



Advancing Equity for
ATHENS' RESILIENCE

February 2017

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Overview

The Bertelsmann Foundation, with generous support from the Open Society Foundations, partnered with the 100 Resilient Cities initiative (pioneered by the Rockefeller Foundation) and the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) to launch the Transatlantic Policy Lab (“the lab”). The lab is a unique platform to explore the agenda for advancing just and fair inclusion, or equity, in American and European cities. Boston, Massachusetts, and Athens, Greece, provided the backdrops for interactive, weeklong explorations into this issue by a team of trans-Atlantic experts from local government, philanthropy, think tanks, nongovernmental organizations and the private sector. The lab is an organic, results-driven exercise, aimed not only at facilitating trans-Atlantic dialogue, but also toward developing place-based policy recommendations that can advance resilience on both sides of the Atlantic.

This report summarizes the Athens lab, which took place on June 26-30, 2016. Since its inception, the lab has worked in tandem with Athens' Chief Resilience Officer Eleni Myrivili. The lab is designed to build on the key findings of the municipality's Preliminary Resilience Assessment, which used community engagement to rank and order the municipality's resilience priorities. The recommendations contained within this report will feed into the Municipality of Athens' Resilience Strategy, which will be released to the public in 2017.

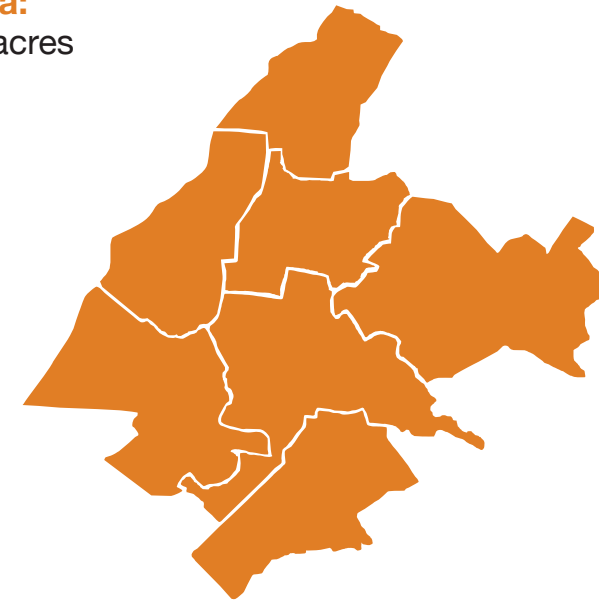
Lab Background: Resilience

Across the United States and Europe, cities face rising inequality as a result of growth that is neither sustainable nor inclusive. In many cases, this exacerbates historic inequalities that have excluded some groups from the pathway to opportunity. The impact of inequality is far-reaching, and it is felt most profoundly among people whose advancement is constrained by structural forces, racism and prejudice, or threats to personal well-being. Inequality also manifests itself in city space. Historic urbanization patterns and urban planning regimes have concentrated poverty in certain districts and have discouraged investment. New urban growth and investment spurred by globalization is reshaping cities, causing spikes in gentrification, displacement and further spatial polarization. Thus, inequality is widely acknowledged as one of the most pressing challenges that cities and metropolitan regions face.

The drivers of inequality in Athens are linked to Greece's economic crisis, which has driven unemployment to record levels, severely constrained government spending and produced a turbulent investment climate. These

At a Glance: Municipality of Athens

Area:
38 acres



Permanent Population:
664,046

macroeconomic issues trickle down to affect municipal service delivery, access to capital and individual health and welfare. As a result, the physical city, the municipal government, and its people and business are strained, and longstanding inequalities have been exacerbated. This situation has been compounded by the arrival of refugees and migrants from the Middle East, Africa and South Asia. The combination of transient refugees and migrants who intend to settle in Athens has created a mosaic of new stakeholders, especially in the two districts where the lab concentrated its efforts. In response, a range of organizations and individuals have stepped up to support the new arrivals with housing, jobs and basic services and to connect them to the Athenian community.

Amid these challenges, the resilience of Athenians is striking. The doom and gloom that predominates in media coverage of Greece's economic woes dissipates once on the ground in Athens. Through the lab process, the experts spoke with leaders dedicated to creating a more resilient Athens. Specifically, the Municipality of Athens directed the lab to focus on two areas that are critically linked to the city's resilience challenges. The first, economy, focused on issues including entrepreneurship, job creation, skills development and the creation of value chains. The second, placemaking, refers to the process of physical revitalization and utilization of public spaces through social, cultural, economic and environmental activities. Placemaking is an important lever for reducing inequality because of the opportunity to improve

Nationality		Sex	
Greek 77.16%	Foreign 22.84%	Male 47.47%	Female 52.53%
Population by Age Group			
0-19 15.19%	20-39 32.27%	40-59 27.81%	60+ 24.73%
Marital Status			
Unmarried 43.73%	Married 42.81%	Widowed 8.25%	Separated 5.81%
Educational Attainment			
Primary 15.16%	Secondary 47.74%	Higher 24.40%	Other 12.70%
Employment Status			
Active 15.16%	Non-Active 47.74%	Employed 24.40%	Unemployed 12.70%
Housing			
Total Housing Units 427,825	Occupied 69.15%	Vacant 30.85%	



Population Change (1991-2001)
-18.68%

High Educational Attainment
Athens: 72.14%
Greece: 57.99%

Proportion of Elderly Residents
100 children / 148.5 elderly people

Financially Inactive Population
51%

Increase in Unemployment (2011-2015)
7%



Turnover for Greek Businesses (2008-2010)
-38.32%

Change in Average Number of Businesses (2008-2010)
+11.11%

Fall in Average Income (2010-2012)
Athens: 8.35%
Greece: -5.31%

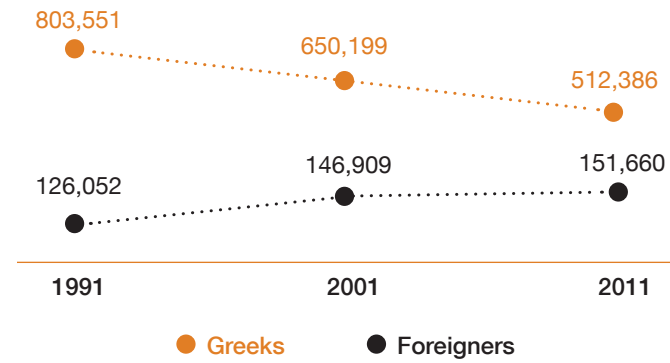


Old Building Stock
80%

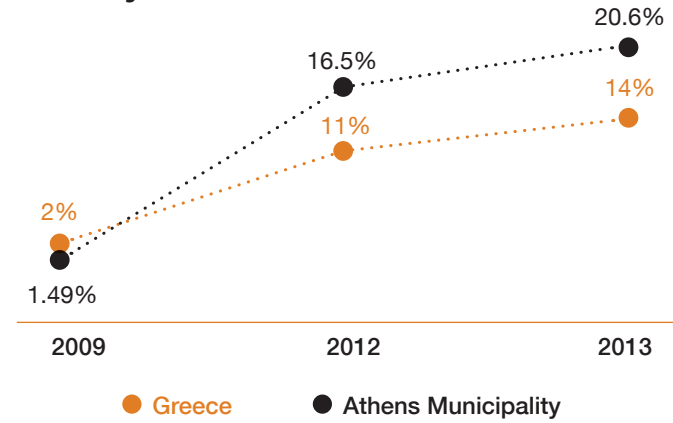
Urban Green Space
Athens: 2 square meters per resident
EU: 8 square meters per resident

Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority

Population Change, Athens Municipality



Poverty Rate



the physical environment, while bridging divides and creating connections across communities.

The lab focused its analysis of economy and placemaking on two of Athens' most diverse and dynamic areas: the 3rd district, anchored by Avdi Square, and the 6th district, anchored by Victoria Square. Each of these distinctive districts has a diverse set of community assets and actors working to strengthen economic activity and placemaking. The lab was inspired by the innovations already present in these communities and intrigued by the possibility of building upon them in the final recommendations.

Lab Process: Trans-Atlantic Collaboration with Athens Stakeholders

The goal of the on-site lab was to develop a robust understanding of Athens' resilience and equity challenges in order to make informed, implementable recommendations. A number of issues complicated the process, including the compressed lab timeline and the complexity of both the issues and the case study districts. Despite these challenges, both the Bertelsmann Foundation and GMF shared the goal of designing the lab in a thoughtful and meaningful way. These two organizations collaborated with the lab's facilitation

partner, TMI Consulting, to design a process that utilized strategies drawn from design thinking or human-centered design, which is rooted in empathy. As such, the first three days of the lab focused on intensive information gathering at both the city and district level. Over the course of the lab, the experts spent 28 hours engaging with more than 60 local leaders through presentations, site visits and dialogue sessions. The rich insight gained from these experiences illuminated key challenges and opportunities that were critical to the lab process. As shown in the graphic below, there were four main phases of the lab process, including a four-day session in Athens as well as remote engagement with the lab experts to develop the final recommendations.

The first phase of the lab involved citywide framing of the role that social inequity plays in Athens' resilience challenges. The lab kicked off at the Impact Hub Athens with briefings from city officials, local academics and community members. The opening session included an overview of the municipality's Resilience Strategy, discussion of Athens' social equity challenges and a deep dive into revitalization efforts in the 3rd and 6th Districts. Later, lab experts engaged in exploration and analysis. Lab experts were divided into two theme-based teams (economy and placemaking) to learn about

Athens

June 26-30, 2016

Remote

July-September, 2016



3rd Municipal District

Area: 6 acres
Permanent Population: 46,508

Nationality		Sex	
Greek	83.65%	Male	48.90%
Foreign	16.35%	Female	51.10%
Population by Age Group			
0-19	16.82%	20-39	32.58%
40-59	27.53%	60+	23.70%
Marital Status			
Unmarried	43.37%	Married	44.36%
Widowed	7.48%	Separated	4.25%
Educational Attainment			
Primary	19.11%	Secondary	45.53%
Higher	18.61%	Other	16.67%
Employment Status			
Active	49.19%	Non-Active	50.78%
Employed	38.91%	Unemployed	20.91%
Housing			
Total Housing Units	27,864	Occupied	70.82%
		Vacant	29.18%



Low Educational Attainment
64.64%



Small Foreign Population
16.35%



Low Income



Large Proportion of Green Space
19% of the municipality's green space

Fewer Housing Units
6% of the municipality's housing units

Fewer Square Meters Per Resident
42% of dwellings under 30 square meters

6th Municipal District

Area: 4 acres
Permanent Population: 130,582

Nationality		Sex	
Greek	64.75%	Male	48.56%
Foreign	35.25%	Female	54.44%
Population by Age Group			
0-19	14.85%	20-39	32.27%
40-59	28.19%	60+	24.74%
Marital Status			
Unmarried	46.32%	Married	38.55%
Widowed	8.76%	Separated	6.37%
Educational Attainment			
Primary	11.58%	Secondary	43.20%
Higher	33.90%	Other	11.32%
Employment Status			
Active	50.81%	Non-Active	48.97%
Employed	38.46%	Unemployed	24.30%
Housing			
Total Housing Units	90,178	Occupied	63.59%
		Vacant	36.41%



High Percentage of Married People
38.55%

High Population Density
19.66%

Second Highest Population Decline (2001-2011)
19.58%

High Unemployment Rate
24.3%

Large Foreign Population
35.25%



Middle Income (compared to other districts)



High Percentage of Vacant Housing Units
36.4% of municipality's total house units

Housing Units
21.2% of municipality's total housing stock

Low Proportion of Urban Green Space
6% of the municipality

Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority

the people, organizations, programs and initiatives involved in addressing these issues. The experts learned about these policy issues while uncovering each district's unique network of actors and institutions dedicated to revitalization, resilience and strengthening social equity. Each team participated in informational briefings, site visits and small-group discussions with community experts. Engagement in both districts culminated with a networking session and a roundtable discussion with local civic leaders, business owners and representatives from local institutions.



Economy Group Site Visits

- Kipseli Market
- Melissa
- Bios/Romantso



The neighborhood immersion and stakeholder engagement process was a powerful experience for the lab teams; reflecting on their experiences, lab experts expressed how deeply affected they were by the work of community leaders and their personal stories of perseverance. A common theme throughout the community conversations was a significant lack of trust in government, compounded by bureaucracy and a perceived lack of accountability. Both the economy and placemaking teams reported hearing this refrain in talking with stakeholders. Both teams felt strongly that addressing trust and accountability would be an important precursor to the success of any of the lab's recommendations. As such, the lab formed a third group to focus on strategies for building trust and accountability as a precursor to the lab's main recommendations.

Following the district site visits and stakeholder engagement, lab experts analyzed the inputs and new information gained using a SWOC (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Challenges) model. As illustrated by the photograph above, the lab experts thoroughly documented their initial takeaways and insights. The three teams then utilized elements of design thinking to further refine and process their experiences and begin the "Big Idea" brainstorming phase. Each team sifted through the SWOC analysis to identify major issues or levers that could advance the policy themes of social and economic equity. The trust and accountability team focused exclusively on citywide strategies, while the placemaking and economy teams developed a mix of both district-level and citywide

recommendations. Through intensive discussion and debate, the teams narrowed the list of potential issues to a set of Big Ideas. Over the course of the day, as the Big Ideas took shape, more concrete recommendations for policies, programs or investments emerged. The teams then participated in two feedback loop sessions to refine their ideas. In the first session, the teams shared with each other; in the second session, they presented to groups of district stakeholders with whom they met during site visits.

The three teams spent the final session of the lab reflecting on the input from the feedback sessions, making final adjustments to their Big Ideas, and mapping out an action plan to transform their thoughts into concrete recommendations. Each member of the lab elected to work on a specific Big Idea during the post-lab remote session period from July to September; this step involved additional research, engagement with officials from the Municipality of Athens and developing the recommendations in this report. Each recommendation includes key goals and actions for implementation, as well as profiles of trans-Atlantic models or best practices. During this final phase of the lab, the Bertelsmann Foundation and GMF hosted conference calls with the theme-based teams to track progress, discuss engagement with the municipality and further refine the recommendations. The following section provides an in-depth look at each recommendation that the lab offers to the Municipality of Athens for its consideration.

Lab Recommendations

The lab produced the following recommendations as a result of its collaboration and engagement with the Municipality of Athens and stakeholders in the 3rd and 6th districts. The insights and experiences from these engagements inspired the lab to consider both citywide and district-specific recommendations that would improve the municipality's resilience in the three thematic areas: trust and accountability, economy and placemaking. As noted throughout the report, there are challenges to designing and implementing a time-constrained process that requires outside experts to thoughtfully and thoroughly immerse themselves in issues with deep complexity and history. With these factors in mind, the Bertelsmann Foundation, GMF and the lab experts offer these recommendations as one input into Athens' vision for a more resilient and inclusive municipality.

Placemaking Group Site Visits

- Municipal Art Gallery
- Skate Park Latraac
- Communitism Project



Building Trust, Accountability and Innovation

Athens faces a tremendous challenge: In a time of austerity, how can the municipality maintain basic city services while creating opportunities for residents to improve their lives and the health of the communities in which they live? Limited resources, governance challenges and externally imposed controls hinder the local government's ability to provide many of the services that residents expect and deserve. Despite these challenges, there are opportunities for the Municipality of Athens to improve the lives of its residents. The municipality is constrained, but not powerless. Local government, communities and other stakeholders can work together to address challenges that the current economic crisis poses and meet the growing social needs of residents.

Many Athenians are already taking action to bring to life new ideas that can contribute to a positive future for the municipality. Organizations such as Atenistas,¹ Boroume² and synAthina³ lead innovative projects that showcase local ingenuity and dynamism in the face of enormous obstacles. For example, the synAthina kiosk located across from the Varvakeios Market has hosted 2,174 activities conducted by 247 groups of citizens and institutions since its launch in 2013. The municipality must continue to encourage and support these initiatives while incubating a new wave of novel concepts.

