

How We Live Together: *Resilience and Social Inclusion in Cities*



URBACT Resilient Europe
Final Thematic Report on Social Inclusion
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“Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody.”

-Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*

A prosperous city is not necessarily an inclusive city. An inclusive city demands intentionality. An inclusive city is one that ‘puts its money where its mouth is’. Being an inclusive city demands the dedication of resources – time, money, spaces – and political will to create communities and places that people want to live, study, work and play.

Cities like Medellín in Colombia - which is investing in state-of-the-art and efficient public transport, building beautifully designed public libraries and offering a myriad of free programmes from public health education campaigns to cultural events - are reaping the benefits of having healthier, happier, and safer cities.

And in London where Mayor Sadiq Khan has championed a local living wage which is meant to address the real cost of living in one of the most expensive cities in the world and is higher than the national minimum wage.

And in Copenhagen where 80% of residents choose to bike to work. Even top politicians ride their bike every day to parliament. And the city is building even more routes to ensure a safe and green transport route for cyclists while creating green spots in the cityscape. Bike super highways are already a reality in and out of the city from as far as 15 kilometres away. New immigrants are offered bikes and training on how to understand traffic signals, to repair their bikes, and to decode written and unwritten rules of the cycling culture to be able to adapt more fully to the rhythm of the city.

These kinds of inclusive actions and solutions are needed now more than ever in a world experiencing unprecedented urban growth with close to four billion people - 54 percent of the world's population - living in cities and that number is projected to increase to about five billion people by 2030.





Cycle Path in Ioannina, Greece

This head-spinning rate of urbanisation has come with concomitant social challenges, including growing numbers of slum dwellers, increased air pollution, inadequate basic services and infrastructure, and unplanned urban sprawl all which contribute to making cities and people more vulnerable to disasters.

The United Nations (UN) is one of the global institutions leading the clarion call for better urban planning and management to make the world's urban spaces more inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.¹ This has been concretely expressed by the creation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which acknowledge, among other commitments, the pressing need “to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.”² Also the New Urban Agenda which came out of the 2016 Habitat III cities conference in Quito, Ecuador which is guiding sustainable urban development efforts around the world for the next 20 year.³

Campaigns have been undertaken such as United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) “The Making Cities Resilient Campaign” which sought to encourage and support all urban centres to reduce risks and become resilient to disasters.

The Campaign aimed to respond in four ways. Firstly, by helping local governments to identify options to sustain and replicate existing successes in disaster risk reduction through city-to-city learning events and the provision of practical tools and resources designed to capture and read information on good practice. Secondly, it aimed to strengthen political will, governance structures and the capacity of local governments by promoting their roles as essential drivers of ‘bottom-up’ social and economic development. Thirdly, it aimed to help cities leverage significant achievements in local-level resilience, even where resources are limited, by fostering partnerships between local governments, private enterprise and others, to initiate and mobilise innovative financial and technological solutions to disaster risk. And finally, the campaign established planning guidelines aimed at equipping city managers and planners with flexible, locally-driven strategies to help them identify, manage and reduce risks through the construction and reconstruction of urban infrastructure and housing.

Furthermore, UNISDR explicitly acknowledges the social inclusion connection to urban resilience that a “...city also builds resilience through the engagement of its government, citizens and other stakeholders in the process of disaster risk reduction, where specific actions are taken to identify, manage and lessen the impact of natural and human-induced hazards.”⁴

How to foster urban resilience?

¹ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg11>

² <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg11>

³ <http://habitat3.org/the-conference/about-habitat-3/>

⁴ https://www.unisdr.org/files/28240_rcreport.pdf

Place-based experimentation in urban living labs

While it is critical to have influential global institutions like the UN setting a policy agenda, the question persists of how in practice can we create resilient, inclusive cities. Co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, the 28 Member States, Norway & Switzerland, the URBACT programme has been working to foster sustainable integrated urban development in cities across Europe for over 15 years.⁵

In September 2015, the URBACT Resilient Europe (RE) network of 11 cities began working together to understand, explore and act on creating socially inclusive communities and cities. Since then, the cities in the RE programme have been experimenting with social inclusion and cohesion in the relationship to **urban resilience** defined in the RE programme as *“the capacity of urban systems, communities, individuals, organisations and businesses to recover maintain their function and thrive in the aftermath of a shock or a stress, regardless its impact, frequency or magnitude”*.⁶

The working definition for the RE cities of **social inclusion** has been *“strengthening people’s resilience as the anchor point and corner stone on a broader urban regeneration action towards robust and adaptive infrastructures, local economies’ revitalisation and appreciation of urban ecosystems for improving their resilience and multi-functionality”*.

