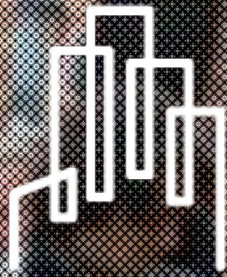


REFILL MAGAZINE #2

2017



refill

TEMPORARY USE • DYNAMICS FOR LIFE

BROKERING BETWEEN STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED IN TEMPORARY USE



European Union
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Development Fund





*A REFILL meeting in Ghent (Belgium).
Photo by Strategic Design Scenarios.*

*Cover Picture:
Action group is thankful for the temporary site of the Standaert in Ghent (Belgium).
Photo by Ledeberg doet het zelf.*

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BROKERING BETWEEN STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED IN TEMPORARY USE

By François Jégou, Strategic Design Scenarios

Temporary use seems to be simple: cities have unused places and buildings on the one hand and on the other hand there are plenty of interesting initiatives looking for accommodation. It is common sense to host them for a temporary period in the empty premises. Of course, as usual, the devil is in the details and

starting a practice of temporary use for a city means a lot of brokering activities between the various stakeholders involved. And this is the topic this second edition of the REFILL Thematic Magazine will focus on! Temporary use is not only an issue of owners and temporary users.

A CONSTELLATION OF VALUE

A stakeholder mapping exercise would reveal other important groups at stake: the residents and the merchants care for their area where the temporary use is likely to take place; urban planning department of the city and developers see it as a process of exper-

imentation anticipating redevelopment; cultural social and economic initiatives sees it as an accommodation solution to begin and a launch pad; architects and urban designers see potential professional involvement; use of empty urban spaces is an asset for all actors dealing with more sustainable and responsible development of the city.

How to better communicate within temporary use communities and enlarge them is a core issue for REFILL. From the very beginning of the REFILL network we noticed that we continuously spent time in explaining and re-explaining what



*REFILL preparation phase city visits in Ghent (Belgium).
Photo by Ariana Tabaku and Emma Tytgadt.*



temporary use means, what it is and what it is not, discussing the limits with other similar practices of multiple use of public buildings, of occasional use of public space or different forms of experimentation in redevelopment. We discussed divergent views to align to a common understanding within the consortium. We saw the needs of local coordinators to familiarize their colleagues in administration with temporary use, to explain the process to elected representatives, to show the its benefits to dubitative owners, to peace neighbours worried of a temporary use settling in the street, etc. We thought it would be so easy to have a short and easy access video that would present temporary use in a nutshell, a teaser tapping into benefits and challenges, a sort of “temporary use for dummies” that could be played in less than 5 minutes and that would save a lot of time to REFILL partner cities, to ULG members and to all potential URBACT partners at stake with the topic of temporary use.

So we develop with the REFILL consortium an animated video that says in 4 minutes with drawings the what, the why and the who of temporary use. The video is presented in this magazine and available online.

GIVING VISIBILITY AND EVIDENCES

In the first article, Emma Tytgadt investigates how to better communicate the benefits of temporary use for all these different stakeholders. Comparing practices of the city of Gh-

ent where she works with practices of Bremen and Nantes, she advocates for a pragmatic field approach: giving visibility to emerging local temporary use and pointing on foreign cases of good practices, taking opportunity of events organized by temporary users to invite civil servants and elected representatives, promoting demonstrators and calling for “icon projects” and “ambassadors” to convince of the benefits for all stakeholders. This early activation to raise awareness on temporary use in the city should be then backed-up as early as possible with a proper integrated communication strategy liaising with the neighbourhood around the temporary use, sharing the mutual benefits emerged from temporary use and managing - online and offline - the community of temporary users and owners involved. She also advocates in favour of evidence-based policy-making and acknowledges the difficulties to capture in appropriate indicators and hard data the effective benefits of temporary use.

MEDIATING BETWEEN THE STAKEHOLDERS

Bridging between all these different and potentially conflicting stakeholders requires first of all an action of mediation from the city administration. Anne de Feijter, presents the strategy of the cities of Amersfoort - where she works - and of the city of Ghent to appoint civil servants as brokers between citizens and the city administration. 5 City district

managers in Amersfoort and 15 Neighbourhood managers in Ghent are playing a key role of intermediaries for more than 2 decades, signalling to the administration what happen in each neighbourhood, translating to citizens what new projects or policies may mean for them, making “horizontal plans” integrating all different administrative silos for each neighbourhood. As such they work as essential brokers between stakeholders engaged in temporary use, listening to all parties, mediating in a creative way and facilitating negotiations, involving the local initiative into temporary use practices and reciprocally stimulating the participation of city administration into temporary users initiatives.

Looking at mediation with the decision making level, Oliver Hasemann and Daniel Schnier also insist on the importance of communication. Their article compares the situations and different strategies of Bremen, Amersfoort and Athens.

Promoting temporary use requires mechanisms of diffusion within the public administration (as the ZZZ transversal steering committee working as an ambassador in different department of the city administration), with policy makers (as in Athens where a new Vice Mayor position has been created with the task to liaise between grassroots initiatives and administration) and with private owners (as in Amersfoort where city administration opens and organises dialogue with real estate players). The lobby work to promote tempo-



rary use should be carefully oriented at particular decision-making targets according to the particular situation of the city.

MAKING MATCHES

The last articles of this magazine look at the way cities can foster the matchmaking between temporary users, owners of vacant properties, residents living around, and different cities departments potentially involved.

Marcis Rubenis, in a first article, analyses the role of broker between property owners and the temporary users through

the experience of Free Riga. Telling in details the twists and turns of Zunda's gardens case in Riga he shows the difficult and necessary role of intermediary that should translate respective expectations between owners and temporary users, build a good match based on mutual understanding, "fill the gap" between both parts without taking too much responsibilities, etc.; a tailor-made role that requires dedication and time from a city administration.

Finally, Nicholas Karachalis questions the potential of online social platforms to foster

temporary use initiative. The experience of the Athens' SynAthina platform created to support and synergize bottom-up citizen's initiatives in the city reveal a great potential on the one hand to map needs and potential synergies in terms of accommodation and on the other hand, to organize and coordinate the round of different temporary use of the same space. SynAthina's team is starting to explore the potentialities of online platforms with a first successful pilot run on a small kiosk in the centre of the city.

TEMPORARY USE FOR DUMMIES

During the preparation phase of REFILL, the city partners all acknowledged the importance of communicating around temporary use to disseminate both concepts and practices among all stakeholders (public authorities, property owners, temporary users, etc.).

They also acknowledged that temporary use processes and potential mutual benefits are not a trivial issue: temporary use mechanisms and interest in taking part for the different stakeholders need to be explained in a simple and efficient way.

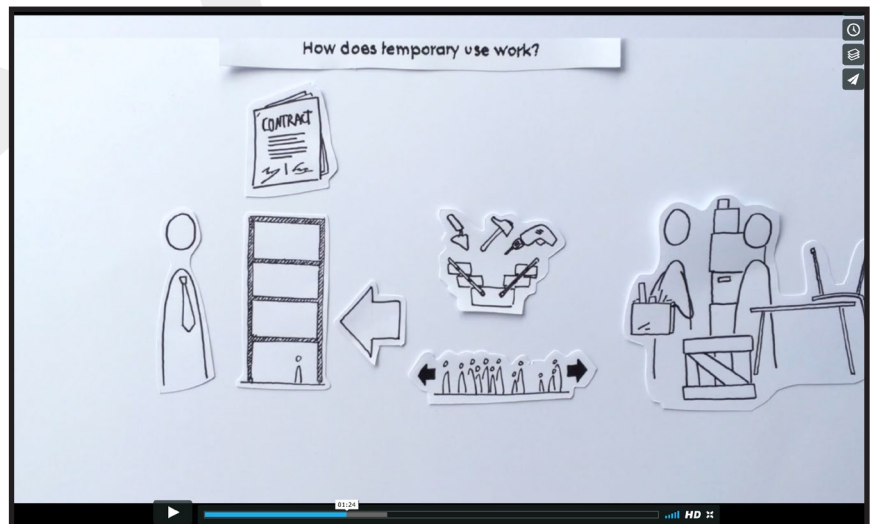
We therefore proposed, as a challenge, to make a short animation movie presenting temporary use as one of the outputs from REFILL. The purpose of this "Temporary Use for Dummies" 4-minute animation film was to enable partner cities and any other promoter of temporary use in these cities and beyond to disseminate the idea in a quick and straightforward way and to familiarize the

various local stakeholders with temporary use. It browses in a nutshell through the following questions:

- What are the **mains causes** of building vacancy?
- What are the **mechanisms** of temporary use?
- How did the **concept of temporary use emerge**?
- What are the **challenges** of temporary use?
- What are the **benefits** of temporary use?