Mayor Yiorgos Kaminis and the Municipal Council of Athens have taken initial steps to address residents' longstanding needs. Citizens, local government, universities and other partners can come together to tackle Athens' challenges and plant the seeds of restoration and renewal. If this process is thoughtfully managed, the municipality's new diversity from migrant populations can be a source of growth.

The Trust, Accountability and Innovation (TAI) group of the Transatlantic Policy Lab proposes a municipal initiative to: 1) change the culture of how government serves citizens; 2) be more transparent and accountable; and 3) galvanize residents to work toward making Athens a more **functional, livable, inclusive and resilient city**.

Throughout the municipality's history, people have come together in times of crisis. This time should be no different.

As Athens and its people work together, they will find innovative solutions to their most pressing challenges. With the recommendations of the TAI group as a blueprint, the municipality can create a platform to support the development of resident-centered and resident-generated projects and identify both new and latent resources to put these ideas into practice.

The goal is to create a foundation for the recommendations proposed by the economy and placemaking groups of the Transatlantic Policy Lab. The two groups' recommendations feed into the innovation platform that we will create once the groundwork has been laid by early trust and accountability efforts. The end goal for the municipality and its residents: When a problem arises, citizens, government, business and local stakeholders come together to find and implement solutions and complement one another's efforts.

Guiding Principles

We have used the following principles to guide and reflect our actions. These guiding principles are fundamental for the municipality to build a more **functional, livable, inclusive and resilient Athens**:

- Focus on the positive and the possible through positive framing
- Focus on inclusion and ensure that residents have what they need to participate and prosper
- Ensure that communication and learning are reciprocal
- Ensure that information is transparent, provide regular updates, and track planning processes and commitments
- Be inclusive and respectful of all residents
- Tailor engagement and communication to neighborhood and block-level needs
- Focus on the impact our work has on people
- Collect and share quantitative and qualitative data on our efforts and performance
- Respect local and neighborhood institutions and assets and include them in all activities

Create a More Functional, Livable, Inclusive and Resilient Athens

Diagram 1: Guiding Principles



Summary of Key Recommendations

We propose the launch of the TAI initiative to support a more functional, livable and inclusive municipality that enhances well-being and opportunity so that all Athenians have the chance to thrive. Diagram 1 illustrates the activities that will jump-start the initiative to facilitate interaction among stakeholders. Although these interactions can be led by external intermediaries, the municipality should set project goals and agree on key performance indicators to ensure that efforts are aligned and on track to meet the goals. The following projectwide recommendations support the TAI initiative:

➔ Recommendation 1 – Trust and Service

Earn the trust of residents and build confidence in government and its services, starting at the neighborhood level. The municipality must regain the trust of its residents and community stakeholders so that they will share their ideas and be willing to work with each other and with the municipality. After many years of growing civic disillusionment, the municipality must demonstrate its willingness to serve and be held accountable.

➔ Recommendation 2 – Transparency and Accountability

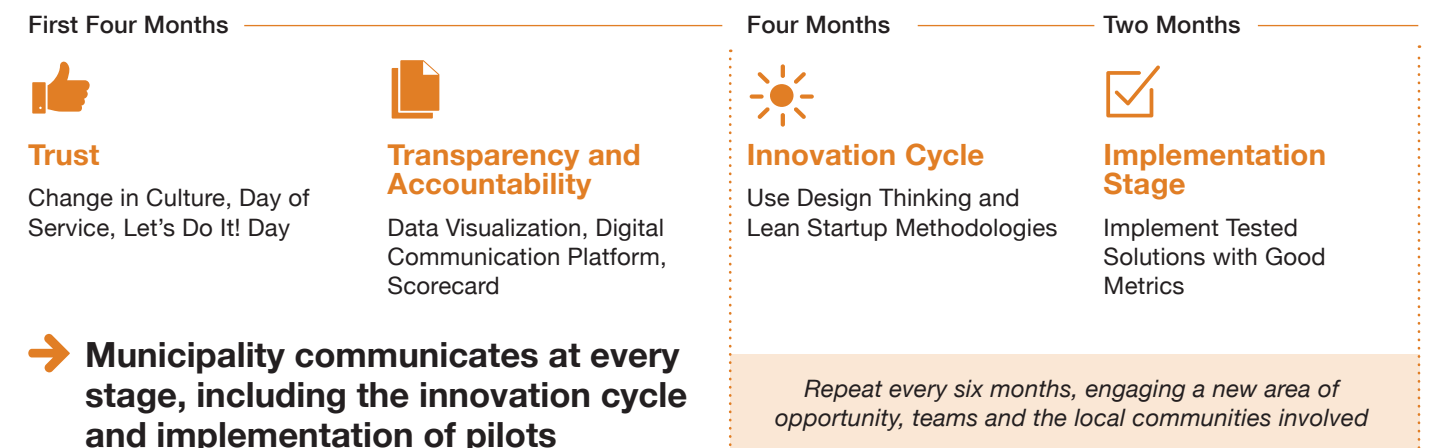
Become more transparent and accountable to residents. The municipality must collect and share information, be clear about its goals, monitor project outcomes and report results to residents in a timely manner.

➔ Recommendation 3 – Government and Resident Innovation

Support and promote resident input, idea generation and innovation. The municipality has a unique role to play in identifying and supporting existing local solutions, facilitating local and international partnerships, catalyzing collaboration, collecting internal data on city services and resources (unavailable to private entities), and inspiring citizens to become active innovators and change makers.

Trust, Accountability and Innovation Initiative

Diagram 2: Project Cycle

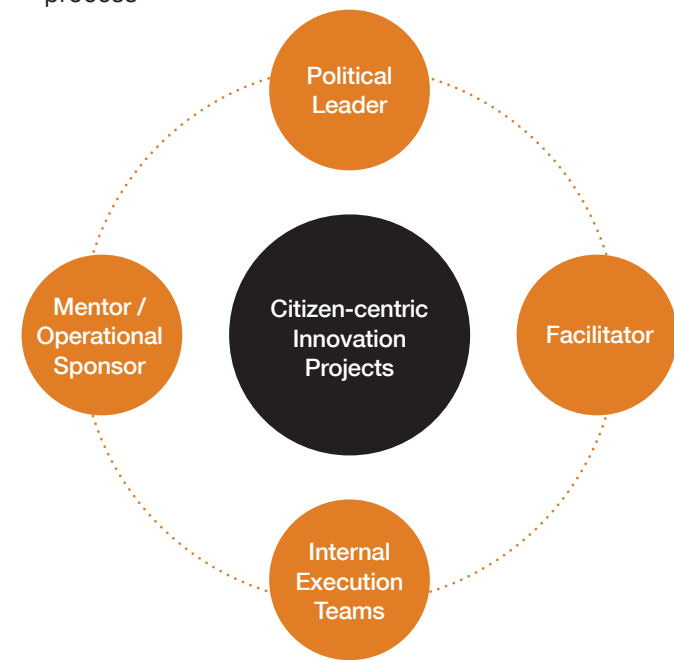


Key Actions to Support Recommendation 1: Trust and Service

The goal of the first recommendation is to earn the trust of residents and build confidence in city government and services, starting at the neighborhood level and focusing on residents’ daily lives. Specific actions include:

STEP 1: Identify a lead coordination team for the project. The accountable team member is the mayor. This team is composed of:

- a) Political Leader: Promotes the initiative and inculcates the appropriate culture (*mayor*)
- b) Mentor/Operational Sponsor: Helps access resources and decision-makers (*philanthropy, nongovernmental organizations*)
- c) Facilitator: Facilitates workshops and guides the process (*chief resilience officer*)
- d) Internal Execution Teams: Coordinate and advance the process



STEP 2: Launch Athens Municipality Serves, a series of virtual and in-person platforms and actions aimed at changing how residents interact with public officials. This initiative will demonstrate that local officials are committed to improving relationships and services, thereby building trust between citizens and their government. Specific actions include:

- a) Create a more welcoming environment at key points of contact between residents and local government, especially in public service offices. This can be done with simple, low-cost solutions. For example, the municipality could ensure a reasonable room temperature, adequate seating and the

presence of clear signs and information. Position greeters to welcome residents as they arrive and direct them to the appropriate service window. Strive to understand the needs of children, seniors and new Athenians (e.g., immigrants, returning diaspora and young adults seeking services for the first time).

b) Erect information kiosks where employees from the municipality spend one day a month fielding questions from residents and visitors. This would help employees better understand the perspectives and needs of residents.

c) Create an online portal of local government events to build awareness of positive, impactful efforts by the municipality, districts, local government employees and council members.

STEP 3: Review the effectiveness of the citizens’ helpline, 1595, in responding to requests, suggestions and complaints. Highlight examples of requests that were successfully resolved or suggestions that were implemented. Launch a public information campaign to inform citizens about the helpline. This could include the distribution of postcards or posters to small stores and market stalls. Explore the feasibility of creating an online version of 1595 similar to the 311 line in Washington, DC. Washington’s system, which evolved from phone-only to an online platform,⁴ could be used as a model for Athens. The accountable team members for this step include the mayor and district leaders.

STEP 4: Launch initiatives led by municipal employees, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and/or residents to resolve problems and improve conditions. These actions could be coordinated or decentralized. For areas in which there is acute mistrust or frustration, it would be beneficial to begin with a “municipality serves” approach. These actions can also take the form of the Neighborhood Fix-It infrastructure outlined in the placemaking recommendations. Specific actions include:

- a) Create a Municipal Employees/NGO Day of Service with the goal of spurring community engagement and trust-building between the municipality and its residents. This initiative is intended to be a visible and tangible demonstration of the municipality’s commitment to serve its residents. City leaders, employees and other volunteers would engage in team community service projects aimed at generating quick and visible results. Examples include graffiti removal, trash cleanup, beautification of green space and pink sidewalk projects. Municipal employees could volunteer for the effort, and, if the projects take place outside of normal work hours, employees could receive paid time off for their participation. NGOs and philanthropies could lend resources and staff to expand the scope of the projects and inject energy and purpose. The initiative could also work with NGOs

to recruit migrants to work on projects. The accountable team members for this step include the mayor and district representatives.

b) Launch a resident-led Let’s Do It! Day⁵ to deepen relationships and trust generated by the Municipal Employee/NGO Day of Service. This is intended as a first step in building a culture of civic participation within the municipality. To ensure success, the municipality should partner with NGOs and philanthropies to devote sufficient resources to the project. The accountable team members for this step are district representatives.

The end goal of these actions is to create highly visible local events that build trust. Neutral facilitators would be present to handle any tensions among participants, and should help design the day’s activities. Neighborhood residents, business owners and universities would all be invited in advance to participate.

Key Actions to Support Recommendation 2: Transparency and Accountability

The goal of this recommendation is to encourage the municipality to be more transparent and accountable to its residents.

STEP 1: Develop and unveil a local government scorecard to foster transparency and allow for internal and external monitoring. The accountable team members are the mayor and survey firms. Specific actions include:

a) Create a city self-assessment to rate government performance and the current situation within each district. This would demonstrate to residents that the municipality is acting in good faith and is attempting to establish a minimum threshold of trust. Given the current level of disillusionment with government, this is a crucial first step before the municipality implements more complex platforms to solicit constructive feedback and participation from citizens.

b) Pilot a digital “polling” tool with which citizens can rate all trust-building events and city services on a smiley-face scale (no comments).⁶ Polling tools could also facilitate greater citizen participation in decision-making by the municipality. For example, Austin, Texas has engaged in this type of polling.⁷

STEP 2: Launch a data visualization gallery to promote government transparency. The accountable team members are the municipality’s chief digital officer, the general secretary of the civil service and data visualization companies and experts. Specific actions include:

- a) Make data collected by the city easily accessible and understandable. Create a single site that brings together tools

from local and international NGOs and academic institutions so that they are easily accessible, searchable and usable. The goal is to make city data “digital-on-demand” so it can be visualized and built upon over time.

b) Add features that allow for community-influenced impact. Investigate and potentially integrate an Athens data tool similar to Partnership for Southern Equity’s (PSE) Metro Atlanta Equity Atlas⁸ and the National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership.⁹

c) Support NGOs that create self-managed open access mapping projects (for example, support for refugees and migrants in various languages).

d) Ask companies that have a stake in user-centric open innovation projects to share information and processing methods with users and residents.

STEP 3: Establish a digital communication platform with an in-person outreach component. The accountable team members include e-government and policy experts, NGOs and community stakeholders. Platform moderators would be responsible for filtering offensive comments and providing an outlet for resident and stakeholder frustration and anger, while providing a format that encourages residents to channel frustration and complaints into suggestions for improvements. The platform must be built to withstand cyberattacks. Specific actions include:

a) Follow up the announcement of the TAI initiative with the publication of action items, due dates, parties involved and consequences for inaction. This could be published on a platform moderated by the municipality.

b) Create a feedback loop for NGOs, civil society, small businesses and stakeholders.

c) Report in-person communication via the digital platform to increase transparency.

STEP 4: Establish a municipal department that focuses on the participatory process and neighborhood outreach. The staff of this department would explore ways to create opportunities for dialogue, information sharing, partnership and action between city government and neighborhood residents and leaders. One useful case study is the New Orleans Neighborhood Participation Plan.¹⁰

Key Actions to Support Recommendation 3: Government and Resident Innovation¹¹

The goal of this recommendation is to support and promote resident input, idea generation and innovation. The accountable team members include the mayor, innovation teams, synAthina and local residents.

STEP 1: Develop an online innovation platform to allow for resident input and idea generation. Specific actions include:

a) Establish an innovation unit within the municipality to launch innovation cycles to develop new projects for citizens or find and scale existing projects. The innovation unit could make use of digital tools or public spaces to collect and share data from citizens. Fellowships could be created to bring individuals with innovation experience into the projects.

b) Execute the innovation platform¹² in four-month cycles using the following steps:

1. Defining opportunities: Pinpoint areas for innovation based on goals and a strategy defined by the municipality. This could be buttressed with resident input gleaned from the mapping and digital communications platform as outlined in the transparency and accountability section of this recommendation.

2. Team creation: Create internal municipal teams to coordinate with local communities and stakeholders during the innovation cycle.

3. Exploration Stage: Use innovation teams to observe and interview citizens and stakeholders in order to understand their motivations, frustrations and wishes. This step should uncover insights that inform the next step of the process.

4. Ideation and Prototyping Workshop (conducted in virtual or in public space): The insights gathered in previous stages

are explored in this workshop, with the goal of shaping them into prototype projects for the city. This will require an independent facilitator from outside the municipality, without connection to the government or residents' groups.

5. Testing and Learning Stage/Workshops (virtual or in public space): The ideas that are determined to be sufficiently well-developed (and aligned with the municipality's goals) will be prototyped for quick testing to determine feasibility and refine program models.

6. Viability and Feasibility Check: Once these solutions are validated, the teams develop a plan to maximize their impact. Indicators could include a cost-benefit analysis, as well as an assessment of the likelihood that these innovations result in an increase in residents' trust and quality of life.

STEP 2: Refine and implement the most promising ideas generated through the innovation platform. Accountable team members include the TAI team and Innovathens.¹³ Specific actions include:

a) Connect with incubators and innovation labs and construct international networks to scale social innovation taking place at organizations such as Impact Hub Athens¹⁴ and Ashoka.¹⁵

b) Provide coaches or mentoring.

c) Furnish assistance and guidance to seek outside funding to encourage, cultivate and nurture innovation.

Boosting Careers, Care and Employment

During the Transatlantic Policy Lab in Athens, citizens expressed a profound lack of trust and disappointment in government and bureaucratic regulations. Unemployment (especially among youth) has hit record highs, and officials working in education are concerned about dropout rates and student motivation. Severe reductions in public funding for health, social services and education, as well as cuts in the salaries of public servants, including physicians, have put immense strain on public services and average Athenians. Compounding these problems is the recent influx of refugees, which has placed additional pressure on already distressed neighborhoods. Given the challenges weighing on economic development in the 3rd and 6th districts, the economy group designed its recommendations to intersect with improving outcomes in the domains of health, education and newcomers.