A core methodology adopted by the programme was creating small groups of colleagues to meet periodically over the course of the programme to tackle real world problems and to learn from each other’s experiences. Furthermore, the approach of Resilient Europe has been to apply the lessons from the innovative governance approach of Transition Management which is a process-oriented and participatory steering approach that enables learning through iterations between collective vision development and experimenting. Each city in the RE network - in their quest to become more resilient and socially inclusive - are acutely aware that this can only happen when citizens are genuinely and creatively engaged and included in effective change processes that create visible impact leading to social change. To this end, each RE city created an place-based Urban Living Lab (ULL) to experiment, build and empower resilience. Each city convened an URBACT Local Group (ULG) of stakeholders to collaborate together to bring the ULL to life. The cities were tasked with engaging the Transition Management method to co-design and experiment with new ways of organising and building urban resilience.

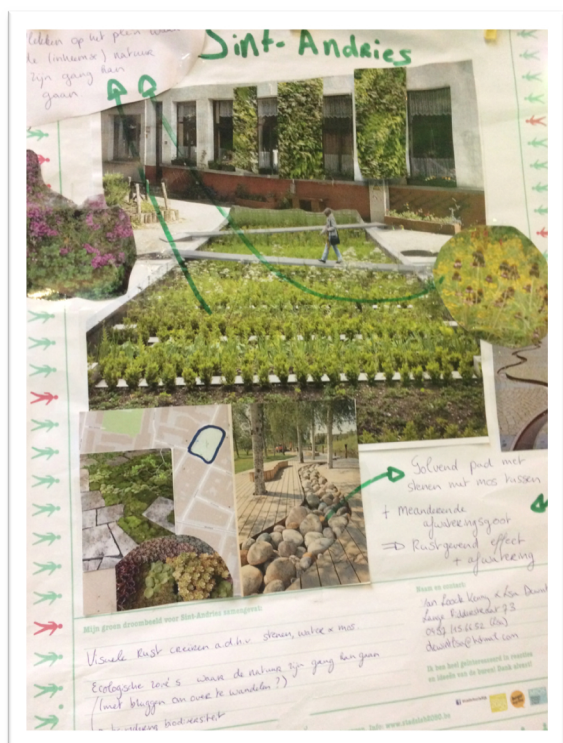
Each city over the course of the programme created an Integrated Action Plan (IAP).



RE Network Meeting, March 2017

⁵ <http://urbact.eu>

⁶ <http://urbact.eu/urban-resilience-one-picture>



In **Antwerp** (Belgium) the concept of urban resilience provided a new frame to integrate social and spatial issues into the climate adaptation policy development process. As a connecting and integrating lens, urban resilience was used to experiment with co-creation methods. The ULL focused on climate adaptation in the neighbourhood of Sint-Andries, an area of the city which has been impacted by climate stresses, social pressures and environmental shocks.

This diverse neighbourhood includes people of different ages and backgrounds. It is an active, vibrant place that has already created various successful projects which have contributed with positive social inclusion. The ULL had some self-organised local groups and other groups looking for leadership of the RE project from the city. Balancing these different types of relationships has been interesting and challenging dynamic according to those leading the project for the Antwerp.

In general, the neighbourhood is as a place with strong social capital, strong social networks and well-organised residents. There is a strong presence of youth work undertaken by Habbekrats, a non-profit organisation working with vulnerable young people. However, there are some groups within Sint-Andries that have been reluctant to be included in social networks and activities. The two most groups most vulnerable to stresses and shocks are the elderly and residents of social housing.

The project team for Resilient Europe in Antwerp report that “...the planning processes initiated by the city of Antwerp are becoming more inclined towards citizens participation. However, there is still a lot to gain in the involvement of citizens. Urban resilience is also about gaining ownership and commitment of people through participation trajectories. For the Sint-Andries area it means the creation of a local network that deals with the challenge of climate-adaptation in co-creation with the city. This includes mapping the expectations, needs and strengths of local stakeholders and offering a platform to experiment with technologies and methodologies involving sustainability and sharing this with the broader public. In trying to achieve this the collaboration between local stakeholders and the city government is the main challenge.”⁷

The city of **Bristol** is the UK’s fastest growing city. The population of Bristol has also become increasingly diverse in recent decades many local communities have changed significantly. There are now more than 45 religions, more than 180 countries represented and more than 90 main languages spoken. The RE project team in Bristol choose to embrace the broadest possible view of resilience to help understand how the city can continue to flourish in the face of rapid change.