You can watch it online and use it for your own communication and promotion purposes!

www.vimeo.com/183606641





**HOW DOES THE
CITY BETTER
COMMUNICATE
THE BENEFITS OF
TEMPORARY USE
TO THE
DIFFERENT
STAKEHOLDERS?**

*Stakeholders concerned by Temporary use in a
meeting, Bremen (Germany).
Photo by ZZZ.*

Communicating the benefits of temporary use

Explaining the complexity of temporary use and making it understandable to each stakeholder is a big challenge

By Emma Tytgadt, City of Ghent (Belgium)

Temporary use is a systematic mutual benefit process: it means “soft maintenance” of buildings for the owners, access to low rent spaces for users, a more liveable and dynamic neighbourhood for residents and merchants: an experimentation buffer for urban planning and a cultural, social and economic development booster for the city; work provision for architects and urban designers, an intensification of use of equipment in terms of sustainability. Explaining the complex story of temporary use and making it understandable to each stakeholder is a challenge. Partner cities answer this issue collecting examples of good practices (a database of cases from the *Zwischen Zeit Zentrale* in Bremen), showing demonstrators (visits of temporary use in Ghent and SAMOA conducting guided tours of temporary use on the Isle of Nantes).

THE PROOF OF THE PUDDING IS IN THE EATING

The best way of communicating about the benefits of a temporary use is to show evidence of these benefits. In a first step, it is showing what a temporary use is about. A city, which is pioneering with the first steps of temporary use, needs to create awareness of temporary use initiatives, and wants to

stimulate them, a good way of influencing both city government and policy, is showing foreign successful examples. Showing the evidence of the benefits of temporary use is also about monitoring the value that is created by temporary

Showing the evidence of the benefits of temporary use is also about monitoring the value that is created by temporary use.

use.

The role of the municipality could be to search for indicators on the impact of temporary use initiatives. Showing this evidence and therefore creating a monitoring instrument on the value of temporary use initiatives is not an easy job. How do we find and communicate ‘hard’ evidence of the benefits? It is difficult, but we think the role of the municipality is to define indicators, and collect data from the beginning (i.e. data as value real estate, users profiles, social return on investment). The role of the municipality could also be to manage the expectations of temporary use. Most of the cities need to take their first step in monitoring the benefits of temporary use initiatives.

In Ghent (Belgium) when we initiated our first two iconic projects of temporary use (DE SITE started in 2006 and DOK in 2011) foreign examples and best practices were showed in order to influence the city departments and the city policy. Our experiences let to more examples of temporary use initiatives existing in our city, cities from outside Ghent come to visit our examples in order to convince their municipality to initiate and stimulate temporary use. The Policy Participation Unit in Ghent, among other units, organises this site visits to show the different results of temporary use and let them connect with the temporary initiatives.

ULG members visiting temporary use KERK in GHENT Photo by Refill, ULG Emma Tytgadt

When a new temporary use project has its opening, it is important to invite both politicians and civil servants to the event, in order to experience the results and activities and to understand what is the temporary use about. This gives the new initiative the publicity and goodwill they need.

In Bremen (Germany) the ZZZ (*Zwischen Zeit Zentrale* – the agency responsible for temporary use) has a strong



social media activity. On their Facebook page¹ they share news and activities of different temporary use projects and on their webpage² they have a database of all temporary use projects running in the city of Bremen. ZZZ also organises in real life public events like the “WURST SAFARI”, which was an open day in the WURST CASE (ZZZ has their own office in a temporary use), where they invited the neighbourhood and people from all over the city to visit the ZZZ and their activities.

In Nantes, SAMOA (Société d'Aménagement de la Métropole Ouest Atlantique) operates on different levels to ensure a constant communication flow towards its stakeholders. The Urban planning Unit (under SAMOA) includes a space, called Hangar 32, which is the service for mediation and interpretation of the urban redevelopment project on the Isle of Nantes. People are invited to this place and get explained about the overall action and the sequence that is going to transform the city in the coming time. In the meanwhile, Hangar32 is also the place for memory, as it is a former port warehouse located on the docks of the old industrial port, now transformed in a leisure area.

The Cluster Quartier de la Creation (under SAMOA) has also a main tool for communication: a website³, which is the gateway to most of the announcements for the collaborative projects developed by the cluster and its members. Both sides work on creating ownership at an early stage by including neighbours, students, or creative professionals that can contribute to the definition of the calendar and the agenda as well as contributing to the output. In this way, SAMOA can count with a high engagement, by putting in the spot the natural local leaders that acts as trendsetters in the local ecosystem.

This overall strategy is key to build consensus and acceptance around temporary uses, as it helps to deliver the mes-

sage that an unexploited brownfield is a sunk cost unless integrated in the whole urban redevelopment project through the experimentation of the future uses of the city in the shape of a city lab. The Communication strategy is especially recent when it comes to the Cluster Quartier de la Creation, and it is still a challenge to build the social ties between the old neighbours and new dwellers of the Isle of Nantes.

AN INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The achievements of these cities show that a lot of energy goes to communica-

tion. Therefore a city should provide an integrated communication strategy. It is important to define different roles and responsibilities, i.e. the specific role of the municipality, the specific role of the initiative, ... and to create a common framework of action, and sub-divide different target groups.

Temporary use initiatives are embedded in a neighbourhood ...

In a city, everyone has neighbours. It's important to communicate about temporary use to the closest neighbours in order to get goodwill and acceptance of the running activities. Oliver Hasemann of the ZZZ says: “In many cases we ex-



Hangar 32, Ile de Nantes .
Nantes (France).
Photo by Ile de Nantes' websife.



plain the temporary initiatives that it is very important to address the neighbourhood from the beginning, that they need to care about for example gardeners in their little garden spots (who are the archetype of ignorant narrow minded citizens), because they are the first and loudest ones to complain about projects. We remark that it is becoming better and better, as the initiatives get aware and we as ZZZ and also the city get more and more experienced. But of course we have projects which are supposed to be an open space but in fact do not really address everybody (if you want to do something, you're invited but there are not many offers to the people)".

Temporary initiatives easily attract citizens in their own network to their place and programming. They often are highly known in social media and digital information and already have a big network.

Multiplying the benefits of owners ...

In Ghent, the first aim of using the concept of temporary use in empty municipal buildings was "to fight squatting". In the past, the Development Agency and the Department of Facility Management quickly searched for commercial or interim companies for temporary use, which actions often had no benefits in favour of a liveable neighbourhood. Thanks to experiencing with temporary use, more and more temporary initiatives with social benefits came, and we now opened the debate of searching more local initiatives in these empty municipal buildings.

In Bremen, Oliver Hasemann of the ZZZ says: "the steering group of the ZZZ, especially the board of economic growth is sometimes a good partner in speaking with owners, or the association of home owners, who is helping as well. It is a mixture of directly addressing the people, getting support by the city and

sometimes the owner comes to us. As we are connected to the city, public owners can be easier to address, but private owners are in many cases easier in the conditions you can get for the use". It's good to address the people with an existing idea or an example. In our latest project we try to bring a fab space into an industrial vacancy that is on the ground of a still working industry. And they are really interested in that content.