Despite the challenges detailed above, the lab cohort was struck by the remarkable initiative and resilience of the people and organizations with whom we met. The economy group has developed its recommendations to boost resilience through initiatives to support trust, education, health and employment. Our recommendations focus on two levels of impact: citywide initiatives and strategies aimed specifically at the 3rd and 6th districts. At the city level, the lab recommends enhancing economic opportunity by supporting individual access to legitimate "extra work" opportunities and leveraging Athens' comparative advantage in the medical tourism sector. At the neighborhood level, the lab recommends strategies to engage youth and develop anchor institution-community relations.

➔ Recommendation 3

Pilot the "MyAthens" Project to Enhance Education, Careers and Citizenship provides schoolchildren from the ages of 11 to 13 with an inspiring learning environment and a 'miniature Athens' to spur knowledge of civic institutions and their community.

➔ Recommendation 4

Engage the University as an Actor in Community Development to Foster Community Connections and Business puts forth a strategy to improve relations between anchor institutions and the 6th district.

Recommendation 1: Develop a Platform for Extra Work

Because Athenians' primary jobs often do not provide enough income, they seek additional hours of employment. The depth of need for additional work across Greece is unmeasured and not well understood. Anecdotal evidence suggests that thousands of citizens are finding extra opportunities in retail, home care, tourism, advertising, driving and countless other professions. For example, a part-time teacher contracted for 20 hours a week may sell his or her spare hours as an *apoklistiki* (personal caregiver) to families with a relative requiring care for a few days a week. There are also Athenians who are unable to obtain a full-time job and seek short-term hours of employment. Some residents need flexible work hours to accommodate an unpredictable medical condition, family commitments or the demands of a home business.

Develop a Platform for Extra Work proposes that the Municipality of Athens support an online platform to make the labor market more efficient, thereby increasing individual wealth and contributing to GDP growth. A successful pilot program in Athens could be replicated in other municipalities in Greece. Athens is particularly well-suited to serve as a pilot site: there is a high density of urban tourism, the tourism sector has significant need for extra workers and unemployment is higher than the European regional average.

The municipality must act as a driver for this proposal, as it already maintains relationships with the diverse array of

➔ Recommendation 1

Develop a Platform for Extra Work centers on how the municipality can help make the local labor market more efficient by setting up a digital platform where Athenians can seek informal employment.

➔ Recommendation 2

Expand Medical Tourism to Boost the Athens Economy outlines a strategy to attract diaspora Greeks, underinsured Americans and others seeking low-cost health services to Athens as medical tourists.

Innovation Platform Timeline



employers, umbrella bodies and international players needed to ensure a successful launch.

Introduction

Currently, access to extra work in Greece depends on personal contacts. The work-seeker must find an employer that needs someone at the times the individual can be available, in the right location and with the right skills. These informal arrangements are limiting, and there is little chance to move into higher-paid or more stable extra work. Employers tend to maintain a small pool of personal contacts from which they can draw as needed.

Greece's bureaucracy imposes a significant burden. For example, to hire someone to clean a house for three hours, an employer must visit a post office or bank, specify the type of work and pay-rate, pay for the work and social security contributions and then collect an *Ergosimo* form. This form is given to the worker, who returns to the post office or bank to receive their pay and ensure that their social security is credited. These steps become onerous if the work-seeker is unable to commit to regular time slots of work.

Unfortunately, Greece lacks labor market data on informal or odd hours worked. However, research by the World Bank finds that 75 percent of shadow (black) economy activity in European countries is made up of odd hours of employment.¹ If 40 percent² of economic activity in the Municipality of Athens takes place within the shadow economy and if such work were brought into the mainstream, there could be up to 30 percent growth in official GDP.

Legitimizing this type of work aligns with Mayor Yiorgos Kaminis' commitment to helping citizens build self-confidence and dignity.³ A citywide market for extra work would give both individuals and businesses more choices.

If the municipality or other public bodies lack a strategy for bringing irregular work into the mainstream economy, the sharing economy is likely to make further inroads. For example, Uber, the mobile phone-based application allowing almost any car owner to compete with regulated taxi drivers, has already launched in Athens.⁴ Companies such as Uber have significant funds set aside to undercut local regulations and fight regulatory battles around the world.⁵ Uber has led the way in bringing drivers and customers together in its city markets, but once it is established as an essential tool for citizens, it cuts driver pay rates to increase its profitability.⁶ This creates competitive pressure that can force other platforms providing extra work to behave in a similar manner.⁷ Each of these platforms is fighting for dominance in one specific type of work (taxis in the case of Uber) rather than creating opportunities for workers to progress to better paid or more stable forms of work. This too-narrow focus can

lead to aggressive moves between platforms that do little to enhance the quality of the municipality's labor market.⁸

In response, the municipality should create its own market for extra work. This market must establish the groundwork that makes it more attractive to hire, for example, an interpreter for a few hours and pay this person legitimately, rather than under the table. This is only possible via a specialized digital platform because of the complexity of the transactions involved.

The United Kingdom has already funded such a market. With modification for Greek law and language, this model would allow any Athenian to specify all types of work they are willing to do; their personal limits on period of notice, travel distance from home and other factors; and the hours they want to sell today, tomorrow or in the weeks ahead. For example, a buyer seeking "five carpet layers this afternoon" can immediately see who is qualified, available and willing to take on that particular work. Each worker would have an hourly rate based on their personal preferences and social security payments. The workers available at that time and on those terms can be booked in a few seconds.

The market platform tracks the reliability of each work-seeker, encouraging those with a proven track record to charge higher rates. It displays data that identifies new opportunities for each worker, for example suggesting training that would increase their earnings. It would also provide the municipality with highly detailed data on such activity. In the background of each booking, the platform would create an *Ergosimo*, charging the employer through a mechanism such as PayPal. It would file this (likely through paper printouts delivered manually to a central post office) and then generate a printout for the worker once an online timesheet has been accepted by the buyer and seller.

The feasibility of implementing this recommendation depends on a number of factors, including funding. Due to the economic crisis, costs associated with this online marketplace must be borne outside of the municipality. Startup costs could be divided into two parts: first, the municipality laying the groundwork for the launch of a "market"; and second, the operations and funding of the "market" after it launches. Greek law does not allow intermediaries to charge for services, so both strands of funding would have to come from philanthropic or NGO sources. Philanthropies and NGOs in Greece support the job market in many ways, but they appear to do little to help the growing number of citizens in need of extra work. It is possible that a pilot project would attract additional outside funders. Their incentive to act would be the mayor's commitment to the platform and more good-quality jobs. A successful launch in Athens would demonstrate a model that could be scaled to other municipalities in Greece.

International organizations have asked for increased labor market flexibility in Greece to improve access to employment. Possible legislation such as the 30-hour rule, which incentivizes employers to limit an employee's weekly hours but allows people to do extra work elsewhere without penalty, could be powerful drivers of employment and growth. This could be achieved by using Athens as a proof of concept for a market that could be replicated in other parts of Greece.

Key Actions

1. Quantify available demand: The new market needs transactions to start immediately. There will not be a shortage of citizens seeking extra work. One core challenge is to identify employers that can start booking workers through the market platform as soon as it launches. This can be done via organizations with which the city already maintains relationships. For example, members of the City of Athens Convention and Visitors Bureau (ACVB) may see value in a supply of high-quality workers to cover spikes in business. If they commit to using a new channel, sufficient demand might be created to jumpstart the market. It is estimated that the Athens market should have a minimum of 5 million euros in demand for workers committed during its first 12 months. This is merely an estimate of the actual amount required; more precise modeling is needed before the launch of the project.

2. Engage funders: This should target organizations already in communication with the municipality. Philanthropies, NGOs and EU funders could be given a proposal outlining the case for an Athens launch and its wider implications for Greece. The initial request to fund a pilot project produces a detailed business case for the municipality.

3. The market for extra work should be under local control. The controlling authority could be the municipality, one of its agencies, a local foundation or an international NGO. Crucially, the operating authority must be credible and viewed as a neutral body by all users of the market. Open source software from the United Kingdom can be supplied, but will need to be adapted for local needs in Greece, thereby creating opportunities for local technology companies. Precise business cases for parties that might be involved will become clear during the exploratory phase of work. A business case is dependent on the amount of activity in a market, and that cannot be known at this stage.

We recommend that the initial focus be on "market making"—determining whether Athens has sufficient demand for a healthy market. As outlined above, research will determine the timetable for launch and who has the most to gain from acting as market authority.

Lessons Learned and Conclusion

Other municipalities that have launched markets for extra

work have learned that it is important to secure demand from employers before launch. Without this step, the new market could be flooded with people needing work and insufficient demand from employers. Because employers are typically slower to adopt a new system, workers sometimes fail to receive bookings right away, thus leaving them convinced that the market will not work.

The solution is to ensure that a group of employers commits to buying the extra hours of Athenian workers in the market's first 12 months. This can be achieved by quantifying demand and persuading large employers — hotels, restaurants, hospitals or shops — to commit to booking extra workers.

It is also important to spread awareness of the new market. In our experience, this is most easily achieved by distributing posters and leaflets in places where the public interacts with government services, including support for job seekers. However, it was not clear during the lab's time in the municipality if this approach would work. Allowing charities and NGOs working on employment to refer their clients to the market may be a better option.

During the lab in Athens, experts observed that the market is both inefficient and embedded in the shadow economy, illustrating the need for extra work. Creating a more efficient market in the mainstream economy would benefit employers and individuals wanting to use extra work as a pathway to better economic opportunities. This experiment must start in one city, and Athens has the density of employers in key sectors, such as urban tourism, that are lacking in the rest of the country.

Recommendation 2: Expand Medical Tourism to Boost the Athens Economy

Expand Medical Tourism to Boost the Athens Economy aims to develop medical tourism to serve diaspora Greeks, underinsured Americans and others seeking less expensive health services in a desirable European destination. Services could include general medical services; women's health services and in vitro fertilization (IVF); dental care, such as cosmetic surgery and implants; and retirement and residential tourism with assisted living and long-term care services. This initiative could also include six specialty service areas identified by the Athens Development and Destination Management Agency (ADDMA): medical, dental, wellness, spa, sport and culinary. While undertaking this economic development initiative, it is also imperative to make efficient and equitable use of existing public and private health care in Athens.

Introduction

Visits and interviews with the Praxis health clinic in the 6th district and interviews with the director of all regional health

clinics in Athens, Dr. Theofanopolus Alexandros, revealed a sharp reduction in funding and staffing for public health clinics, and refugees' and immigrants' health care needs going unmet. Since 2007, there have been significant cuts in public health care funding, cuts that have accelerated since 2010. Government health care spending has fallen 82 percent since 2010 and dropped to 5 percent of GDP in 2015, the lowest among EU member states. In 2015, hospital budgets were cut in half and doctors have either lost their jobs or had their salaries slashed. The public sector has been unable to hire additional health care professionals due to cuts to public programs.

Greece has an abundance of underemployed, highly skilled, well-trained medical professionals — general practitioners in internal medicine and obstetrics/gynecology, surgeons, specialists, dentists and support staff, such as nurses, medical technicians and dental hygienists. In 2013, Greece had the highest number of doctors per capita — 6.3 doctors per 1,000 people — of any OECD country.⁹ There are 17,000 dentists in Greece, 6,000 of whom work in Athens.

While the economic crisis caused many problems for Greece's health care industry, an opportunity exists to create a new economic sector in Athens by channeling global demand for medical and health tourism — people traveling to Greece for the purpose of obtaining health care. Medical tourists travel to another country for treatment that is less expensive or prohibited in the patient's home country. Health tourists, a broader category, may seek a range of preventive and health-conductive care. Wellness-related tourism, including visits to spas, is a related field.

After speaking with Alexis Galinos, director of ADDMA, the lab experts arranged follow-up meetings with leaders in the medical field such as Dr. Nikolaos Kouvelas and Dr. Constantine Constantinides to discuss Greece's underemployed, highly trained medical and dental professionals and their interest in developing medical tourism. Constantinides has proposed an Assisted Residential Tourism (ART) initiative to provide retirement housing and aging/long-term care services, a spectrum of care from "independent living" to what is known as "assisted living." ART would include real estate/property, engineering/architectural design for aging residents, technology, long-term care services, management of aging and language, food and culture services.¹⁰ Dr. Kouvelas envisions an initiative for medical tourism in dentistry that builds a high-quality program, employing dentists who are three-year post-doctoral practitioners in the United States or the European Union, ensuring high levels of certification and specialization and collaborating in groups, so all services are provided at each dentistry site.¹¹

Key Actions

1. ADDMA should research and survey the global medical tourism industry to see what types of services and recreational facilities are offered in which destinations, for which populations and at what cost. ADDMA should also assess health professional resources in Athens to see where relative strengths and excess capacities exist. ADDMA could also assess the certification and core competencies of existing health professionals to align them with international standards. ADDMA may also research possible public-private nonprofit partners in the Greek tourism industry and establish partnerships between medical and health professionals and professional organizations and providers of tourist services, such as airlines, hotels and food services.

There are many organizations that help potential patients explore the availability, cost and location of medical tourism services. For example, Meditour offers dental, medical, cosmetic and wellness services, along with vacations and medical and tourist support services, in a network of countries. MUrgency Medical Care offers services around the world, including in Greece and other European countries. Both offer secure patient portals, provide quotes for desired services, have partnerships to offer insurance and financing, and customize vacations and support services.

2. The mayor and the chief resilience officer (CRO) should initiate a conversation with the funders of the Transatlantic Policy Lab to explore the possibility of establishing a "sister city" relationship between Athens and Boston to support exchange and the development of medical tourism in Athens. The Sister Cities International organization, based in Alexandria, Virginia, could be instrumental in facilitating this exchange. This sister city relationship could spur collaboration between health departments in Boston and Athens, and between leaders in the business of health care and medical tourism in both cities. The exchange could focus on making efficient use of health services and supporting the development of medical tourism to create additional jobs in the health care and tourism industries.

3. The mayor, the CRO and ADDMA officials should explore the possibility of a partnership between medical centers and universities in Athens and similar institutions in Boston, such as Harvard Medical School and schools of public health at Brandeis University and Clark University. The Transatlantic Policy Lab should facilitate connections between health care leaders in Athens, such as Drs. Alexandros, Kouvelas and Constantinides, and Boston leaders in medical tourism and economic development. Leaders in Athens could build relationships with health experts from the Boston area, Greek-Americans and Greek medical professionals. U.S.-based community benefit programs, foundations or medical schools could support the exchange of experts between Athens and Boston.

4. Municipality of Athens: Request authority for the mayor and municipal government to consolidate and manage existing public health services at all levels of government. Request authority over all relevant resources, including funding, professional staff, equipment and buildings. Coordinate these services, reduce duplication and redundancies and work to make them more efficient. Establish connection and coordination with nonprofit health care provided by organizations such as Praksis, Doctors Without Borders and Mercy Corps. Work with medical tourism programs to obtain pro bono services for local immigrant and refugee populations.

Lessons Learned and Conclusion

Before the economic crisis, Greece had a high-quality health care system that ranked 14th overall among OECD countries. Health professionals were well-trained and credentialed.

However, cuts to public budgets shrank health care staffing in Athens, leaving highly trained health professionals unemployed or underemployed. This also resulted in a "brain drain" of medical professionals to other EU countries.

These cuts hit poor and immigrant and refugee groups, perpetuating social inequity. According to a recent review of women's health, "most migrant women have poorer maternal health outcomes than other women throughout the WHO European Region. Identified risk factors are linked not only to pregnancy, childbirth and the postpartum period, but also to events before conception. Ensuring universal access to care and providing culturally sensitive care will enhance access to and the quality of maternal health care and eventually improve migrant maternal health." Better coordination of existing public health care and private nonprofit programs will improve the overall health of Athens residents and that of immigrants in the 3rd and 6th districts, thereby enhancing social equity across all districts and social classes.

