, environment, culture, technology, tourism and health.

The activities that SynAthina supports have to be non-commercial and non-profit, for social purposes. SynAthina is the common space which brings together, supports and facilitates citizens' groups engaged in improving the quality of life in the city. By coordinating the invaluable resource of citizens' groups, the City of Athens actively listens to the needs of its people and is thus revitalized. By supporting the activities of the citizens, the City creates a new perception about the relationship between civic society and local governance and cultivates their dynamic, bidirectional bond.

SynAthina is an initiative of the City of Athens. It was created in July 2013 by Amalia Zepou and today comes under the Vice Mayoral Office for Civil Society and Innovation. The synAthina kiosk functions as an actual meeting point where groups of citizens who are not able to find an affordable space for short periods organize and actualize their activities and collaborate. More buildings in the city can be used in similar ways; this experience is now being discussed in the context of the Refill Local Support Group. Before that, following an invitation of the Vice Mayor's Office, a special group of stakeholder representatives and municipal officers was formed (now linked to the URBACT Refill Local Support Group) in order to discuss the challenges in this field and the possibility of matchmaking between building owners and citizen groups. The municipality of Athens is also represented (through one of the members of this group) in the commission that the Ministry of Environment has set up for drafting a proposed national Law on empty buildings to be voted in the coming months. The potential of linking groups active in the SynAthina platform to specific buildings and spaces is one of the major challenges for the coming years. Key projects such as Romantso (the old printing house in Anaxagora Street that has been turned into a social innovation incubator) and the temporary nature of the Traces of Commerce project are two characteristic examples of how these buildings can become important assets on a neighbourhood and city level. Synathina falls under the **Vice-Major of Civil Society**, a position which was initiated at the Municipality of Athens in September 2014. It was part of a wider policy to open up and provide services to active citizens and their groups in order to work together addressing common challenges. As a citizens' service, the Vice Mayor's office has specific duties connected to citizens' groups and initiatives, NGOs, volunteers etc. The Office acts on different levels and circumstances in order to empower local groups of citizens and help them overcome bureaucratic obstacles that don't allow good ideas to flourish. For example, when community groups had the idea to use small banners at historic buildings with some essential information, the Vice Mayor's office worked with the Municipality's legal service and the technical services in order to tackle difficulties that came up. Through this process they were able to change the regulation and facilitate permission for placing the banners and adopt the idea as a Municipality service and apply it on even more buildings for the city. The impact of this simple solution was very important. Instead of the usual negative response, city officials are now more open to new practices. Finally, the **Athens Development and Destination Management Agency (ADDMA S.A.)** will hold a key role in the process of implementation and will be the body working on the funding of the actions.

5b. STAKEHOLDERS THAT PARTICIPATED IN THE ULG MEETINGS

During the implementation of the Refill project local stakeholders met regularly in the context of the **Local Support Group (LSG)**. The following stakeholders are expected to contribute to the strategy, with different levels of commitment:

The Resilient Athens Office

has been founded in order to work on the Resilience Strategy of the city, which includes special actions for empty buildings and the social economy.

Traces of Commerce

is the initiative that allowed an old arcade that owned by a public body in the area of Syntagma to operate as temporary use initiative for creative initiatives. There are plans to revive the idea this year.

ULI Hellas-Cyprus

is a non-profit organization that provides leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide.

Public Properties SA - ETAD

is managing all the properties that belong to the Greek state and are being privatized. This is a key stakeholder concerning empty buildings.

Ministry of Environment

the organization responsible for the protection of heritage buildings, etc.

Hellenic Property Association

represents the private property owners on a national level.

Romantso

is an incubator for social enterprises. It is hosted in a old printing house in the city center of Athens.

Benaki Museum

is the most important non-public museum of Athens with many private properties and willingness to cooperate with social initiatives.

Impact Hub Greece

as the management team of the Kypseli Market initiative (selected after an open call by the municipality of Athens).

Communitism

is an arts initiative that works with empty buildings (mostly in the area of Metaxourgeio).

Latraac

is a new space in an empty plot in Metaxourgeio hosting a pop-up skatepark and a café.

Focus on Fokionos

is a citizens' initiative interested in turning Fokionos Street in a lively and diverse area.

The Urban Planning Laboratory of the NTUA

conducts research on urban planning issues in Athens and has proposed to assist with the impact assessment in general, and the impact on the neighbourhood in particular.

The Unfinished Athens team

of the Oxford Brookes University has been working on a policy on empty buildings.

The Managing Authority of the Region of Attica

is in charge of informing the stakeholders on funding opportunities and practical issues regarding Structural Funds.

The URBACT Contact Point of Greece and Cyprus

will be supporting the dissemination activities.

Finally many other stakeholder representatives (artist groups, researchers, NGO such as Monumenta, etc) took part in briefings, meetings, etc. Local media and free-press newspapers (e.g. www.lifo.gr, www.athensvoice.gr) will have a key role in promoting the next steps of the strategy. Finally a very important stakeholder, the Ministry of Labour is launching a similar strategy with common goals since September 2017 which means that synergies will be sought.

5c. THE FRAMEWORK FOR THE DELIVERY

Action 1, 2 and 6 will mostly be run by Synathina platform. Action 3 and Action 5 will be delivered on the basis of particular partnerships as there is need for specific expertise. Action 4 regarding the Toolkit will be developed on the basis of partnership between Synathina and the Impact Hub, and will start a at a later stage as it is necessary to first evaluate the operation of the pilot year.