Temporary initiatives get informed ...

The last stakeholders in this story are the temporary initiatives (grassroots initiatives) themselves. In Ghent, through the fund of temporary use (financial support) we communicate about the needs of the neighbourhood and the importance of bringing a social return into the neighbourhood. We try to convince them to build up a strong participation with the neighbours.

We really would like to build a (digital) platform for the initiatives in order to share knowledge, information, issues and questions. We also could bring experiences from outside into this digital platform. We will now start a closed Facebook group.

IN A NUTSHELL

It is important to define the different roles and specify the responsibilities of each stakeholder in an integrated communication strategy (city government, initiatives, etc.).

The best way of influencing is to use ambassadors, who will influence their own network.

The best way of influencing is to use ambassadors, who will influence their own network.

For example, an owner could be convinced by another owner/investor

who has a successful example.

As a municipality, your role is to create awareness about temporary use (by mapping vacancy and mapping initiatives, collect good practices and show them) in order to stimulate temporary initiatives. Measuring the impact of temporary use initiatives and use it as an instrument is also a role of the municipality.

Insights for cities

1. Invite all stakeholders to a temporary use initiative, so people can feel and experience the benefits of temporary use
2. Show good practices (database, guided tours, examples from abroad) and tell stories is the best way to communicate about the benefits
3. Define the different roles and specify the responsibilities of each stakeholder in an integrated communication strategy (city government, initiatives, etc.)
4. Use ambassadors to communicate best practices and influence their own network, e.g. an investor with a good practice will influence other investors/owners
5. To measure the impact of temporary use initiatives in order to communicate 'hard' evidence of the benefits is lacking in many cities, taking this challenge and providing a measuring instrument could be very helpful
6. Bring temporary use initiatives together physically or digital so they can share knowledge, get informed and inspired

¹ www.de-de.facebook.com/ZwischenZeitZentrale-Bremen-108505829172071/

² www.zzz-bremen.de/projekte/

³ www.Creationduquartier.com





**WHAT ARE
THE MEDIATION
NEEDS AND
SKILLS BETWEEN
TEMPORARY USERS,
OWNERS, RESIDENTS
AND CITIES
THEMSELVES?**

BUILDING BRIDGES TO CROSS-OVER

Neighbourhood managers playing a brokerage role between stakeholders involved in temporary use

By Anne de Feijter, City of Amersfoort (Netherlands)

“Temporary use can be a strong mean in city development. As a city administration you need to realise that temporary use requires having civil servants with mediation skills that can play a brokerage role between citizens and local government.”



There are, in general, two models to choose from as a city, as it comes to organizing this brokerage role.

The cities of Bremen (Germany), Nantes (France) and Riga (Latvia) have an intermediary organisation that deals with the matchmaking process between temporary users and owners.

Amersfoort (Netherlands) and Ghent (Belgium) have civil servants within the city administration who function as brokers. This paper looks into this second model.

Amersfoort and the area-based approach The city district is the most recognisable area for citizens. As a citizen you are connected to your city district in the most direct way: it is the area in which your children play, you let your dog out, you do your groceries, you talk to your neighbours about having had nice holidays, etc. Citizens concern the most about the city district they live in and they are the most willing to participate in activities or projects when they concern their own neighbourhood.

Because of this reason, the municipality of Amersfoort (the Netherlands) has decided to take the area-based approach of working to a next level. The main goals are:

- Contributing to a more integrated way of working within the city administration (cross-over the silo's);
- A closer collaboration between citizens and city administration: give space to citizens to develop activities in their own neighbourhood (a letting go attitude) and involve citizens in projects and policy making activities of the city

administration itself (knowing what the neighbourhood needs).

Amersfoort has worked with city district managers ('wijkmanagers') since 1992. At the moment there are 5 city district managers covering 14 neighbourhoods in Amersfoort. They are civil servants that have the task to 'know what is going about' in a certain city district. This signalling function is a very general one. The city district manager (CDM) has a helicopter view of the city district, taking into account: social, safety, physical issues, etc.

Douwe Offringa, CDM in Amersfoort says: "I float above the city district and look at all things that happen within the domains in which our municipality has responsibilities." Depending on what a district needs a CDM focuses on particular activities. For example: when there is a high unemployment rate the focus will be developing economical activities in the district.

The role of the CDM is one of an intermediary between citizens, entrepreneurs and organisations in the city district on the one hand and the different departments within the city administration on the other hand. The CDM try to activate the policy makers in the different departments to go into the city district and work together with citizens and entrepreneurs to solve problems, empower people to make their ideas happen and facilitate initiatives.

This way of working fits in the general trend of changing the municipality into a more collaborative organisation within



the city, the social innovation trend. The new posture of the civil servant is to be more pro-active, to go out and meet the citizens in their contexts, to listen to them and come back to share with colleagues the information collected outside the municipal arena. The information is then being translated into policies and projects that match with the needs of citizens. In Amersfoort these civil servants are being called: "free range civil servants". CDM's have a role as ambassadors in this organisational shift.

In the temporary use of empty buildings a CDM sometimes plays a crucial role. He or she signals the need of a bottom-up initiative and makes sure the demand is being forwarded to the right department within the city administration. If necessary the CDM stays the contact person of the initiative until a clear 'match' has been made between a policy maker and the initiative.

Kruiskamp Onderneemt!¹ is a good example. This initiative is being formed by a group of social entrepreneurs that owns and exploits an old school building in the city district Kruiskamp. It has a multifunctional purpose: it accommodates starting entrepreneurs in exchange for activities in the neighbourhood, it hires out meeting rooms, it empowers inhabitants to organise their own social activities by offering coffee and asking a contribution to the project in return.

Kruiskamp Onderneemt! was in the process of looking for a building and making a healthy business case during two years. During this time, CDM Esther Brink was their contact person at the city adminis-

tration. She persisted in playing the role of intermediary, searching for solutions within the system. She made sure the initiative got a building and a 'good deal' at the end. She tells: "as a CDM you stand with one leg in the city administration and with the other outside. In this unique position you can ask for space, make space and give space to development."

The building of Kruiskamp Onderneemt!
Photo by Kruiskamp Onderneemt!

A NEXT LEVEL

In the future the role of the CDM in Amersfoort will change. In two pilots that are running in 2016, city district plans are being developed for two city districts. The process is being led by the CDM's and is designed as a cocreation between stakeholders in the city district and the city administration.

It started off with policy makers of different departments that went out to talk to citizens, interviewing them about their wishes, dreams and concerns for their city district. Also citizens could fill in a questionnaire at an online platform. There was a special process designed to hear the voice of those citizens that are normally not respond when an open invitation to participate is being published by the city administration. Policy makers went to schoolyards, teenager centres and community centres to talk to singles, immigrants and teenagers/youngsters. Some of the civil servants that were involved in this were a bit reserved in taking part at the beginning, because of the time it would take. When they did it anyway, they got a lot of energy of it. At the



"I float above the city district and look at all things that happen within the domains in which our municipality has responsibilities."



“With all the collected information the city district plans will be written and again citizens will be able to participate in this process, leaving all the space for them to come up with own activities to solve the top 5 problems in their neighbourhood.”

end they were convinced of the value of this process.

With all the collected information the city district plans will be written and again citizens will be able to participate in this process, leaving all the space for them to come up with own activities to solve the top 5 problems in their neighbourhood.

In these pilots the CDM has more authority within the city administration than before. In the future, if the pilots prove to be as successful as they now seem, the CDM's will be able to assign policy makers from the different departments to certain projects, initiatives or activities in the city districts.

NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGERS IN GHENT

In Ghent (Belgium), the municipality has 15 neighbourhood managers ('wijkregisseurs') covering the 25 city districts in the city. They work in a special department called the Policy Participation Unit, placed directly under the Mayor's office and the general management of the city administration. This unit also has 5 assisting staff members working on communication, new innovative methods of participation: citizens' budget, temporary use, etc.