The development of health, medical and assisted living tourism could produce quality jobs for highly skilled health personnel and help stem the flight of medical professionals abroad. The development of the medical tourism industry could also have ripple effects that create additional jobs in the tourism industry. For example, India and Thailand have generated billions of dollars from medical tourism. The United States provides both inpatient medical care for medical tourists in U.S. hospitals and purchases medical services for Americans in countries outside of the United States as a way to cut employee health care costs. See the section on further reading at the end of this chapter for more information.

The consolidation of existing public health funding, staff, equipment and buildings and coordination/partnerships with private, nonprofit health care providers will improve service

delivery to native Athenians and refugee and immigrant populations alike, enhancing social equity.

Recommendation 3: Pilot the "MyAthens" Project to Enhance Education, Careers and Citizenship

Introduction

Youth in Greece have been particularly hard hit during the economic crisis. Almost 50 percent of those aged 15-29 are unemployed, more than three times the OECD average. Moreover, 27 percent are neither employed nor in education or training, a rate that is considerably higher than the OECD or EU average. Overall, Greece has the highest unemployment rate in both the OECD and EU. Dropout rates have been on the rise in Greece overall and in Athens in particular. These economic and educational challenges have led to a decline in social cohesion, equity, educational attainment and employment within the municipality.

With the award-winning educational initiative Me & MyCity,¹² pioneered in Finland, as a blueprint, Athens should launch an initiative in the 6th district aimed at enhancing basic education to drive entrepreneurship, economic development and social cohesion. *Pilot the MyAthens Project to Enhance Education, Careers and Citizenship* ("MyAthens" for short) will allow the municipality to tackle demotivation and a lack of civic knowledge among students aged 11-13. MyAthens is centered on providing a learning environment within a "miniature town," where students spend a day as employees, citizens and consumers, with the support of teachers, facilitators, and public and private organizations.

MyAthens is aimed at helping young students understand the importance of teamwork, their community, NGOs and the Municipality of Athens. It will provide students with the perspective necessary to better understand their lives and careers, and to increase trust and cooperation in the long term.

A miniature town could be set up at the newly refurbished Kipseli Market and in various schools in the 6th district. Each day would be dedicated to key aspects of city life, such as small enterprise development, pollution, agriculture and participation in civic life. Over time, MyAthens could adopt topics of interest tailored to the needs of specific districts and schools. This recommendation also considers addressing later stages of education and careers in subsequent versions of the initiative. Upon completion of a successful pilot, the MyAthens model could be deployed to other districts within the municipality.

Most importantly, MyAthens builds on existing initiatives in the municipality and the 6th district, specifically the Open Schools initiative and the Kipseli Market. Open Schools seeks to foster greater connection between schools and the

community in order to promote understanding, trust, tolerance of immigrants and cooperation. School administrative bodies, particularly the Municipality Committee of Education and the 6th District of Schools, are well placed to take the lead on this initiative, in partnership with business, NGOs and other local actors.

In order to be successful, MyAthens must bring together community actors to create a collective learning space and obtain sponsorship through businesses and organizations. Specific steps are outlined below, and examples of successful initiatives are included in the section on further reading at the end of this chapter.

Key Actions

1. Develop and define the concept, roles, materials and process. Using Me & MyCity as a model, plan a 6th district pilot in partnership with teachers, school administrators, students, business, NGOs and the community.
2. Once the concept, roles, materials and process have been defined, train teachers to participate in the process together with school administrators, specialists, NGOs and business people from the 6th district and beyond.
3. Develop five to 10 preparatory lessons for students that can be incorporated into their regular curriculum. During these lessons, students learn about the concept, their role and the process.
4. Allocation: Students create a job application during the preparatory phase that they will use to apply for jobs in the MyAthens miniature town. Jobs could be in sectors such as sales, finance, information and communications technology (ICT), health care, agriculture, or in media or culture. Teachers assign students to tasks and teams.
5. In the MyAthens miniature town, five to seven students form teams according to their roles. Examples include a retail team that sells products, a banking team that provides access to finance, a university team that carries out surveys, a journalism team that writes and edits stories, and a health team that checks up on other participants. Material support is provided at this stage of the process (Me & MyCity teams in Finland were given iPads).
6. Establish a virtual currency: Each team draws a virtual loan from the bank, which is used to pay salaries and as a means of exchange within the miniature town.
7. Connections: Teams in the miniature town are interconnected so that they interact with one another. For example, the banking team supplies loans, the ICT team provides digital support, the shop team sells products and the farm team “produces” food through a simulated process.
8. Political dimension: A city hall is established with

representatives from each team, and they vote on an initiative concerning service delivery, the environment or other issues. Students could also engage in a physical visit to city hall to provide their input and engage in a mock vote.

9. Facilitation: Teachers and facilitators trained to run MyAthens guide the process and the teams. The students themselves are the actors.

10. Feedback and reflection: Feedback is collected from students, teachers and other key actors.

11. With Athenian creativity, MyAthens can add additional activities and components and connect to the existing Open School initiative, Resilient Athens and its Innovation and Action platforms, and the *Engaging the University as an Actor in Community Development to Foster Community Connections and Business* and the *School Street Markets Pilot Project* recommendations (for more on the latter, see the placemaking section of this report).

12. Go Beyond MyAthens: Follow-up initiatives could build on the pilot project. For example, a “MyAthens in the World” for 15-year-olds could be established to focus on business and entrepreneurship in a globalized world. This initiative could also be considered for global environmental challenges. Other iterations include innovation competitions or engaging in entrepreneurial experience. See the section on further reading at the end of this chapter for a list of successful initiatives.

Lessons Learned and Conclusions

The MyAthens concept has been presented to Deputy Mayor Maria Iliopoulou; Eleni Megaloeconomou, a city councilor and president of the Municipality Committee of Education of the 6th district; and Eleni Zontirou, director of schools in the 6th district. All of them were enthusiastic about the program. If the idea gains traction, MyAthens should be piloted in the 6th district before expanding to other districts. This is also how the original Me & MyCity project was rolled out in Finland. Today, 75 percent of all 12-year-olds in Finland participate in Me & MyCity.

The 6th district is well-situated to serve as a pilot for MyAthens, as its schools have the most need. Any pilot must include school administrators, teachers, community actors, business, NGOs and universities. The *Engaging the University as an Actor in Community Development to Foster Community Connections and Business* initiative could connect to the MyAthens initiative by having university students develop and run the MyAthens process. In addition, the physical space of the newly refurbished Kipseli Market lends itself to the creation of the miniature town. This could be combined with fairs and other community activities and the *School Street Markets Pilot Project*.

To start, the municipality should invite leaders from the Me &

MyCity initiative to Finland to further explore the concept. If the municipality wishes to adopt the Me & MyCity model (including the brand and digital simulation software), negotiations would be necessary to obtain funds and sponsors. Me & MyCity is a commercial product of the Confederation of Finnish Industries, administered by their Economic Information Office (TAT),¹³ which is currently planning Me & MyCity’s expansion to Sweden and other parts of Europe. Although the digital simulation software is a key part of the Me & MyCity process, a MyAthens pilot could be developed and conducted without this software.

Recommendation 4: Engage the University as an Actor in Community Development

Introduction

The Athens University of Economics and Business (AUEB), located just a few blocks from Victoria Square, has the potential to play a critical role in the 6th district’s economic and social renaissance. The university provides quality education to its 11,000 students, with 1,800 undergraduate and 1,200 graduate students enrolling each year. However, despite its location at the heart of the district, the students, faculty and community do not seem connected. Leveraging the university to play a more active role in shaping the district’s future would be beneficial to the university, its students and area residents. Furthermore, engaging youth at the community level would benefit the entire city. Community service placement not only positively impacts academic performance, but also influences students’ decisions to pursue careers along those lines.¹⁴ Therefore, the city stands to benefit from a better prepared workforce that engages with the community. Lab participants briefly visited the AUEB to speak with students and were impressed by their eloquence, preparation and aspirations for the future. Although AUEB is a state university under the supervision of the Ministry of Education (outside the jurisdiction of the municipality), the municipality could play a transformational and convening role in engaging the university, residents and nonprofit organizations.

There are three levels of opportunity that can strengthen AUEB’s role in supporting economic development in the 6th district. First, university students and faculty could spur innovation at the local level through the Athens Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation (ACEin). As described on its website, ACEin puts significant effort into “supporting students who wish to turn their innovative entrepreneurial ideas or scientific research results into a sustainable business model and subsequent start-up company.”¹⁵ As AUEB students and researchers put their entrepreneurial skills to use, small community-based projects are emerging.

Second, the university could act as a research-action partner to create internship or research opportunities for AUEB students. The dynamic nature of the 6th district holds great

potential for students and faculty to engage in research projects and actively contribute to local organizations. In addition to the opportunities to learn skills and lay career foundations, universities and employers report that service activities help students develop “good citizenship,” a skill that is instrumental in the admissions process.¹⁶ The 6th district offers myriad opportunities to work with city and community-led programs and projects. Finally, AUEB could play an influential role in the 6th district’s future by using its purchasing power to benefit of the community.

Key Actions

Across all three levels, the municipality plays a convening role. These initiatives can move forward only if projects are jointly identified and the municipality acts as the facilitator. This convening begins by building goodwill between the municipality and the university. One way to do this is to bring leaders from the university into city planning sessions. Once a relationship with the university is strengthened, the following steps should be undertaken:

Initial steps to build and strengthen the relationship between university and the municipality:

1. Initiate a conversation between the municipality, ACEin and the Department of Student Affairs. Conversations must take place at the level of middle and upper management. The chief resilience officer could act as a facilitator.

This conversation would make it possible for local businesses and NGOs to create an inventory of activities where partnering with students makes sense. One successful example is Melissa, a center for migrant women in the 6th district that engages immigrant and refugee women from 45 different countries. Melissa works with migrant women to build small cooperative food businesses, leveraging members’ culinary skills. ACEin’s involvement would strengthen business prospects while supporting Melissa’s core mission of integration. Any partnership must respect the organization’s bottom-up approach.

There are other potential business opportunities related to energy efficiency, weatherization, renovation and construction. The municipality urgently needs to renovate many buildings to make them habitable. This could provide an opportunity to build weatherization businesses in the 6th district. The municipality stands at an important juncture, having committed to housing thousands of refugees. Buildings need renovation. New green technologies are available and job creation opportunities exist for both Athenians and immigrants.

2. Align university priorities with community engagement. For example, if the university is interested in supporting the green economy, a starting point would be to outline opportunities in

that sector. If ACEin would like to expand and is looking for physical space, partnering with Bios, Romantso or other co-working spaces in Athens could be beneficial.

This can happen by obtaining a better understanding of the internship and community service requirements set by the university and exploring the possibility of granting academic credit to students who work as interns or volunteers in local organizations. For example, Praksis is a sophisticated NGO that provides many services to low-income families, while promoting solidarity and volunteerism. Two Praksis programs would be an ideal fit for AUEB students. The first is the “work counseling and promotion to labor” program, which could provide volunteer opportunities for students interested in supporting job training programs for vulnerable populations. The second is the Praksis Business Coaching Center, which could benefit from the university’s expertise in entrepreneurship.

In addition, documenting successful entrepreneurial efforts in the community could serve as a learning experience for students and an inspiration for others starting similar endeavors. For instance, the economy group learned about the impressive incubation and cultural centers that Vasilis Haralambidis founded at Romantso in the 1st district of Athens. Lessons learned from that process could provide a template for entrepreneurs in the 6th district. Finally, building a body of research based on the evaluation of effective social interventions at the local level would be an important contribution for both the university and nonprofit organizations that are looking to improve their programming.

3. Engage students through student associations to participate in the resident Let’s Do It! Day, as proposed by the Trust, Accountability and Innovation team.

4. Encourage students and faculty to participate in the Innovation Platform (see the TAI team’s third key recommendation).

5. Meaningfully include university faculty and leadership in urban planning conversations.

6. Better understand the university procurement process. Explore whether it is possible to leverage resources that pass through the university by encouraging local purchasing and hiring. Explore ways in which AUEB’s purchasing power can be leveraged to benefit the 6th district. The complexity and centralized nature of the procurement system at AUEB makes it difficult to make substantial changes in the short term. A good start would focus on small pilot projects involving leaders that are committed to working with the municipality, nonprofit organizations and residents. This could include thinking about suppliers, cleaning services

and food service. In the long term, it could include the construction or refurbishment of some classrooms and buildings.

Lessons Learned and Conclusion

Recognizing the AUEB as an important actor in the local community and economic development could be a game changer for the 6th district. Joint initiatives between the university, the municipality and nonprofit organizations would benefit residents, students and researchers. As the municipality begins to play a convening role, it will be essential to respect stakeholders’ diverse perspectives and needs. Community engagement, volunteering and internships must be structured in a way that respects the bottom-up approach that organizations use.

It is worth noting that the Transatlantic Policy Lab’s approach for Boston also included several examples of engaging anchor institutions and universities.¹⁷ However, it is important to recognize that the higher education system in Greece is different than that in the United States. For example, the Municipality of Athens would have little leverage in implementing payment-in-lieu-of-tax. The municipality can, however, still play an important role by engaging AUEB in conversations about the present and future of the 6th district. Finally, engaging university students gives Athens the opportunity to leverage its youthful energy and future-oriented mindset to benefit the broader community.

Further Reading

Expand Medical Tourism to Boost the Athens Economy

Greece

Greece is a relative newcomer to the medical tourism market; during the last few years, many tourists have come to the country for rehabilitation and treatment. Compared with other European countries, Greece has lower prices and is a popular destination for tourists.

Thailand

Thailand has 37 hospitals accredited by the Joint Commission International. In 1994, the Thai Dental Council was established and has since formulated uniform competency requirements for dental practitioners. The Ministry of Public Health plays an important role in developing health care. Foreigners seeking treatment for everything from open-heart surgery to gender reassignment have made Thailand a popular destination for medical tourism, attracting an estimated 2.81 million patients in 2015.¹⁸ In 2013, medical tourists contributed as much as \$4.7 billion to Thailand’s economy, according to government statistics.¹⁹

India

Medical tourism is growing rapidly in India. An estimated 150,000 travel to India for reasonably priced health care procedures every year. Cosmetic surgery, bariatric surgery, kneecap replacements, liver transplants and cancer treatments are some of the most popular medical tourism procedures for foreigners.

United States

A 2008 McKinsey & Company report found that between 60,000 and 85,000 medical tourists travel to the United States each year to receive inpatient medical care.²⁰ The same study estimated that 750,000 American medical tourists traveled to other countries in 2007 (up from 500,000 in 2006).²¹ The availability of advanced medical technology and the sophisticated training of physicians are cited as driving motivators for growth in foreigners traveling to the United States for medical care, whereas the low cost of hospital stays and major or complex procedures at Western-accredited medical facilities abroad are cited as major motivators for Americans leaving the country for health care.

Several major medical centers and teaching hospitals (including those in Boston) offer international patient centers that cater to patients from foreign countries who seek medical treatment in the United States. Many of these organizations offer service coordinators to assist international patients with arrangements for medical care, accommodations, finances and transportation, including air ambulance services.

Conversely, some U.S. employers have begun to explore medical travel programs as a way to cut employee health care costs. Employers may offer incentives such as paying for air travel and waiving out-of-pocket expenses for care outside of the United States. For example, in January 2008, Hannaford, a supermarket chain based in Maine, began paying for employees to travel to Singapore for hip and knee replacements, including travel for the patient and a companion.²³ Medical travel packages can integrate with all types of health insurance, including limited benefit plans, preferred provider organizations and high-deductible health plans.²⁴ For example, in 2007, a subsidiary of BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina, Companion Global Healthcare, partnered with hospitals in Thailand, Singapore, Turkey, Ireland, Costa Rica and India.²⁵

Sister City Relationships

Athens, Greece has existing sister city relationships with Beijing, China; Bethlehem, Palestinian Territories; Los Angeles, California; Nicosia, Cyprus; and Ammochostos, Cyprus.