⁷ Final IAP, City of Antwerp, February 2018, URBACT Resilient Europe

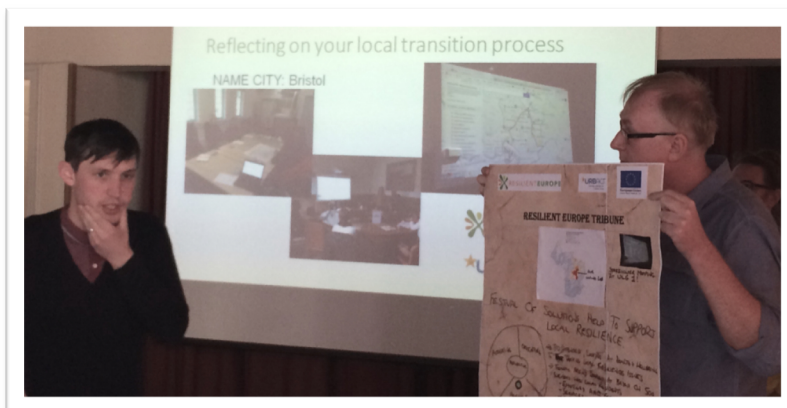
The area of Easton and Lawrence Hill was chosen for the ULL area for a number of reasons including the fact that a number of other projects are taking place in this area – for example a smart city Horizon 2020 project and a University of Bristol led project looking at shared space usage of the railway path. Also, the RE project builds on the work that is being carried out by the Bristol City Council ensuring that the project contributes to the sustainability of the resilience strategy and impact for the longer term.



ULG Activity in Easton and Lawrence Hill 1

To carry out the RE project, Bristol partnered with the resident led charity, *Up Our Street*, based in the Easton and Lawrence Hill neighbourhood with over 15 years of experience in engaging with residents to find solutions to the issues they face. As an organisation it is well regarded for its ability to bring diverse voices to a conversation, defining local issues and co-producing projects with residents, so it made a natural partner for delivering the URBACT project. The RE project team developed indicators together with *Up Our Street* with the aim of maintaining ongoing engagement with the local community following the conclusion of the RE project. ***The local experiment involved understanding the role that both people and institutions have in relation to the local environment.*** The objectives were to increase urban resilience by creating a local green space network, the creation of a Stewardship Group for Bristol & Bath Railway Path and the development of a code of conduct for the railway path. The project team reported that *Up Our Street* plans to continue to use a community-led approach to improving the neighbourhood which demonstrates that the RE approach has had a degree of success in utilising temporary urban experiments to challenge citizens to engage with and think differently about urban space.

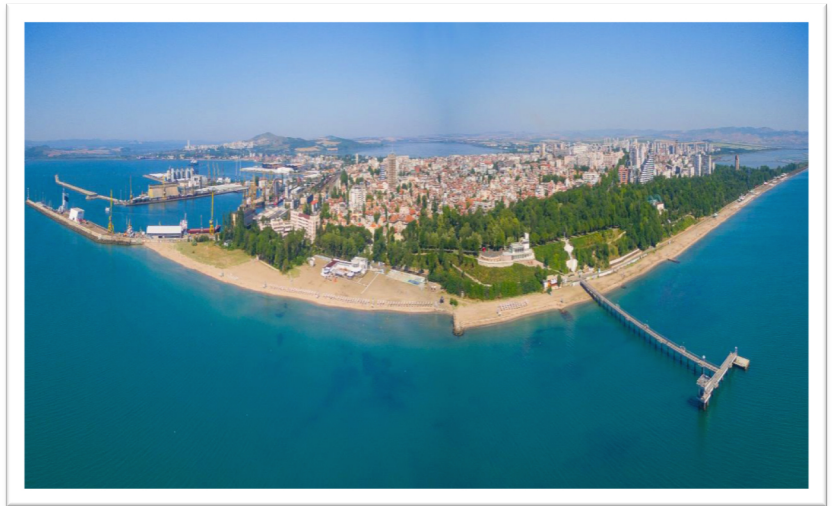
Furthermore the RE project team in Bristol reported in their final IAP report that “..this experiment did an excellent job in galvanising action and bringing an issue to the forefront which had been rumbling in the background for years. It successfully motivated some key players outside of the council (*Sustrans and the University*) to bring their skills, resources and energy to bear on creating longer term solutions. Most importantly the desire among these established organisations is to work with community partners and residents to build on the good work that has been done and viewing the local community as an essential part of the solution.”⁸



RE Network Meeting, Ioannina, March 2017

⁸ Final IAP, City of Bristol, February 2018, URBACT Resilient Europe

The city of **Burgas** in Bulgaria is the fourth largest city in the country by population. It is the most important municipality in terms of the economy, logistics and tourism. Though, the city has experienced ups and downs in the economy during the last decades which have caused considerable social inequalities and developmental imbalances.