The first months after the launching of the strategy the actions meetings will be held with the managing authority in order to discuss funding and finalise the budget. The strategy will be developed according to the following steps

- A. Coproduction process (Opening up a building for temporary use can result in empty property business rate savings)
- B. Raise Political Support (Municipal Council vote)
- C. Disseminate strategy (Publicity activities, pitching)
- D. Gathering evidence (further work on Social Impact Assessment)
- E. Results and indicators according to the EU Results Framework

The strategy is connected to certain risks, therefore a risk analysis plan is necessary. First of all on an operational level it has to be clear what each stakeholder is responsible for. Regarding the financial aspects of the implementation there is a need to work closely with funding organizations (e.g. Managing Authority of the ROP for Attica, private sponsors). Staffing is also a challenge as the people working on the implementation must be familiarized with the procedures (consultation, management etc.). Still, it is the legal framework that is connected to the most important risks due to the Greek legal system and the local government framework. The 6 actions are designed in order to overcome these risks.

TEAM

Amalia Zepou

Nicholas Karachalis (expert/coordinator)

Vasilis Stamogiannis (LSG coordinator)

George Stefas (financial manager)

Sofia Makedou

Maria Ethymiou

Illustrator/Design: **Konstantinos Belias**



Image1Kypseli Market – Open Event

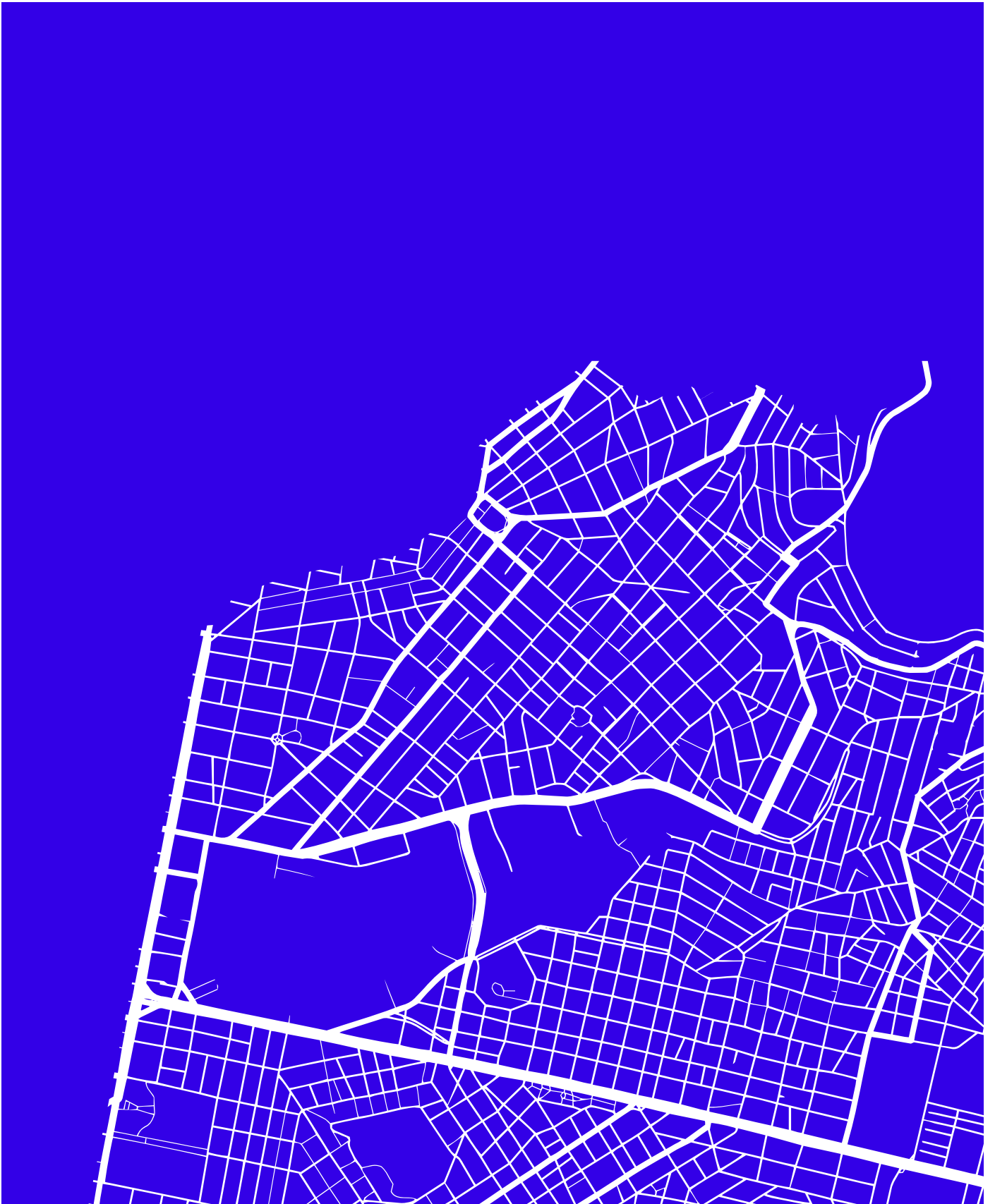


Image2 Xouthou & Verantzerou Street



Image3: El Sistema Greece Youth Music Band performing for Christmas 2017 at Kypseli Market





INTEGRATED LOCAL ACTION PLAN REFILL ATHENS

PARTNER TO THE PROJECT



PROJECT



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