The neighbourhood managers (NM) of Ghent already have the authority of which the city district managers of Amersfoort are waiting to get. They are the ears and eyes of the local government in the city and they have an important role in city development.

Their main roles are to:

- Know what is happening in the neighbourhood and to forward significant signals into the city administration;
- Inform the neighbourhood about the new projects and policy of the municipality and to translate these policy visions into the neighbourhood;
- Make a horizontal plan per neighbourhood in which all themes are being related to each other in an integrated way (i.e. a liveable neighbourhood means: to create cohesion, qualitative public infrastructure, efficient mobility, social services, etc.)
- Improve the participation of citizens and to empower citizens to initiate their own activities in the neighbour-

hood; and,

- Help the other departments in the city administration with participation and co-creation.

WORKING BEHIND THE SCENES

Nathalie Desmet is one of the 15 NM's of Ghent. She says: "you need to be strong and very confident to be a good NM. [...] This doesn't mean we want to get all the credits of our work. We stand at the back row, silently smiling, when citizens and the Mayor celebrate a new success in a neighbourhood. It rather has to do with our believing in the improbability of a neighbourhood and the way we work. You need to dare to make mistakes. In Ghent, we have a policy of trial and error. We want to experiment and we are allowed to try out new things. In this culture of a learning organisation we are allowed to fail or make mistakes, it's the best way to learn and to be innovative." Temporary use is one of the means that can be used by a NM to stimulate the development of a neighbourhood. The case of 'De Standaertsite' is a nice example. Ledeberg is a 19th century neighbourhood that is very dense populated and that has the well-known problems of an urban renewal area. The need of an accessible meeting place for all citizens was big in Ledeberg. A group of citizens was looking for a place to start a community centre themselves. When a large shop went broke, the citizens wanted to use this building for their plans and started a successful action group: 'Ledeberg does it itself!'².

Within the city administration the neighbourhood manager pleaded for buying the building to be able to support this initiative. There was no money and no policy. But the purchase of this building fitted into the plans of urban redevelopment that was running at that time in the neighbourhood ('Ledeberg leeft').

To create cohesion among the citizens, different projects were being coordinated by the city services. We didn't foresee to have a building to create a meeting place, a place of cohesion for the neighbourhood. It was not so easy to create or find space in this dense neighbourhood. This relatively big building that suddenly lost its function and became empty,





Het Nieuwe Land, Ghent (Belgium).
Photo by Strategic Design Scenarios.

formed a huge opportunity that we immediately grabbed with both hands. The NM and the citizens worked hard to convince the city council and to get the various departments involved to cooperate. When this succeeded and the initiative took off, the NM made sure the citizens got into contact with other important organisations in the neighbourhood to collaborate and strengthen each other. Now and then the NM reminds the initiators of the importance of being accessible for all kind of citizens in the neighbourhood. The city of Ghent takes their responsibility in attracting and reaching all different target groups in projects, activities and involve them into policy. The question is no longer how to in-

volve citizens into policy, but how the city could participate in bottom up initiatives. This requires a different role of the government: instead of a directorial role there is the need of a facilitator and the need of letting go.

BROKERAGE ROLE

Temporary use requires mediation between the stakeholders and trust building. This brokering activity is sometimes difficult. "Between local government and citizens' initiatives I feel often like a sandwich", says Nathalie. It requires also a form of "letting-go" from the city. Stefaan Vervaeke, also NM in Ghent, points out: "it's difficult for a city to let customers in the kitchen". As Els Lecompte, head of the

Policy Participation Unit claims: "We are aiming at civil servants 2.0: who don't think from inside, are flexible in their working hours and in their minds and function as real ambassadors of the city administration in the field". Finally, the Mayor of Ghent, Daniel Termont, says: "You cannot govern from the town hall. To have this kind of politics, you need to be together with the population".

Inhabitants in debate with the deputy Mayor about mobility in their neighbourhood Photo by City of Ghent

IN A NUTSHELL

To be able to use temporary use for city development purposes, you need civil servants that can build bridges between



Inhabitants in debate with the deputy Mayor about mobility in their neighbourhood in Ghent (Belgium). Photo by City of Ghent.

citizens at the one hand and elected representatives and city departments at the other. Playing the brokerage role requires people that are different than the old school civil servant behind a desk. You need to make these intermediaries important within the city administration, because they need full backup to stand with one leg in the city and with the other in the city administration.



“You cannot govern from the town hall. To have this kind of politics, you need to be together with the population”

¹ www.kruiskamponderneemt.socenti.nl

² www.ledebergdoethetzelf.be

INSIGHTS FOR CITIES

1. Decide which model is the best for your city to organize the matchmaking process between temporary users and owners: an intermediary organisation or to appoint civil servants within the city administration who function as brokers. If you have many empty buildings that are your own property, you could choose for civil servants within your organisation. If there are many empty buildings in ownership of others, you should consider an intermediary organisation.

2. In both models the persons in the brokerage role need the same skills:

- Be able to really listen, have a frank curiosity for people;
- Communicative: being able to talk to anyone, adaptable;
- Networking skills;
- Political sensitivity;

- Creative in thinking of solutions and ‘bending the rules’;
- Be able to act fast;
- Be able to let go, refrain from taking over;
- Moderating skills, leading processes;
- Mediation and negotiation skills;
- Creative in finding new financial sources;
- Convincing;
- Persistent;
- Decisive.

3. Select people to play this brokerage role that like to try things and see if they work. People that are not afraid to make mistakes and learn from them.

If you choose for civil servants who function as brokers - for example with the title “neighbourhood managers” – you should make them important within the city administration. Give them

authority and place them as close to the General director and the Mayor;

4. City district managers play an ambassador role in the general trend of changing the city administration into a more collaborative organisation within the city. For example: they can lead pilots that provide learning-on-the-job opportunities for policy makers to go out and talk to citizens and train the skills that are needed as a ‘free range’ civil servants. They will experience that talking to citizens to collect info on what goes around before making policies or plans takes time, but it is definitely worth it and fun!



JUST FOR A SECOND OF YOUR ATTENDANCE

Mediation of temporary use matters

By Oliver Hasemann & Daniel Schnier, ZZZ (Germany)

Temporary use is not an everyday business yet, it is, sometimes, more work as the “regular” way and many of the projects seem to be rather small. To provide temporary use with all the advantages, like improved participation of citizens, experimentation in vacant buildings before big investments, rising liveability because of cultural events, it needs a strong lobby. This lobby needs to address stakeholders directly and with the specific arguments for those interest groups as they benefit in different ways (e.g. reducing of running costs, test of possible new use of the vacancy, better image of empty places via new uses).

This lobby needs to address stakeholders directly and with the specific arguments for those interest groups as they benefit in different ways

The examples of the partner cities are quite different, but they got in common, that they create a situation, where the advantages of temporary use can be directly addressed towards policy makers.

This can be directly communicated by a mediator or an official servant/politician of the city or indirectly by a board of experts and servants that will communicate to their colleagues. Communication is the key for success in this matter, literally this mediators or experts need to talk to “everybody” and at the same time understand how temporary use work as its roots.

FOCUS

The level of support of temporary use is very much linked to the knowledge and understanding of this topic throughout the policy makers in politics, administration and economy. If they are convinced in the advantages of temporary use, all stakeholders handling temporary use in everyday business got a far better support. To achieve the aim of convincing these stakeholders it is necessary to identify the proper instruments and settings to do this and to identify the right persons to do it. So, the focus will be on the settings and if they address a specific target group (administration, politicians or economy) or if they address more or less all stakeholders. And it will be on the qualification of the people doing this lobby work.