Burgas has a great deal of experience in renovating urban infrastructure, deploying structural funds to strengthen and undertake critical infrastructure projects and now is prepared to implement policy and take its knowledge and experience to new projects. Initially it was difficult for different municipal departments to work together as their functions are quite distinct. **Through their RE ULL process, municipal departments collaborated with the aim of being able to effectively meet the challenges the city is facing in a more inclusive way.**

With the realisation that not all communities in the city are equally vulnerable to the stress of flooding, the local support group of the city of Burgas proposed the area of Dolno Ezerovo to be the experimental site for strengthening urban resilience where there is also ongoing work on energy efficiency and the renovation of old big buildings. The RE project team in Burgas worked diligently working with their colleagues to advocate for a focus on building resilience in the city.

According to the RE project team: *“...the main issue of concern is related to the lack of preparation and knowledge of the local inhabitants of how to face the changes and to react and adapt adequately when sudden unprecedented events occur like the flooding in the last few years. Due to the insufficiency of information, people have limited, even sometimes no idea how to protect themselves in case of crisis. [...] The community fails to see itself as a powerful driving force that is able to achieve significant positive results with small efforts. These small steps could be vital for local people capacity to resist the impact of future unexpected negative events and make the living environment a more pleasant and safer place. Another negative aspect regarding local people’s resilience is the lack of social cohesion due to high level of unemployment among young people and growing inequality because of financial issues. All these factors become a prerequisite for lack of education, poor health condition, crime raise and low social mobility.”*

In **Glasgow** (UK) urban resilience has been employed as a framework to continue the community development work that the city is undertaking while considering the ecological and infrastructural integrity. The city of Glasgow has long been working on connecting environmental and social policies. **The Glasgow ULL has been a way to engage multiple stakeholders beyond traditional consultation and service provision with a focus on empowerment and co-creation.**

Following several well-attended ULG meetings, the decision was to undertake the ULL in *Possilpark*, an area with a multi-cultural population that has already seen several initiatives undertaken to promote urban resilience. Despite this there is a persistent and entrenched distrust of local government which is one of the biggest challenges to the ULL process.

The ULL focusing on an integrated food strategy. The first ULG meeting looked at the resilience menu and plan to open a kitchen with food grown locally. This was in line with national policy in which all

UK cities need to develop an integrated food growing strategy. The *Possilpark* area has many social challenges and many residents are weary of what they see as another consultation process that may not yield any results. The ULG – through the ULL - tried to find new ways of working with residents and new ways of interesting them in resilient food systems and contributing to the development of other green actions such as green roofs and hydroponics.



Third ULG Meeting, February 2017

They undertook a number of experiments which included seeking to secure the use of vacant local shop on Saracen Street as a resilient food hub to be managed and promoted by community members, redeployment of a surplus council container to be used as a pop-up re-use restaurant, a Soup Bike community engagement experiment whereby fresh soup made by community groups from locally grown produce and distributed via bicycles to local people, a Film Night – to bring together elected members, community groups and local residents to watch short films on urban food resilience, and food portraits (learning from the city of Vejle’s experiment) whereby photographs of local ‘food heroes’ were taken and displayed publicly, and the creation of a cookbook whereby community recipes are to be shared and made available to the whole community for free.

The RE project team in Glasgow reported important lessons learned from their work with stakeholder engagement included that *“...will and capacity exists amongst local stakeholders. However, new mechanisms are required for releasing this capacity. And that the link between food resilience and physical/social regeneration is well understood. That the capacity for growing space exists but there are challenges in terms of temporal land use, contamination, skills and training and accessibility of private space. Community groups want to participate in a dialogue and find opportunities for working together. However, competitive funding constraints make this difficult. There are well-established food resilient components to the work of local organisations (growing, food sharing, skills and training etc.) but it is difficult to connect these projects through a long-term sustainable approach.”*⁹

⁹ Final IAP, City of Glasgow, February 2018, URBACT Resilient Europe

The city of **Ioannina**, the capital and largest city of Epirus in north-western Greece, has a complex, urban ecosystem vulnerable to environmental, social and economic threats and stresses including extreme poverty, environmental and climatic hazards, air pollution, infrastructure issues, and mobility problems.

For the Ioannina, the ULL provided a new and useful way to connect different aspirations and ideas about inclusion, sustainability, and inclusion. The city is adopting a perspective on urban resilience that allows for more integrative planning bringing together social, ecological and infrastructure ambitions.



An unforeseen challenge is that the city has been the hosting of over 1,000 refugees housed in two hotels and needs to find a new way to integrate these new groups and to prepare the arrival of more refugees. There continues to be a great deal of pressure because of economic crisis. There is an appetite among different stakeholders and residents to find a way to help the city to be more resilient. The ULL focused on dealing with the ecological degradation and depreciation of its important asset: *Pamvotida Lake*.