Boston, Massachusetts has existing sister city relationships with Melbourne, Australia; Hangzhou, China; Strasbourg, France; Sekondi-Takoradi, Ghana; Belfast, Northern Ireland; Padua, Italy; Kyoto, Japan; and Barcelona, Spain.

Pilot the “MyAthens” Project to Enhance Education, Careers and Citizenship

MyAthens

Me & MyCity²⁶ was started in Finland and originally targeted students aged 11-13.²⁷ The Me & MyCity module is based on society, working life and entrepreneurship. It offers students the opportunity to study private enterprise, their community, consumer behavior and various professions. The study module includes training for teachers, teaching materials and a visit to a MyCity learning environment. Teaching materials for 10 lessons explain basic information about private enterprise, the economy and society. The learning environment is a miniature town built with movable walls. It contains offices and public services. For one day, students work in a profession, earn a salary and act as consumers and members of their society.

Bad Idea Innovation Competition

Going beyond MyAthens, the “Bad Idea” competition²⁸ is an accredited enterprise and personal development program developed in Glasgow, Scotland. The competition is aimed at inspiring and motivating high school students (especially from disadvantaged backgrounds) while they are in school and is designed to inspire creativity, self-confidence and entrepreneurship. High school students submit ideas for innovative products and services online. The most imaginative are short-listed, and their creators are invited to workshops.

During the workshops, participants are mentored to develop their idea into a business model and learn other facets of entrepreneurialism. The “bad idea” methodology was developed to tackle obstacles that disadvantaged young people face in attempting to become self-employed. “Bad Idea” methodology can bring meaning and motivation to students, boost confidence and lead the way to alternative careers. The campaign has been piloted successfully, and is now spreading throughout Scotland and Europe. The “bad Idea” model offers a consultancy service to jump-start the initiative.

ProAcademy’s Entrepreneurship Program

ProAcademy,²⁹ developed at the University of Applied Sciences in Finland, transforms an educational curriculum into entrepreneurship training. In the ProAcademy model, students run a real company (a cooperative or another form of enterprise) as a team for two-and-a-half years while studying. Here, teachers become coaches and mentors, and the self-directed process is guided by the learning-by-doing principle. Students learn from mistakes within a safe environment, which prepares them for rougher seas. This program has become highly successful. If the business succeeds, the team can continue after graduation. Even if the business fails, students position themselves to launch careers as entrepreneurs. The university offers consultation to jump-start the ProAcademy platform in other countries.

Layout of a Miniature Town



Engage the University as an Actor in Community Development

University and Community Partnerships³⁰

Community wealth-building: Examples of ways in which anchor institutions such as hospitals and universities can be leveraged to generate support for community-based enterprise, even in economically struggling cities. For an example, see “Owning Your Own Job Is a Beautiful Thing: Community Wealth Building in Cleveland, Ohio.”³¹

“Colleges and Universities as Economic Anchors: Profiles of Promising Practices”:³² The goal of this report is to “. . . encourage institutions of higher education to begin to think about these economic anchor roles in a cohesive and coordinated manner, that is, as an integrated cluster of activities and practices, and not as piecemeal and separate phenomena.”

“Leveraging Colleges and Universities for Urban Economic Revitalization:³³ An Action Agenda”: This collaborative effort by the Initiative for a Competitive Inner City and CEOs for Cities explores the enormous role institutions of higher education play in the life and health of their respective cities.

Haley House Boston: A food cooperative that employs vulnerable populations. Over the past 60 years, it has grown from a soup kitchen to a cluster of businesses that includes a bakery-cafe, a pizza shop, a small farm and a cultural center. Haley House often partners with other nonprofits and large institutions to provide catering services, and for years it has worked with Boston College to sell cookies at the university and provide volunteer opportunities for students.³⁴

Catalyzing Change Through Public Space and Placemaking

The Transatlantic Policy Lab’s placemaking group focused on developing context-specific placemaking tactics to enhance social equity in Athens. The group’s recommendations are based on observations made in the 3rd and 6th districts. These districts are home to vibrant communities, yet they remain disconnected from the city at large. Deep-seated social and political tensions are visible, and cross-community engagement is low. Despite these challenges, the Municipality of Athens can improve the quality of life in the 3rd and 6th districts by empowering and engaging residents. Public space can play a crucial role in this process, serving as a crossroads for people, place and policies. Public space is where citizens exchange their views and the municipality’s collective culture, politics, economy and ecology come together.

The Municipality of Athens should undertake a sustained effort to activate participation, citizens’ views, knowledge and practices through public space. The placemaking group’s recommendations are informed by the following five general approaches to public space:

- ➔ **Assets:** Understand resources and available space. Mapping and cataloguing actions is critical to identifying where to begin implementing specific policy recommendations.
- ➔ **Capacity:** Connect communities and residents’ voices. Relations between ethnic groups and social and cultural capital should be part of community design and placemaking.
- ➔ **Design:** Improve infrastructure. Design interventions can help residents remain in their districts while improving living conditions. Activate the community to define infrastructure needs.
- ➔ **Impact:** Maintain regulation and services. This includes ideas on how to make public space more appealing and inviting. Maintaining a focus on impact helps to ensure a vibrant physical environment and citizens’ commitment to creating prosperous places.

➔ **Scope:** Use public space as a catalyst for change. The process of revitalizing space can help to bring residents together.

In a nutshell, inclusive placemaking seeks to use public space as a catalyst for change. When considering these recommendations, it is important to respect residents’ wishes and the local political environment. The recommendations put forth by the placemaking group are divided into three tiers. These tiers align with opportunities for short-term action, long-term action and pilot projects aimed at spurring further projects and activities in both the short and long term. The tiers and associated recommendations are as follows:

Support Clean, Green and Safe for Immediate Action
Launch the “We Are Athens” Initiative to beautify the 3rd and 6th districts and support the long-term maintenance of public space.

Introduce a “Neighborhood Fix-It” infrastructure campaign to improve public assets and build a multisector commitment to support infrastructure in the 3rd and 6th districts.

Support Planning and Asset Mapping
Implement a Participatory Community Asset Mapping Project to allow community stakeholders to identify existing assets and ways to generate people’s interaction with public space.

Create a Community Coalition to Support Capacity Building and Connect Initiatives with Local Social Capital to facilitate communication between districts and the municipality.

Support, Activate and Engage Through Pilot Projects
Establish “Athens Creates” to Breathe Art into Public Space, which proposes a creative placemaking program that promotes public life in the 3rd and 6th districts.

Develop a School Street Markets Pilot Project to Address Education, Food Justice, Social Equity and Labor Market Opportunity to spur action-based intercultural and cross-class learning experiences.

Tier 1: Support Clean, Green and Safe for Immediate Action

In many urban areas, cleaning, greening and securing public space is the first step to restoring long-term activation and use. Unlocking the potential of public space can spur stakeholder engagement and ideas for future creative placemaking projects. The following recommendations are proposed to make public space in the 3rd and 6th districts clean, green and safe:

Launch the “We Are Athens” Initiative

Introduction

The municipality’s ability to effect change in the 3rd and 6th districts is constrained by a lack of resources and the inability of citizens to actively participate in neighborhood revitalization. More vibrant physical environments, however, could help inspire residents and fuel their pride in the community where they live, work, learn and play. The We Are Athens initiative is intended to create such environments, maintaining and enhancing people’s sense of place in the 3rd and 6th districts.

We Are Athens seeks to develop a sense of community responsibility among residents, business and NGOs. Making use of public space can lead to overall improvements in both public and private space. Applying the logic of “broken windows theory”¹ to community restoration suggests that small nuisances, such as under-maintained properties or litter, gradually degrade social cohesion and make the community vulnerable to more pernicious issues, such as abandoned property, dumping, graffiti and, eventually, an increase in more serious crime.

In order to halt this progression, We Are Athens empowers residents, visitors, homeowners, renters, business owners and NGOs to define the quality of life in their communities and establish a culture that supports the long-term maintenance of public space. The primary goal of We Are Athens is to clean up and beautify at-risk sections of the 3rd and 6th districts. We Are Athens engages and empowers residents to work toward this goal while minimizing municipality expenditure and effort.

Key Actions

1. Establish an Adopt-A-Space program.^{2,3,4,5} A cornerstone of the We Are Athens initiative, the Adopt-A-Space program engages businesses and individuals to take stewardship of a well-defined public space. The Adopt-A-Space program addresses three major challenges facing public space. First, it reduces costs associated with maintenance. Second, it gives community stakeholders a chance to model good citizenship and encourage changes in behavior. Finally, it allows public space managers to focus on improving and developing public space. Ad hoc examples of this process can be witnessed in

Athens, where local hotels have taken responsibility for the public space surrounding Syntagma Square.

Implementation of the Adopt-A-Space Program should be designed and managed by a dedicated unit within the municipality (as was done with the anti-graffiti office within the cleaning services department). This allows the unit to research and address legal requirements, develop a standardized adoption agreement, accept and review applications, monitor and manage quality control, provide site-specific advisory and technical assistance, and offer other support as needed. Municipality-provided signage with the adopter’s name and logo could further promote stewardship. Implementation of an Adopt-A-Space program can instill pride that will be recognized by the municipality and district residents. The municipality plays a key role in initiating the program, while a volunteer-based, business association-based or NGO-based committee appointed by the municipality is responsible for its long-term management.

2. Implement efficient and cost-effective trash collection.⁶ While visiting the 3rd and 6th districts, experts from the lab noted an abundance of garbage in the streets. Acknowledging the municipality’s limited budget, a strategy should be developed to implement more efficient and cost-effective solutions for trash removal. This strategy could be implemented directly by the municipality or could become an obligatory component of request for proposals (RFP) for trash collection service providers. Cities around the world are using “smart garbage bins,” which allow for the monitoring of garbage levels and the optimization of collection routes based on bin capacity. Smart sensors reduce fuel consumption, maximize employee productivity and minimize the impacts associated with overflowing trash bins. Existing trash bins can easily be converted to smart bins with the addition of a low-cost sensor. A sophisticated software platform collects data from these sensors and optimizes trash pickup routes using proprietary algorithms. This helps to maintain cleanliness and encourages people to dispose of trash properly, while making the 3rd and 6th districts more appealing for business, residents and tourists.

3. Transform graffiti-marked areas into places for public information-sharing and collaborative expression.^{7,8,9} For some, the terms “graffiti” and “art” are synonymous. For others, they represent legal distinctions. Graffiti as a form of social expression can be found throughout the 3rd and 6th districts and can have either a positive or negative impact on the community. Cities that have embraced graffiti as an art form are able to harness its power to generate community dialogue, educational opportunities, and develop public art installations and tourism. A phenomenon observed in the 3rd and 6th districts is the existence of and respect for informational posters displayed in public space. These posters

serve as a means of communication and disseminate valuable information. It is telling that such posters are not destroyed or painted over with graffiti. Therefore, the solution to less graffiti may lie in replacing graffiti with information-sharing tools. Community-identified and designated neighborhood bulletin boards should be erected in place of graffiti-covered walls. The role of the municipality is to provide initial leadership and support before handing over responsibility for the project to an NGO or community-based organization.



“Ideas for Lisbon,” Museum of Design and Fashion (Lisbon, Portugal)

Currently, informational posters serve to disseminate information, but some sites could experiment with information flow in the opposite direction, as has been done with Candy Chang’s “Before I Die...” art installations,¹⁰ or with community engagement initiatives such as Lisbon’s “Ideas for Lisbon.”¹¹ Candy Chang has transformed walls into information collection spaces by using chalkboard paint to solicit responses to the unfinished sentence: “Before I die, I want to...”. In Lisbon, the city engaged citizens by asking them to share ideas for how to improve the city on a sticky note. More than 55,000 weather-resistant sticky notes with ideas were collected, read and used to create a mural on the facade of Lisbon’s Museum of Design and Fashion.

By empowering the community to identify space, choose themes, select artists and take ownership of the end result, the municipality can operate the program as an engagement and community-building tool. Furthermore, by using collaborative processes to develop themes for installations, the murals themselves foster dialogue between members of the community and others, including government, business and visitors. Residents can channel their community through the history or diversity of the neighborhood, the challenges they face or their hopes for the future. Like the Adopt-A-Space program, this initiative can be expanded to include annual celebrations, fundraising activities, cooperation with local schools, and opportunities to harness the power of creativity, expression and community empowerment.

Lessons Learned and Conclusion

We Are Athens seeks to address surface-level issues plaguing the 3rd and 6th districts and to halt the slippery slope of community degradation. The initiative allows the municipality to demonstrate that it is aware of the challenges that communities face and is able to demonstrate a concrete commitment to solving these challenges. The initiative also creates incentives to motivate individuals, businesses, organizations and government to work together to achieve demonstrable change. This can evolve into an upward spiral

of positive change through increased investment by new businesses, newly empowered residents, visitors and those who see opportunity in the 3rd and 6th districts.

Introduce A “Neighborhood Fix-It”¹² Infrastructure Campaign

Introduction

Neighborhood infrastructure is a critical element of urban quality of life. Well-maintained streets, curbs, sidewalks, lighting, transit stations, parks and facilities signal a sense of well-being and municipal responsiveness. However, in some districts of Athens, deteriorating infrastructure signals insecurity and neglect, which discourages investment by residents, the business community and nonprofit organizations. This cycle is evident in the 3rd and 6th districts, which shoulder a disproportionate share of failing assets and impacts stemming from the economic crisis.

Failing infrastructure presents local government with a conundrum. Physical assets are a core municipal resource and a drain on limited budgets. The volume of need, personnel and budgetary costs and layers of government bureaucracy often result in inaction. Although the 2004 Olympics spurred construction of a slate of new physical assets, there has been no new injection of public spending. Therefore, Athens must bring various sectors together to commit to revitalizing infrastructure.

To meet these needs, the Municipality of Athens should launch a Neighborhood Fix-It Week campaign in 2017 to jumpstart infrastructure improvements, leverage resources, tackle visible deterioration and support public investment. While not the answer to long-term infrastructure management, a Neighborhood Fix-It Week can be used to craft neighborhood infrastructure solutions in an era of fiscal austerity.

As part of the pilot, one block in the 3rd and 6th districts would undergo a week of extensive repairs and rehabilitation. Examples could include fixing potholes, curbs, sidewalks, lighting or other equipment in public areas. Selected blocks and accompanying improvements are chosen according to need, likelihood of on-time completion, ability to leverage existing resources, impact on neighborhood quality of life and economic growth, and strength of collaboration among community stakeholders. Outcomes are evaluated and successes become replicable models that can be expanded to other districts.

Key Actions

1. Advance a cross-sector approach to physical asset and infrastructure repair that is led by a Neighborhood Infrastructure Leadership Team (“the team”) consisting of NGOs, representatives from the municipality, schools, local businesses and philanthropic organizations. The team is tasked with identifying a series of implementable, innovative,

low-cost and high-visibility repairs before designing a coordinated stable of projects for which multisector resources can be used. Partners work hand-in-hand to manage and achieve designated goals. The team pools available resources from all sectors and navigates bureaucratic entanglements in order to achieve timely and cost-effective results. The municipality leverages its expertise in infrastructure, planning, regulation and management to jumpstart the projects before identifying a nonprofit partner to convene the team and co-lead implementation.

2. Target improvements, focus resources and document results. By designating target blocks within each district, Neighborhood Fix-It Weeks can achieve a critical mass and quantifiable results. Institutions of higher education can assist in identifying and assessing the condition of specific streets, evaluating results, and developing a user-friendly evaluation dashboard. In the United States, Neighborhoods In Bloom (NIB), a municipal neighborhood revitalization approach in Richmond, Virginia provides a model for how targeted, cross-sector strategies can lead to tangible results. One notable aspect of NIB's success was obtaining agreement from the City Council of Richmond to concentrate funding in specific neighborhoods, even if all districts were not included in the initial round of work. Evaluation tools monitored the course of restoration and emerged as a selling point as the program progressed.