JOURNEY

Bremen (Germany) - The communication between policy makers and those who are responsible for temporary use in Bremen is organised by a formal figure. The temporary use agency ZZZ meets monthly with representatives of the



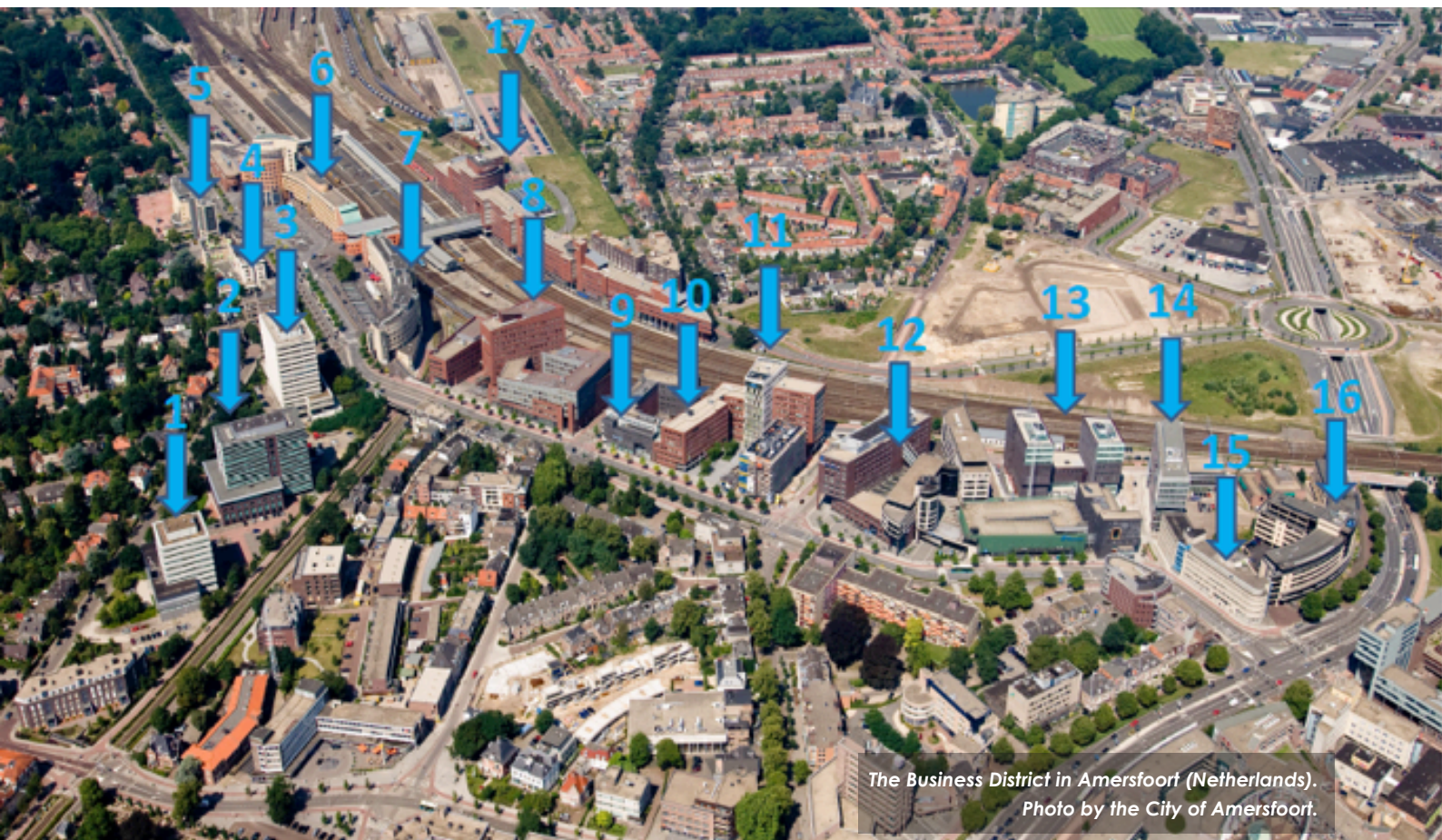
departments of economy, construction, finances and culture of the city of Bremen. This steering group discusses problems and projects of temporary use and also determine potential strategic aims or new projects. Furthermore they get a slight impression of the obstacles and problems of providing temporary use or the struggles of temporary users in everyday business and can report those experiences to other colleagues. The direct connection to the departments helps to get more attention for the whole potential and importance of temporary use in politics. Especially because the different participants in the steering group are working for at least four different departments they broaden the support to several political parties. This tool tightens the connection between policy makers and users and creates acceptance in politics.

Amersfoort (Netherlands) - While the steering group in Bremen mainly addresses administration and politics, the city of Amersfoort started a project called the Amersfoort Business District to address stakeholders from the economy and especially real estate owners from the train station district to make them sensitive for the topic of temporary use. The setting is rather formal, as the administration is doing the invitation and moderation,

and take place four times a year, the city invites to meetings where the participation is voluntary. As such, they open a dialogue between administration and economy about the development of the train station district. The place where the meetings take place and the topics within these meetings are changing. The meetings are addressing certain questions of the stakeholders and involve them directly. Concerning temporary use on the one hand those meetings are a good method to demonstrate which benefits and potential empty real estate has and how it could stimulate local entrepreneurship. On the other hand participants also learn about the limits of temporary use. Generally those meetings give awareness, reduce prejudices about temporary use and introduce contracts and similar instruments.

Meeting with the Vice Mayor for Civil Society Photo by the City of Athens

Athens (Greece) - The city of Athens established the positions of a Vice Mayor for Civil Society. He or she is responsible for citizen's requirements and basically works as an adjuster and consultant. Monetary support is non-existent. The administration is not able to fund pro-



The Business District in Amersfoort (Netherlands).
Photo by the City of Amersfoort.





jects so they provide the network and the expertise. It is an instrument to foster people's self-organisation and enables them to solve problems. As well it is an instrument that's creating linkages between administration and citizens and is avoiding self-organization beyond the legal framework (which would end in the squatting of places)

The easy access for everybody makes it to a useful tool to identify needs, wishes and the mood of the people and hence give them the opportunity to communicate all this towards an official platform. It is essential that the person

in charge of that position has the right personal acquirements, like being communicative, well connected, personally involved for example. The key is to connect people with each other and introduce them into the existing networks.

LESSONS LEARNED

The examples of the three different cities demonstrate a big variety. Within their arrangements they target certain players, in Bremen it is a co-operation with administration and policy, Amersfoort puts the focus on the economy while Athens is mainly addressing civil society. On the





Meeting with the Vice Mayor for Civil Society in Athens (Greece).
Photo by the City of Athens.

INSIGHTS FOR CITIES

other hand they have in common that they use comparable instruments for instance a person or group that is part of the administration as well as taking part in processes of temporary use.

They are addressing the target groups by their needs. The members of the steering group are communicating on the same professional level as they are not in dependent hierarchically structures, the Amersfoort Business District addresses the real estate owners interests and the Mayor for Civil Society is creating an atmosphere, where citizens feel free to talk about their problems and their needs.

- 1.** To promote temporary use, cities need to have the proper tools to communicate the advantages to the policy makers.
- 2.** In the best way they would have all of the three described tools (like Bremen for instance is lacking a proper connection within the real estate owners).
- 3.** The promotion of temporary use has to be connected to activity and is not a collector for good ideas.





**HOW CAN CITIES
FOSTER THE
MATCHMAKING
BETWEEN TEMPORARY
USERS, OWNERS OF
VACANT PROPERTIES,
RESIDENTS LIVING
AROUND AND
DIFFERENT CITY
DEPARTMENTS
POTENTIALLY
INVOLVED?**

“FREE RIGA”

SPACE OFFER DRIVEN BROKERING BETWEEN OWNERS AND INITIATIVES

By Marcis Rubenis, Free Riga (Latvia)

One truth about temporary use is that the owners of vacant spaces and temporary users in most of the cases will have difficulties in understanding each other. Owners tend to come from financially privileged backgrounds and think in terms of property development, a “language” alien to artists, culture organizers and hobbyists who are some of the likely temporary users. Therefore, explaining benefits and process of temporary use and making it understandable to each stakeholder is a challenge. Even more so, explaining is just the beginning of the real work - organizing agreement that fulfils the expectations of both sides and ensuring that the agreement is followed. Thus, in most cases enabling temporary use will need some degree of matchmaking and mediating between owners and temporary use initiatives to bridging the different needs and offers, as well as the different languages.