Many structured discussions and meetings were undertaken through the ULL with citizens focusing on the Pamvotida Lake - a much loved and appreciated asset that has been underused in recent years due to a number of environmental, social, spatial and structural issues. For example, it is no longer possible to swim in the lake because of non-industrial contamination from sewage. Among residents and stakeholders across the city, it has been acknowledged that the lake needs to be recuperated and reconnected to the city and citizens.

The ULL engaged with residents and posing questions such as: how do you see your lake? what is your vision for the future of the lake? The RE project team in Ioannina report that resilience and social inclusion is *“...part of the ongoing effort to improve the city’s resiliency and at the same time connect the community a series of works and living labs have been organized, which focused on explicit threats in the form of stresses and shocks.”*¹⁰

¹⁰ Final IAP, City of Ioannina, February 2018, URBACT Resilient Europe

For the city of **Katowice** is the capital of Silesian Voivodeship in Poland with over two million inhabitants and is using urban resilience as a lens to examine the post-industrialisation transition that city is undergoing to enable a new focus on the social and environmental dimensions as well as economic development.

The Załęże district was chosen as the anchor point for the ULL in an area adjacent to the city centre. In this district, there are many challenges (e.g. depopulation, ageing society, low standard of housing, joblessness, crime). The resilience approach that was chosen concentrated on making sure young people are better educated and more likely to find work.

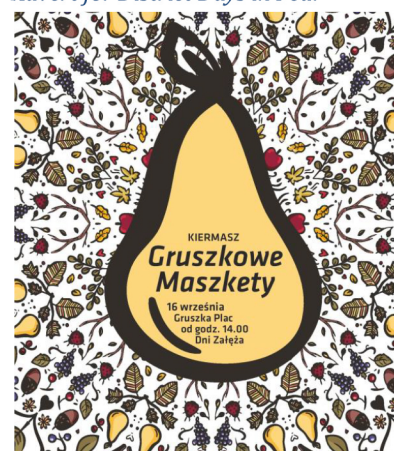
An important goal established by the project team was to create solutions that are feasible and sustainable which can be implemented by the city, local authorities and other partners.

While the resilience concept was quite new in Katowice, the ULG was motivated and well organised and mapped many of the problems and social challenges in the district. The group views resilience has a holistic approach combining many perspectives, stakeholders and methods. The traditional view is that more money from the government would solve the problems in the area though the view the ULG is that more cooperation from a range of stakeholders is needed to identify and deliver effective resilience solutions.

The ULG is planned District Days organised in collaboration with citizens, NGO's and other key actors. The city offered some financial support. There were social activities for all people of all ages and backgrounds. This was planned to be a platform for developing ideas and celebrating the achievements of the local area.

The RE project team for Katowice concluded that the “...due to multidimensionality of the defined process of strengthening resilience of the Załęże Intergrated Action Plan has a horizontal function in relation to selected planning and strategy of the Katowice City”.¹¹

Advert for District Days in Pear



Key to experiments and overall function of the Resilient Europe project has been the inclusion of social, economic, spatial and institutional actors and stakeholders.

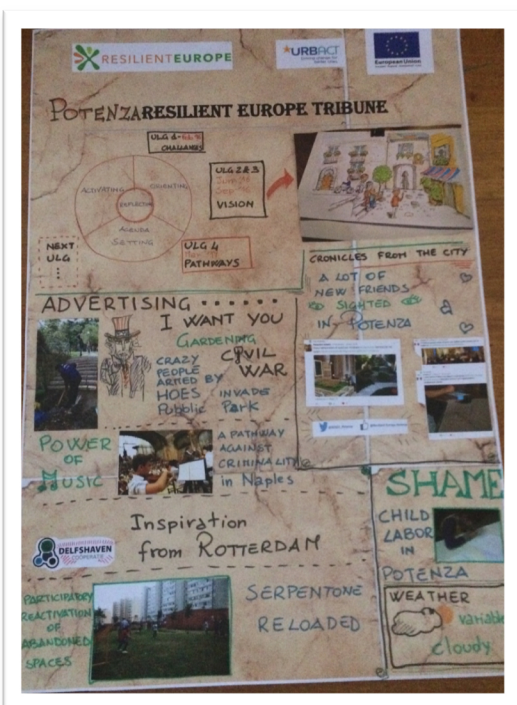
The city of **Malmö** (Sweden) has an established profile as forward thinking city and leader in environmental sustainability and innovation. Nevertheless, the city is facing a myriad of social pressures, challenges and inequalities. For the Resilient Europe project, the city embraced the concept of urban resilience as a new framework to “renew and rediscover a new way to promote community engagement, from consultation to co-creation” and an approach to discover for new ways to create a sense of place and a sense of community from the bottom up and to establish new collaborative relations between the city and its citizens. The city proposed to have a ULL or experimental site in Segepark area to test bottom-up co-creation of new developments and how to create a sense of place. The area is a rich green space, with urban gardening and agriculture, trails in the forest for sport as well as for walking. There are plans to repurpose the area as a new housing district as it an attractive location in terms of accessibility and connectivity to the city.