3. Tell the story of municipal government response and neighborhood restoration. Develop a Neighborhood Fix-It Week documentary video series and communicate results to the media in order to draw attention to the program. This should include interviews with residents that convey the historic and cultural narrative of each district. Engage young professionals, local schools and neighborhood artists to produce the video. Filmmakers should also engage Neighborhood Fix-It teams. For example, the mayor of Seattle has conducted Fix-It walks through the city's 13 districts to talk with citizens about infrastructure needs and community solutions. These walks are reported on a city website and often draw media attention.¹⁴

4. Design and implement Neighborhood Fix-It Weeks as a placemaking practice that evolves into a long-term exploration of innovative capital improvement tools. If successful, Neighborhood Fix-It Weeks could be replicated through a series of short-term interventions. They may draw the attention of experts, practitioners, NGOs and donors who can strategize on a series of progressive infrastructure tools. For example, the European Investment Bank funds and scales up urban infrastructure projects. A number of U.S. states and cities have also developed funding mechanisms to supplement local resources devoted to infrastructure.¹⁵ Chicago has an infrastructure bank that can serve as a model for developing alternative financing for capital improvements.¹⁶

5. Create a Neighborhood Agency Resource Fair to align with Neighborhood Fix-It Weeks. The Resource Fair provides a forum where residents, businesses and municipal employees can work together to expedite often lengthy municipal processes. The fair connects agencies, business owners and the community to spur district-level improvements while building capacity and connectivity.

During each Neighborhood Fix-It Week, agencies station representatives in a public space near the targeted block to process cross-agency requests, sign up residents for municipal programs, canvass the neighborhood or simply provide consumer information. Agencies could hold intermittent volunteer activities, social events or children's activities to drive traffic and build awareness of the event. In order to be successful, the fair must bring together a diverse set of municipal agencies. For example, Baltimore's Greenmount East Public Safety Initiative was co-developed by the Baltimore Police Department, the City of Baltimore and the Baltimore Office of Emergency Management.¹⁷

Lessons Learned and Conclusion

Based on insight drawn from the best practices shared in the section on further reading, the following elements are necessary to implement Neighborhood Fix-It Weeks in Athens:

- a) Commitment from a leader or organization active across multiple sectors (e.g., a nonprofit, local government, business, community or philanthropy). Each brings a different skillset and constituencies to share tasks and create a common vision.
- b) Capacity of partners to access and combine resources to fund block-level improvements. No one sector can carry out the projects alone, but non-public entities can play an important role in financing Neighborhood Fix-It Weeks.
- c) Municipal agencies' ability to expedite permitting and review processes. Such access and expertise are critical to defining the work and getting the job done on time.
- d) Precise planning and high visibility, which are central to a well-organized, effective initiative that morphs into a success story. Impressive results will allow the pilot to serve as a model for other districts.
- e) Meaningful, user-friendly evaluation, which is central to recording successes, learning from experience and justifying the value of Neighborhood Fix-It Weeks.

There are several potential roadblocks to the implementation of Neighborhood Fix-It Weeks in Athens: achieving buy-in from team members, navigating complex policy processes and expediting regulation and bureaucracy. However, these challenges can be overcome. Community engagement should be hardwired into the design and execution of Neighborhood

Fix-It Weeks. The 3rd and 6th districts appear to have a growing number of talented, committed residents who are enthusiastic about the future of their neighborhoods. They can add credibility to results, offer support and air their concerns to the municipality. In addition, consistent messaging about the project as a time-limited, replicable best practice could induce philanthropies and NGOs to become involved.

Improvements to infrastructure in the 3rd and 6th districts are perhaps one of the most essential elements in restoring places of well-being and growth. Since many of these projects can be expensive and complex, Neighborhood Fix-It Weeks afford an opportunity for all sectors to join together and accomplish targeted progress. When successful, Neighborhood Fix-It Weeks create collaboration around infrastructure solutions and lead to additional investment from all sectors.

Tier 2: Support Planning and Asset Mapping

The next tier of recommendations builds on the short-term approach from the clean, green and safe activities by shifting the focus to long-term planning for public space reuse and investment. The recommendations below also prioritize engaging governmental and non-governmental stakeholders to play an active role in the planning process. Cross-sector engagement is critical because the challenges of distressed communities require integrated, multilayered policy approaches and a broader definition of "investment." A key challenge that the 3rd and 6th districts face is the apparent lack of capital investment in physical infrastructure from the public and private sectors and NGOs. These districts suffer from poorly coordinated and organized development and growth, which has resulted in public dissatisfaction with government. Aging infrastructure is crumbling because of a lack of funding, and many residents are unable to invest their own capital due to the lingering effects of the economic crisis.

However, these districts can more efficiently attract investment by focusing on how people navigate the streets and sidewalks and how citizens engage with public space. Potential investments range from volunteering to capital investment by businesses and individuals. Such activity in these areas might attract more investment and ultimately creates a more vibrant, safe and active community. The following strategies would support planning and asset mapping in the 3rd and 6th districts.

Implement a Participatory Community Asset Mapping Project

Introduction

The placemaking group recommends the development of a strategic roadmap using public engagement that will allow residents to reimagine and reinvent their districts. Empowering residents, community leaders and businesses to assess and creatively redefine their surroundings creates boundless opportunities for placemaking. Public involvement

is paramount to successfully creating public places, and is fundamental to addressing many of the challenges that face the 3rd and 6th districts.

Community asset mapping allows for stakeholders in the community to identify existing assets, areas in need of investment, and ways to foster interaction between people and public space. Easy-to-use tools and applications exist to encourage collaboration among government, NGOs, citizens and businesses. For example, by using a web-based mobile application such as SeeClickFix,¹⁸ a community asset mapping project can use location services to allow residents and businesses to identify these assets.

Community assets include well-functioning infrastructure that already exists and infrastructure in need of repair. Mapping these assets begins with collecting and geotagging data on such assets. An application such as SeeClickFix, if designed to capture community assets, could compile this information within three months. The data captured by citizen users are valuable in creating plans to carry out each placemaking strategy in this set of recommendations.

A community asset mapping project can serve short-term interests by identifying "hot spots" for intervention in the Tier One recommendations above. More importantly, the asset mapping provides a neutral baseline for long-term planning by documenting existing conditions and activating community. The tangible outcomes from asset mapping become key inputs into planning processes.

Key Actions

1. Initiate and launch a pilot community asset mapping project. The idea is to create a geofenced perimeter around the 3rd and 6th districts to assess the current status of community assets such as streets, sidewalks, parks and squares. The pilot project should provide an honest assessment of the current state of infrastructure while identifying projects that can be completed easily and quickly. In preparation, the municipality should identify existing public spaces and focus on how to connect these locations. Squares, parks, schools and other destinations should have clear pathways that connect to one another. The outcome of the project is citizen-generated data points that can be mapped, analyzed and compared at a later date.

Data points should be gathered using a quality assessment scoring system: 1=poor, 3=needs improvement, 5=good condition. Suggested data points include:

- Sidewalk repair
- Street repair
- Empty tree well
- Bench broken or unusable
- Street light dim or missing

- Public square improvement needed
- Excessive graffiti
- Public art or wall mural needed
- Historical site or location

Lessons Learned and Conclusion

The purpose of this exercise is to enable the public to initiate a conversation with local government that generates concrete action to address specific concerns and needs. This starts a conversation that may create a strong partnership in the community and empower residents to fill these improved public spaces with events, activities and attractions that support quality places. Key lessons learned for successfully implementing these activities include:

- Provide training: Clear and consistent communication with volunteers regarding the methodological process and scope of the activities is key to ensuring that data is consistently collected and input. This includes a common understanding of the rating system.
- Facilitate access to resources: Volunteers should have access to resources to physically complete the inventory, whether it is conducted using a paper-based or online system.
- Ensure an equitable approach: Rolling out a strategy that is equitable and completely covers neighborhoods is critically important to the community perception of the project. If resources are not available to cover an entire district, a schedule to gather data over time should ensure that the entire area is surveyed and communities are not left out.
- Prioritize inclusive recruiting: Because the mapping is a community project, efforts should be made to engage a diverse set of volunteers, including youth, migrants and other groups that may not typically participate in community activities. Developing an outreach strategy with a clear set of goals will also help build goodwill and generate excitement about the project.

Create a Community Coalition to Support Capacity Building and Connect Initiatives with Social Capital

Introduction

There is no a lack of ideas to spur temporary urbanism, events, exhibits and art installations. Successful, creative placemaking uses these ideas to bring people together and amplify a community's strengths and assets. In the 3rd and 6th districts, experts from the Transatlantic Policy Lab uncovered numerous instances in which individual actors have built community around ideas. Examples include the impromptu Latraac Skate Park and a now-abandoned community garden

in the 3rd district. The challenge is sustaining these ideas over time and connecting them to a larger and more cohesive narrative in each district. There is a crucial layer missing from these communities: unified, coordinated voices that connect groups and initiatives to the overstretched municipality.

Capacity building at the community level is critical to enabling communication between districts and the municipality. If business owners, residents and grassroots organizations can rally around specific needs, they can advocate for change as a collective, which sets priorities for the community and accelerates the municipality's response. A "middle layer" of community network organizations can reach across sectors to connect individual initiatives and create a central point of contact for various agencies. Building a collective voice of residents and business owners will result in stronger neighborhood identity. This recommendation lays out core principles to build capacity within the 3rd and 6th districts.

Key Actions

1. Form a community coalition that draws its representatives from a diverse array of neighborhood groups. The community coalition should be assigned specific areas of focus to support local events, branding, neighborhood diversity and public safety. Leaders from the municipality would be assigned as liaisons between the community and the municipality. The community coalition should include local institutions, faith-based organizations, neighborhood organizations, grassroots activists, residents and business owners. The community coalition helps connect and organize efforts in the district and outlines priorities for the community. It then becomes a conduit for communication and partnership between municipal agencies. The community coalition builds momentum through events, outreach and project development.

2. Develop beyond a community coalition. As the community coalition becomes more sophisticated through building partnerships and trust, it takes on more complex projects and becomes a conduit for the establishment of a formal neighborhood organization, with staff, in the 3rd and 6th districts. Municipal or private grants can fund the creation and support of such an organization. In the long term, the organization could take on complex projects, spearhead local development and adopt a dedicated approach to neighborhood organizing. The ultimate goal is for the community coalition and neighborhood organization to act as a unified voice that creates a pipeline for advocacy and communication between the municipality and the districts. The actions are underpinned by these guiding principles:

- a) Build trusting relationships. Identify core leaders to set positive examples and bring diverse partners into the

process. Identify existing community organizations or informal clusters of residents and business owners and include them in the process. The best-case scenario is the creation of a core group containing an anchor institution such as a school or university, a well-respected business owner, a grassroots leader, a representative from the municipality and urban planners or designers. Securing the commitment of the first two partners is the most difficult part of the process.

- b) Solidify the core team. Organize regular meetings to establish priorities and goals for the neighborhood. Subcommittees can be created to advance specific

priorities. Through this process, participants build trust in one other and the municipality. It is critical to ensure that the meetings are well-organized and productive. Encouraging transparency and shared accountability contributes to the idea that everyone is responsible for the project's success.

A unique "10 x 10 x 10"¹⁹ placemaking strategy could be devised to channel the experience and passion of existing residents. A potential structure would include identifying 10 community leaders or champions, 10 places and 10 unique events, as shown in the figure below.

The "10 x 10 x 10" Placemaking Strategy

	Process	Goal
<p>10</p> <p>Community Leaders or Champions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify 10 community leaders. • Empower leaders to engage directly with municipal officials on key elements of the planning process (i.e., through participation in an advisory committee or as informal ambassadors). • Start a communications and social media campaign to highlight the work of these community leaders and their contributions to public space. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create the conditions that allow citizens to step into the roles of community leadership, organizing and planning.
<p>10</p> <p>Places</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify 10 places through a collaborative, community-driven process. • Draw on community-based efforts to map assets and conduct neighborhood fix-its. • Use in-person or online tools to narrow the list of places. • Imagine the reuse of the 10 places as community-building spaces. Select diverse options for citizens to use and explore, either in an organized or spontaneous manner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify 10 places for building community in order to embed long-term planning and investment in each district.
<p>10</p> <p>Unique Events</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Activate" the 10 community leaders or champions and 10 places by launching a series of events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create small events for community ideas to take root. Even small events might one day become defining events for neighborhoods. • Focus on music, arts, sports and parades to spur neighborhood engagement.

The “10 x 10 x 10” strategy drives change in the physical environment by giving residents and businesses the tools to initiate change. Empowering 10 resident leaders to help identify 10 unique public places for planning 10 unique events will be a benchmark to build upon and spread to other communities to construct quality public spaces.

c) Create a culture of participation. Host a series of town hall meetings and events for residents and community members. Quarterly town halls can act as a communication mechanism that brings people together to engage with one another around issues or ideas being discussed in the community coalition. Events should range from informal to formal, analog to digital and small- to large-scale. The process used to implement these projects is as important as the project outcome. Community innovation events organized and led by the community coalition create a platform to identify local projects with strong capacity for growth and further investment. Community organizing workshops similar to those led by the Detroit Collaborative Design Center²⁰ or Strong City Baltimore²¹ provide a publicly accessible opportunity to become informed and generate ideas.

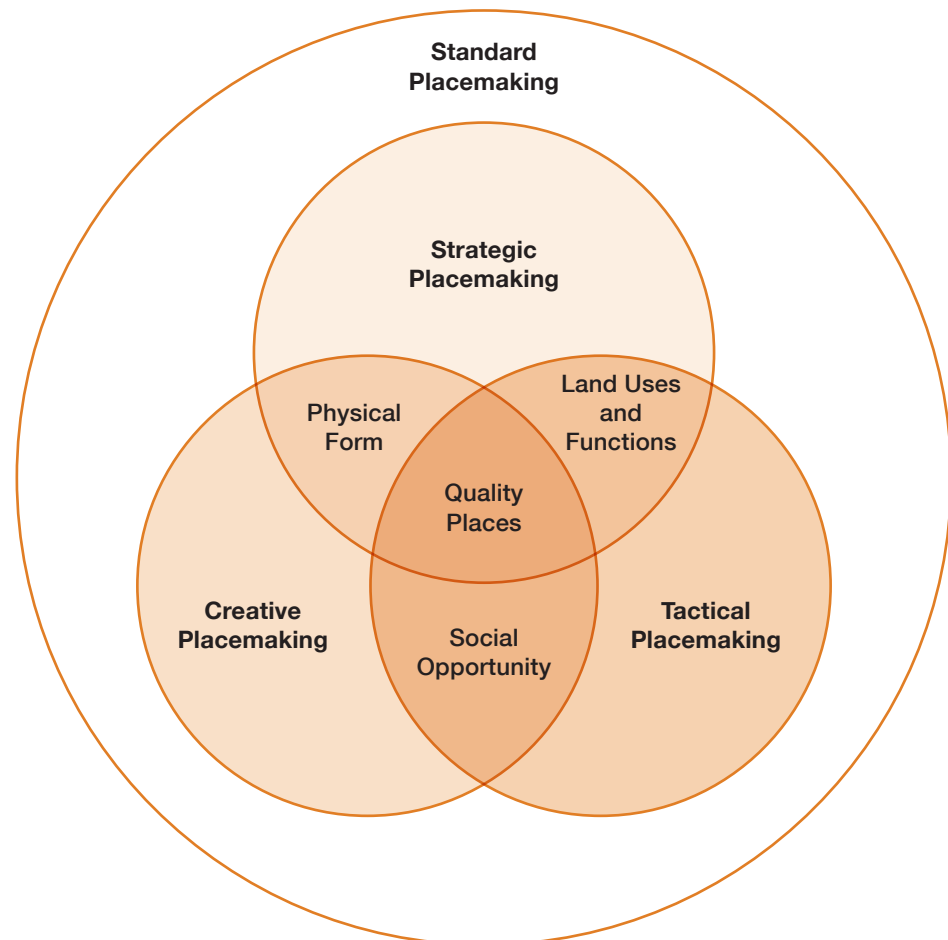
Lessons Learned and Conclusion

Social cohesion ensures the vitality and strength of neighborhoods. The creation of a neighborhood organization should not add unnecessary layers of bureaucracy, but should organize mechanisms to build capacity and support communication between the community and the municipality. Success is dependent on consistent and creative collaboration across a complex network of stakeholders, which poses significant challenges. This recommendation outlines steps to formalize networks of cohesion to benefit the municipality and the community it serves.