The collective for creative temporary use of vacant buildings “Free Riga” is working both as an organizer of temporary use projects and as a curator of temporary use initiatives that correspond to the needs of a space and its owner. As an organizer “Free Riga” is looking for empty buildings, approaching owners and convincing them of

the general benefits of temporary use, as well as negotiating the temporary use contracts with “Free Riga”, which ensures balance of the needs of the owners with the needs and abilities of temporary users. As a curator “Free Riga” is then looking for temporary use initiatives that can fulfil the requirements of the owners, maintain and renovate the space, as well as collectively work on creating new social services and neighbourhood engagement. Although “Free Riga” takes the ultimate responsibility for every space, it is working also as a matchmaker - scouting for appropriate initiatives that can fulfil the needs of the owner, then passing the needs on to temporary users as their obligations and tasks, and then following that both sides deliver what they have agreed upon. From the experience of “Free Riga”, curating and mediation is especially essential role in cases when owners have interest in temporary use not only as a maintenance and cost reduction service, but also as a way of attracting specific types activities to the space.

Curating and mediation is especially essential role in cases when owners have interest in temporary use not only as a maintenance and cost reduction service, but also as a way of attracting specific types activities to the space.

“Zunda garden” is a temporary use space organized by “Free Riga” and opened in an abandoned hangar of tractor factory and the surrounding wildly grown, fenced garden on the riverside of Zunda channel. Zunda garden is located just across the river Daugava, in 5-10 minutes car ride from Riga Old Town. It is part of a larger, mostly abandoned industrial area between Zunda channel and a larger street separating the industrial area from more residential



neighbourhoods. Zunda garden is neighbouring RISEBA university faculty building for media and architecture developed in 2011, as well as a new residential and office complex in close distance also developed recently. These new developments together bring the first permanent life to this previously industrial area. Proximity to the centre, green surroundings and adjacent water, as well as the first signs of new projects in the area makes it an attractive plot for further development.

The owner of Zunda garden intends to develop a residential quarter there, demolishing the old factory hangar. Creating a medium price-point residential housing for young professionals as the primary audience is the most likely development goal. However, due to the economic crisis and following inaccessibility of financing, this plan has been postponed year after year, opening the doors for temporary use of the space starting in spring of 2015. Zunda garden can be permanently used just in the warm season from May till October, as the hangar cannot be heated.

The experience of matchmaking between the owner and temporary users can be divided in two phases - first, initial temporary use agreement and, second, elaborated contract for the second year including the lessons from the first year. When first approached by "Free Riga" in early 2015 the owner expressed clear interest in bringing more life to this territory in order to raise its attractiveness to the potential investors and partners. The intended audience of young professionals was another argument for opening this territory to social and creative temporary use that would attract similar crowd as the intended residents. So creating an attractive event programme became the main condition from the owner in the first year and was included in the contract of one-year temporary use. "Free Riga" made an open call, screened a few event organizers and selected initiators of an indie music festival "Pagalms" as the first "anchor" initiative for running the space. Im-

portant criteria for selection of anchor initiative was the fact that the "Pagalms" had experience in running events, as well as a non-commercial background suggesting possibilities to co-develop accessible cultural space. Throughout the summer of 2015 an anchor initiative organized a few tens of concerts and an event-based bar to sustain the programming of the space. Meanwhile, "Free Riga" took the responsibility to manage applications of other non-commercial event organizers that wanted to use the space, with support of the anchor initiative in providing some technical equipment. In this way multiple arts exhibitions, cinema evenings and also some outdoor events utilizing the garden were organized. This proved to be successful model attracting hundreds of mostly young people, as well as tens of cultural organizers to the newly established culture area, which gained recognition due to the openness to youth culture, as well as the green surroundings and the atmospheric qualities of the hangar.

Paying attention and focusing on the needs of the owners is very important especially in the first steps of matchmaking and negotiation.

When negotiating the extension of the contract for the second year, the owner made additional requirements for maintenance and improvements of the garden around the hangar. It turned out that "Free Riga" had neglected owner's personal interest in gardening and thus hadn't transferred clear responsibilities of maintaining it to the initiatives. Additionally, in the second year owner opened a commercial initiative, a trailer camping area in the other side of the garden, which brought more daily users to the garden and increased the demand for





Events in Zunda garden hangar and outside Riga (Latvia).
Photo by Jozeps Bikše.



Events in Zunda garden hangar and outside Riga (Latvia).
Photo by Jozeps Bikše.



its maintenance. Therefore for the second year contract such additional requirements as mowing the grass at least once in two weeks and generally improving the surrounding of the hangar were made. To fulfil these requirements “Free Riga” included them as obligations in the contracts with the anchor initiative, as well scouted for additional users and activities that would be interested in using and developing the garden. New users were attracted, for example, a semi-permanent donation-based tea spot, located next to the new camping area and serving also the events in Zunda garden. Additionally, “Free Riga” developed a municipality funded creative quarters programme project to revitalize the riverside of the Zunda channel with an open public design workshop engaging architecture and design student, as well as local inhabitants in building street furniture in and around Zunda garden. A ponton pier for accessing water for swimming and fishing was also built. Although in both years, “Free Riga” as organizer of Zunda garden temporary use project took the ultimate responsibility for the space, mediating between the comments and questions of the owner and the initiatives became one part of daily work for “Free Riga”. The owner was often present in the space and interested also in both improvements to the space and activities running there. In some other project houses of “Free Riga” where owners are more interested in maintenance of the space or cost reduction coming with temporary use, role of mediation is much smaller and “Free Riga” can more freely pursue priorities to the development of the space coming from their priorities or more direct needs of the neighbourhood.

Paying attention and focusing on the needs of the owners is very important especially in the first steps of matchmaking and negotiation. Then little details matter more. In case of another, larger residential building in negotiation for temporary use, “Free Riga” made a mistake of not taking enough consideration for the ideas and interests of the owner, too much and too early highlight-

ing parts of the temporary use concept that were based on the interests of “Free Riga”. The owner had expressed interest in establishing temporary use that would bring artist and cultural residencies to the house, which was waiting for reconstruction and aimed at budget flats for young, creative people as the next residents. After discussing and agreeing on the general temporary use concept with the owner, “Free Riga” should have brought elaboration on the temporary use project in form of, for example, particular initiatives of artist residencies and cultural projects. Instead “Free Riga” used the opportunity of getting to know an initiative working with refugees and included it in negotiations with the owner as one of the first concrete examples of temporary users. Although refugee initiative would take not more than 10% of the space, bringing it up earlier than concrete initiatives for the primary concept of creative temporary use hijacked attention of the owner too much and was not facilitating productive negotiations.

As a matchmaker “Free Riga” is filling the role that individual temporary use projects would not be able to do so well.

As a matchmaker “Free Riga” is filling the role that individual temporary use projects would not be able to do so well. It doesn't make sense for every temporary use project to collect the data on ownership of the buildings, accumulate all technical knowledge to perform security and renovation checks on the buildings, to learn to negotiate temporary use as a service to the owners and to invest resources in making safe contracts. From experience of Riga matchmaking and mediation is a role that is often required to enable space to be opened for temporary use.



