

# REFILL MAGAZINE #6

July 2017



**refill**

TEMPORARY USE • DYNAMICS FOR LIFE

## URBAN LABS AND STRATEGIC TEMPORARY USE



European Union  
European Regional  
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## TABLE OF CONTENT

### 4 Editorial

How can we pass from a **passive temporary use** (demand-driven) to an **active temporary use** (as a requalification instrument)?



7

**LET THEM GO...  
TEMPORARY USE  
OF URBAN SPACE**

6

### 19 Some delivery as a manifest event



18

How can cities take advantage of **temporary use** as an **experimentation tool** in **urban planning** and **development**?

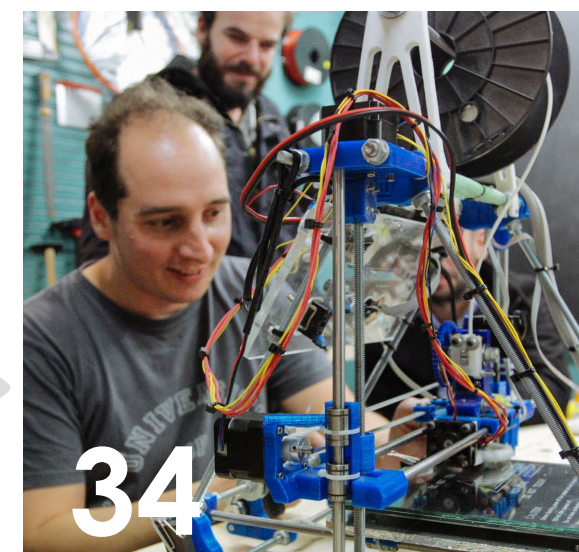
23

**DREAMS COME  
THROUGH THE  
COMMUNITY**

28 **REVIVING LAZARUS  
IN POZNAN**

### 31 MAINTAINING AN EQUILIBRIUM

How does **temporary use** work as a **city lab** to **invent, experiment** and **develop the future of the city**?



34

35

**CITY LABS REINVENT  
THE CITY**

42

Check out the  
issue #1 of the  
**REFILL MAGAZINE**

Smart Kalasatama2, Helsinki (Finland).  
Photo by Jussi Hellsten.

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Living streets, Ghent (Belgium).  
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# THE CHALLENGE OF EXPERIMENTING WITH URBAN PLANNING...

By François Jégou, Strategic Design Scenarios

A wind of renewal of public action is blowing on administrations at all levels of governance in Europe and beyond. Among the ingredients of this new wind is generally the user approach, immersion work, co-creation with the stakeholders and of course experimentation: prototyping or, more precisely, mock-up of a new public policy to explore its potential, confront it with current usages, try it before adopting it and, if necessary, deploy it. These different stages inspired by design thinking if they seem a supposed approach nevertheless pose a number of problems in their implementation. In particular, experimentation implies being able to simulate a public policy in order to try it out. And if experimentation is natural in the process of developing a new product, it seems to be a challenge when it comes to mock-up a new public service or a new urban development. This sixth and last edition of the REFILL thematic review focuses on the temporary use as an experimental tool for urban rede-

velopment, on its strategic use on the urban scale, on the “urban laboratories” which allow experimenting and reinventing the city.

**TEMPORARY USE FOR COLLECTIVE BENEFIT**

The first part of the magazine examines the induced effects of temporary use in terms of quality of life in the neighbourhood, transformation on a city scale beyond the direct benefit of accommodation that it brings to the main beneficiaries: how to move from the individual point of view of each accommodated entity to the overall effects of temporary use? Selected examples from the cities of Ghent, Nantes and Ostrava show how citizen initiatives accommodated by temporary use processes have significant effects on the atmosphere and quality of life in neighbourhoods. But beyond re-enchanting the city they also transfigure it. The effect of the accumulation of several temporary actors gradually transforms the neighbourhood. In this sense they are de facto an experimentation in urban planning allowing to try a possible evolu-

tion of a neighbourhood before this temporary takes root and becomes permanent.