¹¹ Final IAP, City of Katowice, February 2018, URBACT Resilient Europe

The explicit goal of the ULL was “to increase urban resilience by working towards a local sharing economy in Sege Park, creating an urban living lab that investigates the possibilities for sharing in the area.” Also, “the social inclusion and especially the self-reliance aspect of resilient people were important parts of why the co-creation and community-building aspect of the Urban Living Lab”. This was particularly important for the Urban Living Lab experiment which was being undertaken in a country where people rely very much on institutions for emergency situations as well as long term stresses. This means that institutions tend to focus on building their own capacity to manage the undesirable events. **Therefore, one of the challenges in for this experiment in Malmö and in Sege Park was to shift some of the reliance on institutional support to a citizen-based self-reliance.** One way to do that is by sharing the existing resources.

One of the experiments undertaken in the ULL was developing and implementing a community centre or ‘Leisure bank’ for sharing leisure and sports equipment. Community members were asked to donate unneeded equipment to the Leisure Bank so that others could borrow what they need for up to two weeks at no cost. The experiment involved many different partners who contributed in everything from collection of equipment to taking care of the daily business of the running the venue which was taken care of by a women’

The RE project team in Malmö reported that “...so far the lessons learnt are very positive, people are extremely generous and the equipment they are donating is in very good shape! The people lending the equipment have given them back in time (maximum two weeks) and still in good shape.”¹² This sharing experiment laid the groundwork for the city and local citizens to think about the future social sustainability of Sege Park and concrete projects and experiments that can be undertaken which embrace social inclusion and contribute to enduring urban resilience.



Built on a mountain, the city of **Potenza** in Italy has a view on the valley and the recent built sprawling developments. The city has been strongly marked by an earthquake in the 1980s which as a landmark event continues to influences decisions and plans for the city.

For the Resilient Europe project team in Potenza “thinking about urban resilience is a way to shift mind-sets and policy priorities to a forward-looking integrated approach”.

As the urban resilience framework will give the city the opportunity to take a multi-dimensional approach to the future development of the city.

The RE project team in Potenza chose the undertake the Urban Living Lab approach in the historical city centre which has suffered in the economic downturn and suffers from the residual fear and effects of the last big earthquake.

¹² Final IAP, City of Malmo, February 2018, URBACT Resilient Europe

One of the first challenges for social inclusion in the Potenza ULL was the setting up of an ULG which the project team attributed to sense of distrust among different social groups and citizens living in the area. This was exacerbated by ineffective participatory processes that were undertaken in the past. These factors together resulted in a reluctance to participate in the RE project. The RE project team undertook various measures to build confidence and trust with local groups and citizens and eventually establish a viable ULG.

Several experiments were undertaken with their associated pathways well-defined which included one around increasing the accessibility of public space, promoting self-employment and sustainable jobs, increasing the supply of cultural, recreational and commercial associations, better emergency planning and maintenance, and increasing institutional resilience.

The conclusions reached by the project team is that the experiments had a good impact on the ULG and they were included in decision-making processes and could see concrete results. In terms of sustainability of the project, the municipality will be selecting priorities among the actions defined by the ULG to see how they can support and finance them. This has demonstrated that participatory processes can have concrete results which in turn builds confidence in the group to plan future activities and actions. ¹³

For the city of **Rotterdam** in the Netherlands is a hyper-diverse city with more than 175 nationalities. Social resilience is a priority for the city in a context of rapidly changing economy, social relationships, and the threat of climate change.

The concept of urban resilience provides a frame of reference to coordinate the lessons learned from different community programmes including climate adaptations policy pilots and from a long-standing planning tradition. The challenge for the city of Rotterdam has been how to maintain continuity in civic engagement and co-creation processes. The city developed a resilience strategy which has a broad scope and is now trying to cooperate with many people and entities across the city to achieve more integrated solutions.

For Resilient Europe project, Rotterdam not only defines “resilient places” and “resilient institutions” but also specifies that “*resilient people are the most important asset of the city and comprise its social capital, thus it is important to look at the level of social inclusion and self-reliance of citizens in our cities.*” And this builds on the work that the city is doing in a number of international networks and programmes including RC100.