Insights for cities

- 1.** In developing matchmaking efforts and intermediaries for temporary use, cities should clearly focus on understanding the differing needs of both the temporary users and of the owner.
- 2.** Early in the negotiations it is important to pay attention even to the personal preferences of the owner of vacant space and to consider if some of those should be included in the contract. If the type of activities organized in the space is important to the owner, then these are the first to be attended to make for a successful negotiation and sustainable temporary use project.
- 3.** In developing organizational framework of temporary use, cities should look for ways of transferring clear responsibilities to the users. The danger of facilitating matchmaking is in the fact that matchmaker could take too much responsibility and could not clearly transfer it to the temporary users. This results in matchmaker becoming “the last man/woman standing” in fulfilling requirements of the owner that should have been fulfilled by the users. To avoid this matchmaker can, for example, require the initiatives to do test time in running the space to prove their ability to deliver various obligations.
- 4.** Cities should pay attention to financial sustainability of the temporary users. Success practice in the cases of “Free Riga” has been in choosing anchor initiatives for every temporary use space that have a sound way of sustaining themselves financially. In that way anchor initiatives can perform as a gravity centre for other, smaller initiatives, as well as take responsibility for organizing fulfilment of owner’s main requirements.
- 5.** Cities can start temporary use matchmaking or intermediary having a larger role, however, once it is set cities should transfer more responsibilities to temporary users away from the centralized agency. Current model of “Free Riga” is relying on large role of “Free Riga” as the organizer and curator/mediator of every temporary use project. Such centralized model might be essential for successful introduction and implementation of the first temporary use projects and setting a role model. However, in order to scale temporary use to larger number of locations, more horizontal model should be considered. Currently “Free Riga” is considering how to remain as a centralized resource and knowledge depository, while developing an open association of house guardians.



THE ROLE OF SYNATHINA IN TEMPORARY USE

By Nicholas Karachalis, Athens (Greece)

How can the operation of an innovative municipal organisation like Synathina for citizens' groups in Athens expand its services to address issues of temporary use? The creation and operation of SynAthina has been an innovative experiment for the city. The aim of the initiative is to offer a means of communication for the exchange of knowledge, best practices and expertise, in order to encourage the flourishing of new ideas for the city and update municipality services and procedures. Combining an on-line platform with a physical space in the centre of Athens to connect the municipality of Athens with the active groups of citizens proved to be a very effective idea. SynAthina has been developed in a very vibrant network, which now expands its scope to specific issues, one of which is the challenge of empty spaces in the city and their temporary use. In September 2014, it won one of the five Mayors Challenge awards from Bloomberg Philanthropies, a fact that has created a new dynamic and has raised the expectations.

According to the initial planning, the online platform and the physical space SynAthina (kiosk) has the following main goals:

- To collect the activities of citizens

and through them learn what their priorities are for the city;

- To connect citizens' groups with each other, the municipal authorities and other institutions and sponsors in order to help them carry out their activities;
- To identify and promote those activities which have a greater impact on the city and explore their potential to be used as best practices in local governance; and,
- To activate the City's reflexes so that its services can be improved in relation to the current needs of its citizens.

The citizens' activities can lead to changes in the City's political priorities, to better regulations and simplified procedures.

The evaluation of the activities of SynAthina until now is positive both in terms of participation and effectiveness. From the day it was launched, in July 2013, up to this day, the webpage and the kiosk of synAthina have hosted 2238 activities, which have been realized by 266 groups of citizens and institutions.

The variety of actions and groups expands to several fields, from solidarity groups and social enterprises to education, culture, food, tourism and urban policy.





The Synathina kiosk at Athinas Street, Athens (Greece).
Photo by Synathina.

THE KIOSK OF SYNATHINA AS A TESTING SPACE

The development of the online synAthina platform needed a physical space in the city in order to become visible and functional as a meeting point, so in autumn 2013 the synAthina Kiosk was launched. First of all, its geographical position is of major importance as it lies on Athinas street, just outside the Varvakeios Food Market – one of the most visited sites in Athens' city centre. The kiosk belonged to the Municipality and used to be operated as a cafe, still, the last years it was closed. The synAthina team with the help of volunteers and the support of sponsors refurbished the kiosk, installed furniture and a green roof was designed. The space has two rooms and a toilet and an open space with tribunes in front of it. Its operation is based on temporary use as a self-managed space by the community groups and citizens' initiatives that want to use it; this is done through a rotation system which can be accessed on-line in order to have a transparent and fair tool for all potential synAthina groups to organise their activities.

Its two main advantages are that firstly the kiosk has been turned into a space for public use that is open for any group to use it without any bureaucracy. The representative just has to pick up the keys from the City Hall, 500 meters further down Athinas street and it can be used also during non-office hours. All it requires is a simple online booking on the synAthina platform without filling any administrative forms in advance. The second advantage is connected to the fact that using a space for a few hours or days can work as an experiment for a specific idea.

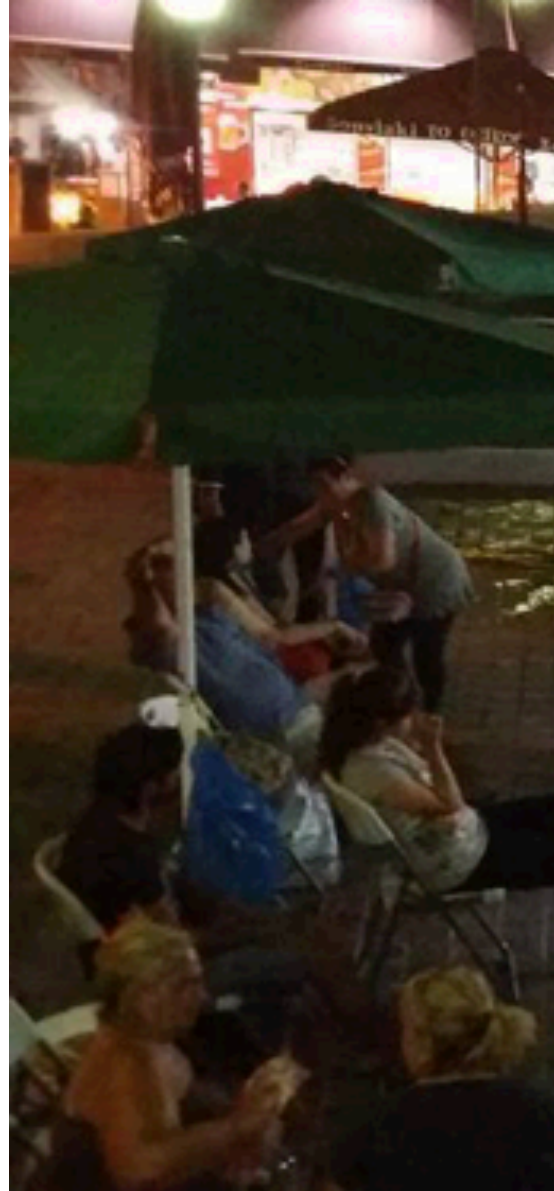
Some ideas respond to social circumstances e.g. operating the space as a centre where refugees can call/skype home, providing homeless people with cleaning services, etc., other

ideas are connected to themes such as sustainable tourism, food policy, cultural and artistic activities, etc. The common element is that it is not easy for these initiatives to find affordable, short-term space, therefore the kiosk proved to be the ideal solution. There are many different activities taking place in the synAthina kiosk and the kiosk itself has been a great means to connect activities, which are complementary to each other. For example, "One stop" was created when two citizens' groups, "the unseen" and "Ithaka laundry", met at the kiosk and decided to provide homeless people with complete services such as clothes washing, haircuts, finding temporary or permanent accommodation, etc. Obviously, temporary use of the kiosk of synAthina was the main factor leading to a successful cooperation between two citizens group in need of space to perform their activities.

THE STRENGTHS OF SYN-ATHINA AS A BROKER FOR TEMPORARY USE

The SynAthina network is organised through a web platform¹ but also meets frequently off line in different circumstances in thematic meetings. Activities, ideas, group webpages, etc. are directly accessible on a map of the city of Athens. Within the platform the groups organizing activities have a page to present themselves, seek for empty spaces and connect with other groups. When new groups apply to be part of the platform, SynAthina members meet them and discuss their activities in order to make sure they are aligned with the philosophy of the platform. When accepted they are left free to manage their page and schedule their activities.