Tier 3: Support, Activate and Engage Through Pilot Projects

There is no single approach to devising a long-term strategy for placemaking in Athens. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the four types of placemaking that can be used to devise sustainable, place-based policies for the 3rd and 6th districts. It is recommended that each placemaking strategy and approach be consulted in the planning and implementation of place-based projects.

Four Types of Placemaking



Comparison of the Four Types of Placemaking

Problem	Process	Solution	Payoff
Standard Placemaking			
Communities are not effectively using public space to create vibrant and livable communities where people want to live, work and learn.	Creating places where residents want to live, work and learn. This includes a strong focus on renovating the physical environment. Standard placemaking is built through engagement targeting the public.	Broad public and stakeholder engagement in revitalizing, reusing and creating public space. Standard placemaking employs short- and long-term techniques rooted in social engagement and new urbanist design principles.	Generation of quality places and activities that create communities about which residents, businesses and visitors care deeply.
Strategic Placemaking			
Communities are not competitive in attracting and retaining talented workers.	Creating an environment focused on a specific market, industry or business sector. The process is designed to achieve a specific goal or outcome.	Revitalization that improves housing and transportation choices, and urban amenities to attract talented workers.	Gains in livability, population, diversity, jobs, income and educational attainment.
Creative Placemaking			
Cities, suburbs and small towns face structural changes and residential uprooting.	Partnering with the public, private and philanthropic sectors to emphasize the physical and social fabric of a community using arts and culture.	Revitalization through creative initiatives that animate places and spur economic development.	Gains in livability, population, diversity, jobs, income and educational attainment.
Tactical Placemaking			
Many physical improvements are expensive and policymakers are reluctant to commit resources.	Creating quality places through light, quick and implementable projects that capitalize on the creative energy of a community.	Testing various solutions using low-cost pilot projects to gauge effectiveness and public support.	Results visible to the public and policymakers, who are able to judge degree of support before committing additional resources.

The Transatlantic Policy Lab recommends focusing on identifying projects that fit each type of placemaking detailed above. Creating a balanced approach to building quality places would spur a movement that will sustain itself. Such a movement will demonstrate to the public that citizens and businesses are the leaders in a process that will drastically improve the livability and quality of life in the districts.

Establish “Athens Creates” to Breathe Art into Public Space

Introduction

The Municipality of Athens faces a litany of well-documented challenges, including unemployment, migration, population loss and widening socioeconomic divides. The lingering effects of the economic crisis, coupled with prolonged

austerity measures, are reflected in the urban space of Athens. Socioeconomic segregation is pronounced in the 3rd and 6th districts. This, coupled with a lack of vitality, care and maintenance of the public realm, discourages citizens from spending time in public spaces.

In order to harness the assets, creativity and resilience of the people living in these two districts, the Transatlantic Policy Lab proposes that the municipality establish a creative placemaking program called Athens Creates. Creative placemaking is defined as the intentional use of arts and culture to shape the physical, social and economic future of communities.²² The Athens Creates program will use art to promote public life in the 3rd and 6th districts.

The existing arts and culture scene in the 3rd and 6th districts should be supported and engaged to address challenges regarding social and physical space. Athens Creates features innovation and creativity at its core. Arts and culture is broadly defined and includes, but is not limited to, the following: visual arts, performing arts, music, media (television and film), culinary arts and design (architecture, interior design and graphic design). Arts and culture and design have the power to immediately improve public space and, in the long run, promote social cohesion.

Athens Creates has four primary objectives:

1. Identify and obtain pro bono architecture and design services
2. Reimagine public space by piloting or testing best practices
3. Promote community building through the use of arts and culture
4. Change the narrative surrounding the 3rd and 6th districts

Athens Creates is composed of a series of temporary placemaking interventions that are tactile and participatory in nature. Arts and culture (including architecture and design) feature prominently in these interventions. Given the municipality's limited budget and highly controlled regulatory environment, temporary interventions will produce the best results. Engaging creative talent such as artists, architects and designers at little or no cost is necessary given the municipality's limited resources. It is important to note that temporary placemaking interventions can be equally as effective as permanent projects, and they tend to cost less and require fewer regulatory hurdles. Temporary projects also allow for more innovation and creativity because there are fewer risks and barriers to success (e.g., cost, public opinion, and a lengthy licensing and permitting process). If residents dislike a temporary project, it disappears. If they enjoy the project, further interventions may follow. Athens

Creates is intended to complement the Neighborhood Fix-It infrastructure campaign recommendation. It will also complement the existing programs led by Imagine the City, which has activated public spaces through unique public art installations and exhibits.

Key Actions

1. Develop and implement an Athens Creates Public Life Forum. The forum is a one- or two-day event that jumpstarts the Athens Creates initiative. The forum is aimed at the 3rd and 6th districts and the goal is to promote collaboration and learning between each district. The forum considers a series of questions:

- How do you feel about the parks, streets and other public spaces in your community?
- Are there places where you can spend an hour? An afternoon? A day?
- Do you have ideas on how to improve public space?

The forum has three goals. First, it engages residents in conversation about public life and obtains their input on potential projects. Second, it identifies locations in the 3rd and 6th districts for temporary public space projects. Finally, the forum identifies and builds teams to work on these projects. Teams should be interdisciplinary and include residents, artists, architects, designers and officials from the municipality.

2. Identify pro bono architecture and design solutions. Athens has a large architecture and design community that should be leveraged to the fullest extent. While there may be challenges with implementing a pro bono system, there are advantages to pursuing this strategy to build connections among communities, architectural firms and the city. Another approach could be to engage larger European firms to participate or to partner with local firms. The success of Athens Creates will be defined by the rate at which architects and designers donate their pro bono services. Alternatively, philanthropic organizations could finance design services. This step is rooted in the concept of social impact design, which refers to the practice of design for the public good, especially in underserved communities.²³

A valuable model and resource for securing pro bono design services is Public Architecture. Public Architecture leverages the built environment for social good and connects nonprofits with pro bono architecture and design services.²⁴ As the largest pro bono service network within the architecture and design professions, Public Architecture challenges the design community to dedicate 1 percent or more of working hours to pro bono service. In addition, in 2015, as part of the Clinton Global Initiative, Public Architecture developed an initiative for cities and municipalities to access

their services. This could serve as a valuable resource for the municipality.

3. Consider a Build a Better Block²⁵ type program. Build a Better Block originated in 2010 as an alternative to traditional urban planning processes. It utilizes experimental architecture, tactical urbanism and rapid prototyping to implement change at the district level. The Build a Better Block is a demonstration project that, for example, creates temporary bicycle infrastructure, landscaping and cafe seating to illustrate active streets and places. The Build a Better Block project demonstrates that communities can actively engage in the build-out process and provide feedback in real time. The teams identified during the Athens Creates Public Life Forum serve as the basis for building the Build a Better Block project teams. The Build a Better Block model is an open source project that is free to reuse and build on.

4. Explore tactical preservation to overcome the often cumbersome and exorbitant financial resources needed to rehabilitate aging or historic buildings that have outgrown their intended use. These buildings, when left vacant or underutilized, render a distressed area susceptible to crime, which strains the physical fabric of the city. However, distressed buildings still hold potential for adaptive reuse, which in turn attracts vitality and contributes to neighborhood identity.

Tactical preservation allows for smaller investment opportunities, taking a single area within a building to adaptively reactivate the space. For example, this may involve transforming the grand lobby of a bank building or the auditorium of a school building. When only partial reoccupation of a building is considered, a specific set of questions must be addressed. These include, but are not limited to:

- How does a developer cover partial or entire insurance requirements?
- How might zoning be changed to accommodate new uses?
- What building codes might be changed to adaptively or partially reuse the building?
- How might construction loans be facilitated and secured?
- Can utilities be adapted to partial use of building space?
- How might other sections of partially reactivated buildings be mothballed and secured for potential future use?

5. Develop a Public Art Program. The objective of the Public Art Program is to develop and maintain a public collection of art and to create dynamic, vibrant communities through art and design. The Public Art Program should purchase, commission and install artworks for use in public sites

throughout Athens. The program would provide opportunities for residents to encounter art in parks, libraries, community centers, government offices, bridges and other public venues. The public art program should be piloted in the 3rd and 6th districts and later expanded to include the entire municipality. The Municipality of Athens and the chief resilience officer are the responsible project officers, and the program could be housed in the Ministry of Culture and Sports.

A key component of the Public Art Program is the MuralsAthens project. MuralsAthens would combat illegal graffiti while educating young people on how to paint with aerosols. MuralsAthens engages youth in Athens by teaching art technique, providing supplies and supporting a legal means to practice and perform their skill in a way that promotes respect for public and private property. The project taps into the interests of young people and uplifts them by providing opportunity, mentoring and hands-on experience. The graffiti-style murals should reflect the character, culture and history of the 3rd and 6th districts. The process of selecting mural sites should focus on areas with high levels of illegal graffiti that the Municipality of Athens identifies.

Lessons Learned and Conclusion

The Athens Creates placemaking program is practical and relatively low-cost. It is grounded in Athens' greatest assets: its people and creativity. Several of the architects, designers and artists that participated in the Transatlantic Policy Lab expressed a desire to stay connected with the project following the lab. The municipality should enlist their help in implementing these recommendations. Three out of the four components are based on well-established programs with best practices and case studies. The tactical preservation strategy is a newer concept with fewer examples, and there is an opportunity for the Municipality of Athens to become a world leader in this area. Examples of all four of these components are provided in the section on further reading.

Launch a School Street Markets Pilot Project to Address Education, Food Justice, Social Equity and Labor Market Opportunity

Introduction

Schools are vital centers for learning about different cultures, religions and worldviews, and they facilitate encounters between different socioeconomic groups. In a municipality suffering from high unemployment and elevated rates of child poverty, schools can play a crucial role in improving social equity and labor market innovation. Schools are the institutions where the impacts of poor living conditions manifest themselves, and where issues of food justice can be addressed. Food can serve as an anchor for action-

based, intercultural and cross-class learning experiences, especially when street markets are employed as a means to encourage exchange.

Street markets in other cities have demonstrated that public space can be used to address food justice, social equity, school education and labor market opportunity. Athens can replicate this model in the 3rd and 6th districts. A unique opportunity exists to leverage the municipality's rich food culture, historical urban fabric, intellectual and artistic professional culture, and innovative school policies to open school grounds to the community. The Transatlantic Policy Lab recommends the development of a School Street Market Pilot Project in four primary and high schools located in the 3rd and 6th districts. This project improves the well-being of children in the target districts and builds long-term skills through self-organized forms of learning.

Over the course of a year, the selected schools organize a street market in a public space adjacent to each school. The idea follows a design-build and do-it-yourself approach and can be supported by design and architecture schools. Teachers and students run the School Street Market Pilot Project as a mini-business. Students present their ideas on how to organize the market, which food to provide and whom to invite. By experimenting with their own families' food cultures, an integrative and inclusive process is launched.

The School Street Market Pilot Project works with public space to generate cross-policy action, requiring a joint effort between various departments within the municipality. This is aimed at stitching together a cohesive set of actions that combines educational opportunity, food justice, social equity and labor market recovery. Schools are chosen according to the mixed socioeconomic background of their students and teachers' ability to promote School Street Market Pilot Project activities.

Two approaches can be used: In the first instance, a funding scheme is provided for each school. Using this approach, the municipality works directly with donors and the philanthropic sector. The second approach involves self-organized efforts led by the school so that the acquisition of resources becomes part of the school curriculum. Market stalls can be set up by students and third parties (e.g., cooking schools, food justice NGOs, design-build and do-it-yourself architecture groups). The second approach allows students to come into contact with potential professions.

Key Actions

1. Launch a School Street Market Team to plan and advance the School Street Market Pilot Project. An interdisciplinary School Street Market Team is selected during a two-day workshop led by the mayor, chief resilience officer and city

councilors. Representatives from the public and private sectors advise and consult on the team's composition. Once launched, the School Street Market Team advocates for changes to regulation so that school buildings and adjacent or nearby public spaces can be used for up to four school street markets per year.

Municipal personnel should cooperate with deputy mayors working in the domains of education, food, and social and economic policy to boost cross-departmental understanding of public space. This allows the initiative to act as a vehicle to address concerns related to youth unemployment, child poverty, ethnic tension and subpar educational attainment. The School Street Market Team provides the external and internal stimulus to enhance the social productivity and redistributive features of public space.²⁶

It should be noted that the School Street Market Pilot Project pairs well with the MyAthens pilot contained in the economy chapter of this document. Both projects are integrated into the standard school curriculum and provide a virtual and physical collective space for addressing future labor market demands and opportunities. Both initiatives also foster learning and are grounded in municipal life and civic participation. Similar approaches have been used around the world to leverage placemaking as a learning tool (often referred to as educational urbanism). A potential avenue to combine MyAthens and the School Street Market Pilot Project would be to organize a workshop with Greek, Finnish and Austrian experts on the topic of schools. Eventually, these two pilots could be blended with the Open School Policy already being implemented by the municipality in the 3rd and 6th districts.

The responsible actors for the School Street Market Team and School Street Market Pilot Project are a combination of political and technical civil servants drawn from the municipal government, officials from the Greek Ministry of Education, district staff and external experts.

2. Use everyday objects (food) and everyday practices (a street market exchange) to situate lessons within place-based education. School street markets promote an understanding of public space as a crossroads for everyday routines related to learning, eating, sharing and earning a living through labor market integration. The physical, educational and social infrastructure of schools is reinforced through an add-on project to the Open School/Open Neighborhood Program run by the municipality. This creates the capacity to activate the productive potential of public spaces by mitigating tension between different groups living within the community. A potential model includes Montag Stiftungen,²⁷ a community-based learning project in Bonn, Germany. Responsible actors include school directors, teachers, students and the municipality's deputy mayor for education.

3. Involve local leaders and civic associations in developing employment prospects for students while they are in school. Focus on how young people can make a living in the 3rd and 6th districts. This step should focus on developing mentoring networks and professional skills gleaned from community assets identified using the Participatory Community Asset Mapping Project. Sample institutions could include professional associations, cooking schools, food justice NGOs, architectural offices versed in do-it-yourself and design-build techniques, and European professional organizations focusing on public space and urban cultures.

This genre of project-based, self-organized learning can be facilitated through the establishment of market stalls within the School Street Market Pilot Project. Specific steps include:

- Brainstorming and theming
- Project planning and the organization of resources
- Constructing and crafting each stall
- Organizing food delivery logistics
- Sharing food habits across cultures and communities

- Learning from professional contacts and networks invited to the event
- Evaluation of public intervention after the event
- Developing recommendations for follow-up markets. This final step should focus on creating an incentive structure for students to participate in the development and implementation of markets, for example by awarding school credit for hours volunteered.

The more voluntary hours that a local NGO can offer to the market, the more material support (public funds, donations from philanthropic associations) they will receive to advance the project. The main actors in this step are district residents, NGOs and activists, and the deputy mayor for civic society and municipal decentralization.