## URBAN PLANNING BY TEMPORARY USE

The second part of the magazine deepens and explores through various examples this idea of activating temporary use as a tool for experimentation of urbanism and local development.

A series of temporary experiments in the city of Cluj aim to reactivate successive portions of the Somes River from 2015 to 2017, inviting people to rediscover this essential element of their city. These experiments indicate to the municipality promising ways for the redevelopment of the approaches of the river. The project is both an exploration of new models of urban regeneration and an empirical approach to urban planning.

A second article looks at the process of rehabilitation of the huge mining and ironworks of Hlubina in the heart of the city of Ostrava. The availability of the multiple vacant industrial spaces and their occupations through cultural and artistic initiatives have made it possible to re-attract the



REFILL preparation phase city visits in Ghent (Belgium).  
Photo by City of Ghent.

population of the city to these disused areas and to make de facto emerge Provoz Hlubina as a new creative district integral part of the city.

A third article describes the strategy of the municipality of Poznan to rehabilitate the neglected district of Lower Lazarz. This strategy is based on a double impetus: to take advantage of vacant spaces to attract cultural and social initiatives through a program of preferential rents and to solicit these same initiatives to radiate positive effects on the neighbourhood and contribute to its revitalization.

The fourth and last article of this second part shows how temporary use has become a strategic tool for the redevelopment of the island of Nantes. It describes in particular the SAMOA, first development agency, to which is added an economic development agency supporting the gradual emergence of a whole Creative District. This agile, evolutionary and also temporary administrative structure has made it possible to grasp the whole range of opportunities offered by temporary use from the occasional accommodation of cultural and artistic initiatives, the concen-

tration and attraction of creative forces from all the city to the revelation of an ecosystem particularly adapted to the creative industries.