The online platform which has been upgraded in July 2016 is lively as it is supported by a communication group which is very active on social media. SynAthina webmaster and communication officer work full time to an-



imate the community, post news, put forward actions and open calls on the platform blog. The Facebook page is focussed on the activity of the synAthina community, Twitter account oriented to international projects, LinkedIn is designated for calls publication and Instagram for picture sharing. A municipal web-radio is also accessible and mobile apps in development. Many of the users form sub-groups and a large proportion is interested in being offered an affordable space in order to host their activities.

Strengths and future potentials
SynAthina is an important experiment for the city of Athens. Both the operation of the kiosk and the on-line network have made an important statement regarding the openness of the municipality towards citizens' initiatives; of course there are several further steps to be taken.

Regarding temporary use of empty spaces, SynAthina is expanding its





*Ithaca Laundry for homeless at Synathina, Athens (Greece).
Photo by Ithaca .*

field of intervention to this issue as it created a special group of stakeholder representatives and municipal officers (now linked to the URBACT Refill Local Support Group) in order to discuss the challenges in this field and the possibility of matchmaking between building owners and citizen groups. The potential of linking the groups that are active in the SynAthina platform to specific buildings is one of the major challenges for the coming years. SynAthina designed and soon will coordinate the consultation procedure with citizens, property owners and tenants for the municipality's interventions in the small triangle (formed by the Praxitelous-Perikleous-Athinas streets) within the historical centre of Athens. The consultation seeks to find solutions for the public space (regarding use, parking, waste management etc.) but also for temporary use of empty stores. Additionally, the new use of

the municipal market of Kypseli will soon emerge following an extensive public consultation organised by synAthina. The building was abandoned for almost 10 years, and during this time, there was also unofficial use of the building for a while by a collective of citizens who were also organising community activities. The building of the Kypseli market will start operating again in January with a new use. Until then, there will be temporary cultural and solidarity activities taking place, in order to reintroduce the market of Kypseli to the local society. Such activities will continue to take place even when the new "manager" will take over in January 2017 so that the local society will have ownership of the building. SynAthina platform and the temporary use of the kiosk of Varvakeion square as a meeting point for citizens' initiatives can be seen as an innovative approach leading to a different

method regarding decision making processes on various environmental, social and economic issues within the city. Many of these innovative ideas have been included in the Integrated Plan for the City of Athens and are being used as a paradigm for future use in other parts of Athens. There is a great potential in the synAthina platform mapping temporary use opportunities across the city. This can be done both by local citizens' groups who identify and request empty spaces for their activities and the municipality seeking for an effective tool to coordinate consultation procedures for the use of certain spaces. Several citizens' initiatives in need of space are activated and networked by the platform. SynAthina helps those citizens' groups finding space but also stimulates new ideas for activities. "One stop" is a good example, proving the success of the platform towards this direction.

Its main strengths are connected to the following factors:

- The openness of the network is one of its main strengths. Any group can make use of the kiosk without any constraints (provided that it doesn't represent racist, violent or discriminatory ideas). Furthermore every Monday evening the team of SynAthina holds an open meeting at the office of the Vice-Major on the 5th floor of the Liosion building which has been re-designed as a meeting space; there everybody is welcome to present, listen to and discuss ideas regarding everyday challenges of the city.
- The visibility and the networking opportunities for the groups that participate are very important; SynAthina operates as a matchmaking platform leading to new partnerships and ideas, e.g. between the NGOs and groups that work with homeless.
- The SynAthina kiosk operates as a testing ground for initiatives, new ideas, etc., which are not able to find an affordable space for a short time. More buildings in the city can be used in similar ways. This experience is now being discussed in the context of the Refill Local Support Group.

Insights for cities

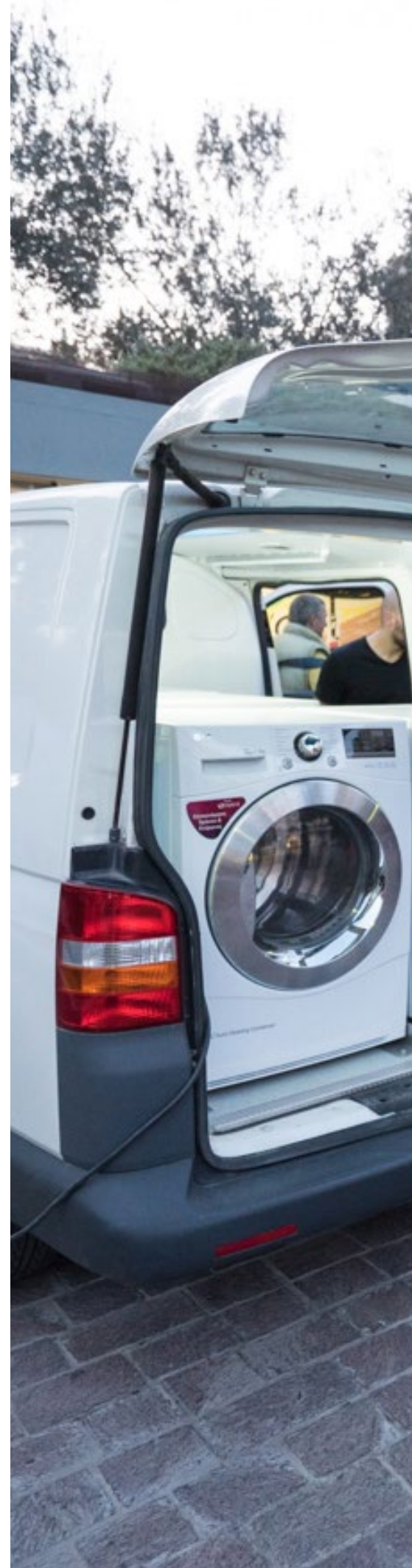
1. Reach out to official and unofficial groups, initiatives, citymakers, etc. in your city and try to investigate the potential synergies and connection opportunities between them. Organise thematic groupings/special meetings.

2. Create an on-line platform to map groups/initiatives in the city, support their actions, provide visibility and create awareness. This on-line platform can also be used as a tool to connect initiatives seeking empty spaces for temporary use.

3. Link any mapping effort or discussion on temporary use of empty spaces in the city with the needs of the participating groups and provide support. Apply an open and fair system of decision making when dealing with spaces that more than one group/initiative would like to use.

4. Provide a meeting space where these groups can meet each other; having an open day once a week is a good practice. Ideally create an autonomous municipal-owned space, which the participating groups can use on a temporary basis without any bureaucratic procedures in order to promote their work.

¹ www.synathina.gr/en





*Ithaca Laundry for homeless at Synathina, Athens (Greece).
Photo by Ithaca .*

Do you want to know more about Refill?

Check out the issue #3 of the
REFILL MAGAZINE!

By Marcelline Bonneau, Strategic Design Scenarios

How can initiatives be supported and adopt the right temporary posture, in order to benefit from temporary use? Could this support be practical? Can they generate temporary use charters and codes of conduct? Why not providing temporary use coaching to make temporality an asset instead of behaving as quasi-permanency?

The REFILL city partners have experienced all of these:

- The ZZZ agency in Bremen (Germany) and the Policy Participation Unit in Ghent (Belgium) provide the little help of a friend...;
- Plantage 9 e.v. in Bremen (Germany), the Government acoustic isolation through the Fund for temporary use in Ghent (Belgium), the Taczaka street terraces closing at 21:00 in Poznan (Poland) are all examples of the ways to be flexible, while creating rules and bending them; and,
- De War in Amersfoort (Netherlands) and Aire38 with Les Badauds Associés in Nantes (France) highlight that we are all temporary users in a fluid society.



REFILL MAGAZINE #3

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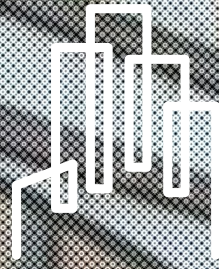
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REUSE OF VACANT SPACES AS DRIVING FORCE
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