Lessons Learned and Conclusion

Based on insights drawn from the best practices shared in the section on further reading, the keys to success for the municipality include the following steps. First, the municipality should ensure that the School Street Market Pilot Project is linked to place-based learning and capacity building. Second, the municipality should develop the capacity to lift public spaces' productive potential through

School Street Market Pilot Project

Policy Field	Goals	Potential For Further Cooperation
 <p>Education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance participation and inclusion through collective action. This occurs through learning about different food cultures present in the districts. • Prepare and document thematic market stalls for the street market. Provides students and teachers the opportunity to learn practical skills and the mechanics of setting up a business or NGO. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open School/Open Neighborhood Program/ Municipality of Athens/vice mayor for children, lifelong learning and education. • The School Street Market Pilot Project can complement the "Schools Open to the Neighborhood Schools Open to Society" project run by the municipality. Potential collaboration could include cooking classes, language courses and open dialogue sessions. The municipality and other affiliated programs could set up street market stalls in the School Street Market Pilot Project.
 <p>Food Security</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure food justice and the provision of food to underserved populations. • Redistribute excess food from restaurants and markets to those living at or below the poverty line (particularly children and families). • Enhance food quality by providing information on Greek cuisine and cost-efficient ways of providing high-quality food to children and adolescents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local restaurants, food justice NGOs, cooking schools and the relevant municipal department responsible for food regulations and street markets. • Create contact points between the food service sector and children interested in learning about food and cooking. • Connect to food justice NGOs seeking to improve redistribution networks for unused food. • Food justice NGOs and cooking schools set up stalls during the street market.

School Street Market Pilot Project (continued)

Policy Field	Goals	Potential For Further Cooperation
 Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster interethnic, intergenerational and cross-class inclusion through the construction of a school street market. Use the market as a point of contact between newcomers and established residents. • Ensure that the street market offers low-cost food and that any profit is reinvested in strengthening the School Street Market Pilot Project. • Leverage the market to improve conditions for those affected by absolute, relative or anchored poverty. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Municipal Gallery of Athens, mentoring networks and creative support. • Invite alumni from local language schools to mentor students at schools in the 3rd and 6th districts. Arrange district- or square-based cross-school mentoring networks for youth seeking professional opportunities. • Mentoring networks set up a stall during the street market.
 Economy/ Jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use school street markets to aid young people in developing skills to access the local labor market. • Provide students with project management skills through the setup of market stalls or the organization of food provision chains. • Offer legal and creative resources where students can learn do-it-yourself practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal Gallery and local entrepreneurs, labor market agencies, European or international professional networks or do-it-yourself architecture collectives. • Offer workshops to revive existing labor markets or create connection to untapped labor markets (e.g., in the fields of education, food and gastronomy, planning and architecture) • Invite European planning offices and European planning schools as external experts with do-it-yourself routines to work in and via public spaces. Link these interventions to local do-it-yourself groups and activists in architecture and planning.

cross-sectoral policymaking. Third, the municipality should create a platform to redistribute and share resources (e.g., food). The municipality should also include elements that encourage positive learning experiences with do-it-yourself and design-build tactics to reactivate labor markets (providing an ideal link to the MyAthens recommendation). Finally, the municipality should seek to deepen trust among communities, authorities and between citizens by linking to the Building Trust, Accountability and Innovation chapter of this policy document.

The School Street Market Pilot Project faces several significant barriers to implementation. Existing bureaucratic restrictions and political tensions can create an incentive for certain actors to co-opt public space, thereby increasing political polarization and civic mistrust. The project would also put additional pressure on schools by creating the need for dedicated human resources.

The primary lesson provided by the School Street Market Pilot Project process is how material and educational interventions can be combined and ultimately interwoven into the complex

urban fabric of Athens. The inclusive and equitable features of both open schools and street markets connects typically fragmented policy fields in education, food policy, social well-being and labor market opportunity. Through the concrete and future-oriented School Street Market Pilot Project, public space can become a core component that generates learning and sharing between education, alumni networks and labor markets. Focus on food equity and social policy helps to overcome the perceived disconnect between different ethnic and socioeconomically divided communities within the 3rd and 6th districts.

Further Reading

Introduce A Neighborhood Fix-It Infrastructure Campaign

Additional Resources

Neighborhoods in Bloom,²⁸ City of Richmond, Virginia

An esteemed community revitalization model, NIB is a municipal strategy to attract self-sustaining private investment to distressed neighborhoods through targeted

housing interventions, infrastructure code enforcement and crime prevention strategies. In light of the limited success of existing restoration programs and a constrained budget, the mayor and city council directed federal and city funding into seven low-income neighborhoods in Richmond, Virginia. In addition, a local community development organization provided resources and development expertise. The program flourished from 1999-2004 and resulted in significant improvement to distressed neighborhoods while stimulating private markets in and near the targeted impact areas. A rigorous evaluation by the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond and the work of other researchers provide a window into the successes and failures of Neighborhoods in Bloom.²⁹

The implementation of NIB in Richmond included eight critical steps:

1. Establish a municipal government taskforce staffed by its department of community development.
2. Assess neighborhood conditions and potential, and develop a consistent data-driven criteria with which to identify target areas. In Richmond, results were clustered in four neighborhood typologies: *Redevelop* (neighborhoods with extensive problems), *Revitalize* (neighborhoods with signs of decline), *Stabilize* (neighborhoods with marginal decline), and *Protect* (neighborhoods with a threatened quality of life). Neighborhoods in Bloom focused on places with extensive problems or significant deterioration.
3. Engage and invest in neighborhood and community leaders as part of the solution from selection of neighborhoods to program implementation.
4. Market the program to elected officials and policymakers through careful inclusion and communication.
5. Identify and target funding sources through the commitment of public pass-through dollars, redirection of cross-agency city budgeting and exploration of non-public funding entities. In Richmond, housing and capital improvements were a high priority.
6. Identify impact areas to receive funding. In Richmond, all impact areas had high concentrations of poverty, dominant minority populations, extensive vacant and abandoned properties, a wide variety of housing types, and historic character.
7. Implement revitalization efforts through a combination of city-initiated programs and competitive funding to community-based organizations.
8. Evaluate results and adjust strategies as needed.

While the NIB strategy has evolved over time, outcomes

from 1999-2004 suggest that the targeted NIB strategy works. Property values increased, vacant properties were repurposed, historic properties were saved from demolition, streets beautified, and both the private and nonprofit sectors are interested in investing further in the neighborhoods.

Chicago Infrastructure Trust

The Chicago Infrastructure Trust³⁰ (CIT) was established in 2012 to ameliorate infrastructure financing and project delivery in a cash-strapped city with a growing gap between need and repair. The CIT provides an alternative funding mechanism and maintains a pipeline of projects to attract private investment, create jobs and ultimately reduce the city's operating overhead. The CIT supports restoration of existing infrastructure and development of new capital assets. It also manages project design and implementation, although ongoing operations may be ceded to private entities. Projects can be proposed either through requests for proposals issued by the city or proposals submitted by organizations or individuals. As in many places spearheading innovative infrastructure tools in constrained fiscal environments, implementation in Chicago has been challenging, but is moving forward. One notable design adaptation has been the redefinition of infrastructure to attract a more diverse pool of non-public investors.

Eligible CIT projects include both hard infrastructure (the physical systems) and soft infrastructure (economic, cultural, recreation and social projects) that support quality of life. For example, more than 60 city buildings in 34 wards are now receiving energy efficiency improvements and work will soon begin on more than 276,000 street, alley and park lights. Lenders are now accepting applications in a housing assistance program that supports down payment and closing costs for homebuyers. The CIT has also received a bid for CTA 4G, a communications infrastructure project to upgrade the wireless capacity of the city's subway system. As a new model, CIT has "learned as it goes," but shows on-the-ground results. Many of these projects also support the mayor's commitment to a sustainable city.

Additional References

Robert Puentes and Jennifer Thompson, "Banking on Infrastructure: Enhancing State Redevelopment Funds for Transportation" (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2012).³¹

Jen Kinney, "Inside 5 Tools Cities Can Use to Pay for Infrastructure."³²

National League of Cities, "Paying for Local Infrastructure in a New Era of Federalism: A State-By-State Analysis."³³

NGA Center for Best Practices, "Fixing It First: Targeting

Infrastructure Investments to Improve State Economies and Invigorate Existing Communities.”³⁴

Additional Information on Telling Neighborhood Stories: NPR’s StoryCorps.³⁵

Assessing Neighborhood Potential and Condition

Assessment of Neighborhood Potential

Neighborhood Capacity for Revitalization

- Active community groups
- Neighborhood/conservation/redevelopment plan
- CDC/Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority Investment
- Enterprise/empowerment/commercial area revitalization program

Market Factors

- Existing or planned investment
- Potential for employment
- Commercial activity or potential
- Existing or planned services
- Availability of land
- On major traffic corridor
- Proximity to public housing

Neighborhood Trends

- Is the neighborhood improving or declining?

Assessment of Neighborhood Condition

Condition of Structures

- Vacant – rehabilitate
- Vacant – demolish

Criminal Activity

- Cataloguing of criminal activity
- Hot spots

Demographics

- Poverty level
- Percent of owner-occupied housing

Source: G.G. John Accordino, July 2005

Create a Community Coalition to Support Capacity Building and Connect Initiatives with Social Capital

Examples of community coalition building include the Neighborhood Leaders Roundtable³⁶ in New Orleans and the Southwest Partnership³⁷ in the City of Baltimore, Maryland.

Studies or action plans outlining successful instances of community engagement include the “Building Neighborhoods

of Opportunity”³⁸ report released by the White House, NeighborWorks America,³⁹ and the New Orleans Neighborhood Participation Plan.⁴⁰

Examples of community organizing workshops include the Detroit Design Collaborative Neighborhood Engagement Workshop⁴¹ and the Strong City Baltimore Neighborhood Institute.⁴²

Additional examples detailing how to convene community members can be found on the Next City website.⁴³

Establish “Athens Creates” to Breathe Art into Public Space

Additional Resources

Gehl Institute, Public Life Diversity Toolkit, Version 2.044

As society becomes more polarized and cities grapple with economic inequality, public space remains a place where people with mixed backgrounds and incomes can come together. Diversity and serendipity are core to our cities’ economic competitiveness, civility and democracy. But the only tool planners and advocates have to discuss inequality and social mixing is census information based on where people live, not where they spend their time.

The Gehl Institute has prototyped a set of tools to identify where social mixing is happening, and the types of design and programming cues that invite these interactions. The goal is to create a new way of seeing the city that helps communities and civic leaders advocate for places that invite social mixing.

Gehl framed their objectives with three questions that they applied to test sites:

- Do people from different socioeconomic groups spend time in this place?
- Are people having spontaneous social encounters in this space? Do people recognize their neighbors and other “familiar strangers” in this place?
- If yes, what prompted these social interactions?

Public Architecture⁴⁵

Public Architecture is an early model in the contemporary social impact design movement. It offers a venue where architects and designers can collaborate for the public good.

Public Architecture provides the network and knowledge necessary to use the design of the built environment as a tool for social gain. Through their flagship program, 1+,⁴⁶ they connect nonprofits with pro bono design services. They are a knowledge broker, matchmaker and advocate for socially meaningful design.

In 2015, as part of the Clinton Global Initiative,⁴⁷ Public

Architecture developed an initiative for cities and municipalities to access their services. Public Architecture committed to supporting government initiatives through their 1+ online platform marketplace. With 1+, municipalities will be able to connect with top architecture and design firms providing pro bono services in order to address local social and environmental challenges in their communities. This program is geared toward underserved municipalities, and the platform will be open to projects that seek to positively influence or contribute to community, civic vitality and good policy.

Build a Better Block⁴⁸

Build a Better Block is an open source project that is free to reuse and build upon. It addresses four thematic areas:

- *Safety* (both real and perceived)—if an area feels unsafe, everything breaks down. Whether it be business, school or neighborhood revitalization, the key to changing a place is addressing its perceived safety.
- *Shared Access* focuses on looking at ways to bring more people into the area using various modes of transportation.
- *Stay Power* is defined by how people can be encouraged to visit the area, linger and invite friends. Stay Power often includes arts and culture (e.g. murals, music, etc.) and food (e.g. coffee shops, outside cafes, food trucks, etc.) as the mechanisms to attract people to a public space and encourage them to stay.
- *Amenities* that are inclusive and create invitations to accommodate anyone from babies to 80-year-olds and beyond. These groups tend to be indicators of a healthy environment that feels welcoming and attracts other groups.

8-80 Cities⁴⁹

8-80 Cities exists to create safe and happy cities that prioritize people’s well-being. They believe that if everything we do in our public spaces is great for an 8-year-old and an 80-year-old, then it will be great for all people. 8-80 Cities improves the quality of life for people in cities by bringing citizens together to enhance mobility and public space, so that together we can create more vibrant, healthy and equitable communities.

Additional Resources

Duncan McLaren and Julian Agyeman, *Sharing Cities: A Case Study for Truly Smart and Sustainable Cities* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2015).

Phil Wood and Charles Landry: *The Intercultural City: Planning for Diversity Advantage* (Milton Park: Taylor & Francis, 2008).

Catie Marron: *City Squares* (London: Harper Collins, 2016).

Launch a School Street Markets Pilot Project to Address Education, Food Justice, Social Equity and Labor Market Opportunity

Additional Resources

- Barcelona: International Public Markets Conference (Themes and Outcomes).⁵⁰
- Madrid: Vivero de Iniciativas Ciudadanas.⁵¹ Civic innovation, local DiY architecture and public space.
- Seattle: Neighborhood Matching Program.
- Frag Nebenan Austria.⁵²
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The Bertelsmann Foundation is an independent, nonpartisan and nonprofit think tank in Washington with a trans-Atlantic perspective on global challenges. We engage policymakers and thought leaders through innovative projects, research and debate to shape practical recommendations and policy solutions for pressing political, economic and social issues.

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The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) strengthens transatlantic cooperation on regional, national and global challenges and opportunities in the spirit of the Marshall Plan. GMF contributes research and analysis and convenes leaders on trans-Atlantic issues relevant to policymakers. GMF offers rising leaders opportunities to develop their skills and networks through trans-Atlantic exchange, and supports civil society in the Balkans and Black Sea regions by fostering democratic initiatives, rule of law and regional cooperation.



The Open Society Foundations work to build vibrant and tolerant democracies whose governments are accountable to their citizens. Working with local communities in more than 100 countries, the Open Society Foundations support justice and human rights, freedom of expression and access to public health and education.



100 Resilient Cities (100RC) - Pioneered by the Rockefeller Foundation, 100RC is dedicated to helping cities around the world become more resilient to the physical, social and economic challenges that are a growing part of the 21st century. 100RC supports the adoption and incorporation of a view of resilience that includes not just the shocks – earthquakes, fires, floods, etc. – but also the stresses that weaken the fabric of a city on a day to day or cyclical basis. By addressing both the shocks and the stresses, a city becomes more able to respond to adverse events, and is overall better able to deliver basic functions in both good times and bad, to all populations.



CITY OF ATHENS

The City of Athens is a unique European urban metropolis. With a history of more than 3,000 years, it also forms one of the densest urban areas in the European Union. The City of Athens is the most populous municipality in Greece, as it concerns a core area of the city center, hosting 664,000 inhabitants. The City of Athens' partnership with 100 Resilient Cities (100RC) focuses on social and economic resilience in a city affected by austerity measures and Greece's economic crisis, along with a clear eye toward potential shocks the city may be exposed to. Athens was selected as one of cities from around the world to join the 100RC Network, which supplies its member cities with tools, funding, technical expertise and other resources to build resilience to the challenges of the 21st century.



Impact Hub Athens is a community of professionals, social entrepreneurs, artists and creative minds that work, collaborate and innovate together, towards creating an ecosystem of sustainable initiatives with the purpose of social change. We are a part of the global network of 85 Impact Hubs that work together to share international expertise, knowledge and methodologies. At Impact Hub Athens we design and organize educational programs, host events, provide a space and tools to professionals and teams thereby empowering their entrepreneurial spirit and offering them access to new ideas, resources and networking opportunities. Impact Hub Athens is not another co-working space. It is a platform to inspire, create and develop ideas and innovative services with a positive social impact.

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