ULG organised event for the project proposal for the Afrikaander market

The ULL project is in district *Feijenoord* which is a diverse area in terms of cultural backgrounds and has a low average level of education and people with low incomes. Many of the people living in these neighbourhoods are young and organise many activities which has created strong

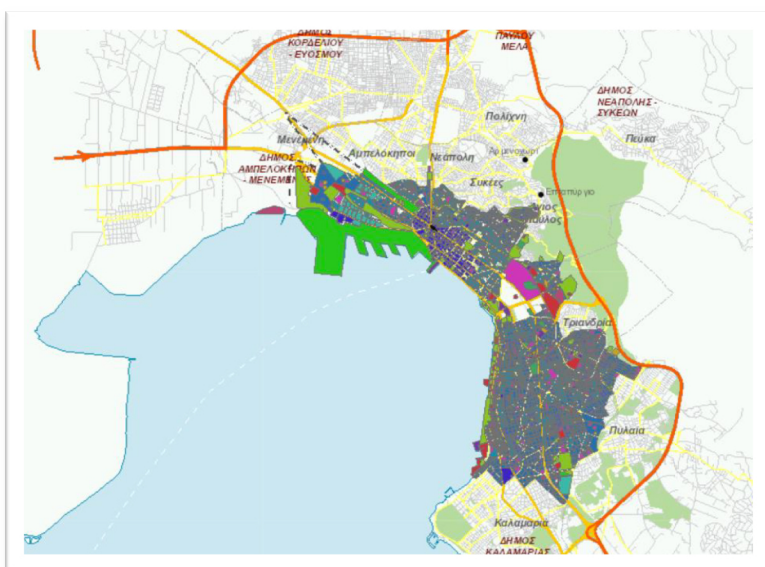
¹³ Final IAP, City of Potenza, February 2018, URBACT Resilient Europe

informal ties and networks. Entrepreneurs are very active in this area and have tried to connect the unemployed to work with small scale companies, on a district scale. One of the challenges of the neighbourhood is a lack of integrated social inclusion specifically with the Turkish population. However as fifty percent of people living in Rotterdam are not of Dutch origin there are many positive examples of integration of people from different national and ethnic backgrounds.

The vision and objectives were established through a collaborative ULG process for these districts very much focused on improving the lives of residents in concrete ways (.e.g. increase of local employment, social networks and operationalising a 'labour matching organization' to match local work with local people). Next pathways were identified for bringing this vision to fruition with timeline and an identification of core stakeholders.

The lessons learned from the RE project related to social inclusion and resilience include a reflection from the Integrated Action Plan that *“building urban resilience starts with building and exploring networks on a district level. Inhabitants, entrepreneurs, government, and other stakeholders are the basis for building urban resilience.”* Furthermore that for building urban resilience *‘...it is clear that building coalitions with local people and organisations takes time...you have to identify formal and informal networks in the districts and also professional networks....creating a shared ambition (aligned with the resilience vision) and keeping it alive is a prerequisite for a successful (pilot) project or small scale experiments. The ‘worlds’ of government, larger private organisations, entrepreneurs and citizens have to be brought together.’*¹⁴

The City of **Thessaloniki** is a densely built-up urban area and the second largest municipality, by population, in Greece and a as a major hub of business and culture, from the Roman period to the Byzantine Empire. As in with the rest of Greece, the city has been hard hit by economic and political crisis in recent years. Today the city is involved in several important international cooperation agreements and networks including Rockefeller 100 Resilient Cities and the Covenant of Mayors. For the Resilient Europe project, the project team in Thessaloniki chose to focus on the issues and challenges of mobility within the city – connecting the broader social, economic and environmental issues. This focus included a multi-stakeholder process for creating dialogue, design and action.



Map of Municipality of Thessaloniki

The RE project team choose to hone in on cycling and how it could impact social inclusion and self-reliance of the residents of Thessaloniki and as a possible solution to traffic congestion.

¹⁴ Final IAP, City of Rotterdam, February 2018, URBACT Resilient Europe

Furthermore this focus meant to look at how to strengthen partnership work and collaborative governance approaches. Consultations, discussions and information gathering, as well as exchange of experience took place in URBACT Local Group (ULG) meetings, round tables, seminars and workshops organized periodically by the Directorate of Sustainable Mobility and Networks, Department of Traffic Planning of the Municipality of Thessaloniki. Looking specifically at citizen participation and social inclusion, the city faces persistent challenges on its path to creating urban resilience. As was found by many of the cities participating in Resilient Europe, a lack of trust and the inconsistency in the interaction between the city and citizens impacted and strained the participation, design and implementing of local solutions.

The experimentation undertaken by the ULG in Thessaloniki (e.g. Dissemination of the Local Authorities' actions towards cycling and generally sustainable urban mobility promotion) through specific actions such as traffic education and the promotion of cycling in Toumpa area of the city contributed countering the lack of trust and lack of concrete actions being undertaken by the municipality. The experiments also raised awareness among residents of the cycling resources that are available to them bicycles being provided for free to refugees. On a policy level, the RE project was a catalyst for undertaking action research with residents (i.e. investigating what are the impediments to cycling for most residents and how can those impediments or disincentives be ameliorated) which aims to contribute to the long term viability cycling in the wider mobility plans of the city.

The RE project team acknowledge that social inclusion and citizen participation is integral to the approval of any cycling-related infrastructure projects and that any new infrastructure must be well-maintained and preserved through its life cycle.¹⁵

The City of **Vejle** in Denmark identified urban resilience as the frame of reference to provide the opportunity to combine new thinking about social, economic, ecological and institutional assets and vulnerabilities with acting for social shocks and stress with ecological and economical approaches in the city. Though getting things off the ground was difficult particularly around the question of power dynamics between the city and citizens.

The ULG was created a local council by themselves and then the entity dissolved. There was disappointment that the initial plan was not politically feasible. However, a local council was created as empowered citizens took matters into their own hands. *West End* area of Vejle with approximately 8,500 residents was chosen as the place for the ULL experiments. It is a former working-class neighbourhood with a strong identity and a proud history. It is also an area of Vejle with lower household incomes, more vulnerable groups, as well as a higher number of people with a different ethnicity than Danish. Additionally, the *West End* is one of the lower lying areas of the city and is thus more prone to flooding than the communities situated on top of the hills, which surround the entire city. The following three pathways were identified: *building a co-creating community, developing a self-sufficient and economically robust community, developing a socially cohesive community.*

¹⁵ Final IAP, City of Thessaloniki, February 2018, URBACT Resilient Europe

Experiments were created and undertaken to develop and test the pathways. The experiments included a collaboration focuses on reducing loneliness among young people and highlighting the opportunities available to young people in Vejle, the creation of a talent camp for young high school students who then created a short documentary to create awareness about loneliness among young people, a local group wanted to create a green public area with a natural playground, and places where residents could grow apples, walk their dogs and enjoy nature.



Reproduced from Vejle IAP Poster

The local council of West End received a piece of unused land, where the work group could realise their dreams. Vejle also hosted a Resilience Week at the city hall square with the aim of the week was to try out a new model for co-creation and create awareness around resilience and Vejle's efforts to become resilient. The ULL has that thought of several experiments additional that they would like to undertake or support.

Key lessons learned from this experiment were according the RE project team in Vejle **“...co-creation depends on the willingness of city management to give up control as early as the design process. This can be hard, as municipalities have to be efficient, effective, and able to document their processes, so often control is an embedded part of their culture. Initiators should therefore be willing to take a few hits when you experiment with co-creation, because not everyone will support your project. In addition, some groups needs a bit of support (e.g. youth) to ensure full delivery, so in our case, co-creation depended on the ability of the project owners to recognize how much each actor stakeholder was capable of doing. Lastly, clear role definitions will prevent confusion around key elements, such as communication or delivery.”**

Furthermore the RE team noted that *“...the Urban Resilience IAP for Vejle's West End is very well aligned with our overall resilience strategy – in fact, building social resilience in the West End is a lighthouse project in the strategy. The IAP unites all the strategies and plans developed by stakeholders in the community (e.g. the local council, the municipality, The Spinning Mill) and sets a common strategy for building resilience in the West End. This creates a strong foundation in terms of accessing funds, and just as the resilience strategy for Vejle is a mobilization strategy, the IAP for West End can be utilized to mobilize the people and resources needed to build resilience in the West End – and already has done so.”*¹⁶ Further as the team noted this strategy then becomes integrated in local council and municipal plans and creates the possibility of widening the scope and securing resources for future activities and projects

¹⁶ Final IAP, City of Vejle, February 2018, URBACT Resilient Europe

CONCLUSION

In some shape or form, each URBACT Resilient Europe city faced challenges related to building trust with across the board with stakeholders, managing expectations especially with citizens, shifting mind-sets and power dynamics, reaching the ‘unusual suspects’, confronting embedded practices and policies, and planning for sustainability. These findings and results offered by the eleven URBACT Resilient Europe cities through their Integrated Action Plans illuminate both the challenges and positive potential of embracing experimentation as a method to create concrete, actionable steps toward building sustainable urban resilience through social inclusion.



RE Network Meeting Antwerp, Oct. 2017 1

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For Further Reading:

[Living Together: Place-Based Social Inclusion](#)

Ratna Omidvar, C.M., O.Ont., Senator for Ontario, The Senate of Canada

[Making Cities Resilient Report](#)

UN, 2012

[How to Build Inclusive Cities](#)

Tanvi Misra, CityLab, June 2016