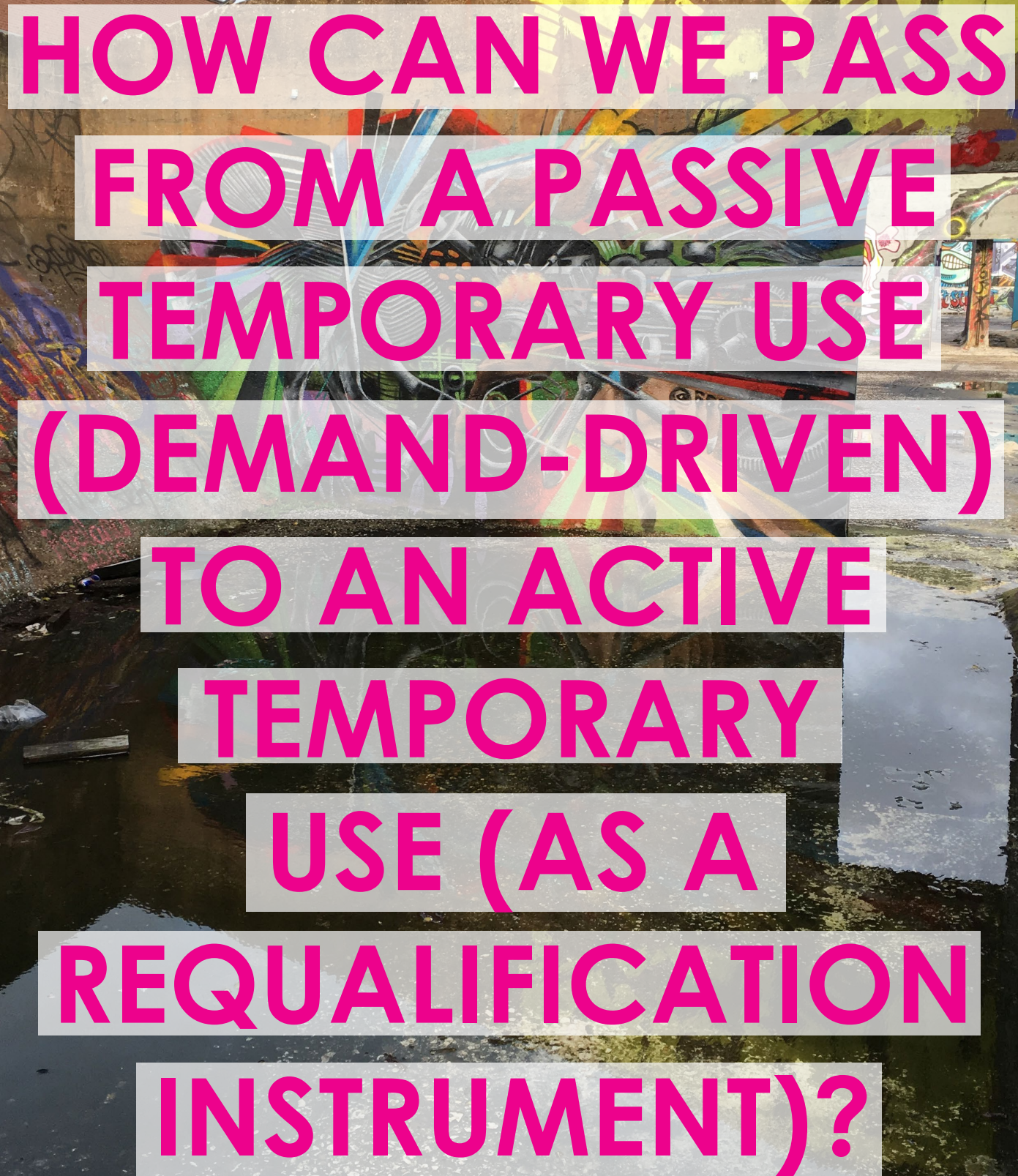
## URBAN TEMPORARY LABS

The third concluding part of this magazine refers to the conditions for the implementation of “urban laboratories” and the conditions necessary for temporary use to contribute to inventing, experimenting and developing the future of cities.

The differences noted in these pages answer firstly to the initial question of how to experiment with urban planning: temporary use taking advantage of vacant urban spaces allows accommodating diverse and varied initiatives in sufficiently large numbers to get the critical mass and to have an effect on the urban scale. It makes possible to constitute at a lower cost and without taking great risks a mock-up in full size, at the same time coordinated by a general intention and co-constructed with the citizens and the whole of local actors that allows “to try the city” before producing it permanently. The “urban laboratories” thus constituted are what are called “mixed-motivated games” in which the actors, both partners and competitors, are trying to live together in a different configuration than that implemented until ‘so. There emerges a reinvented city that is neither the fruit of a top-down process, overlooked as too often in town planning, nor that of a bottom-up process only sometimes lacking coherence and synergy. It is an organic mix co-created and co-carried by all actors.







# HOW CAN WE PASS FROM A PASSIVE TEMPORARY USE (DEMAND-DRIVEN) TO AN ACTIVE TEMPORARY USE (AS A REQUALIFICATION INSTRUMENT)?

*Temporary use of the former gravel tanks for cultural events, Oude Dokken area, Ghent (Belgium).  
Photo by Strategic Design Scenarios.*

## LET THEM GO... TEMPORARY USE OF URBAN SPACE

*By Katerina Bonito and Martina Pilanová,  
Ostrava (Czech Republic)*

### APPROACH BASED ON PARTICIPATION

Civil participation, particularly at neighbourhood level, is an essential factor for long-lasting improvement of the urban residential and living climate. After all, this participation implies that residents get involved in the maintenance and protection of their own environment. Low level civil participation within this concept is a significant cause of urban decay. As people increasingly start to feel that they have a stake in their living environment, they can be approached with a request to participate in the organisation of this environment. Participation can be encouraged by giving residents a role to play in the open space, by organising activities and projects with input from them.

Temporary use is often a vector for place-making. Certain examples of temporary use are intended as a bottom-up and open tools for urban redevelopment and neighbourhood regeneration.

### “DIRTY JOBS”, LEDEBERG DOET HET ZELF, GHENT

Standaertsite is an old workshop territory which previously hosted a “Do it yourself” workshop located in Ledeborg, a popular and dense neighbourhood. However, when it went bankrupt local inhabitants had a feeling that Standaertsite is an important public part of the neighbourhood and shouldn’t transform into something like a new

housing or other ordinary real estate project. Locals were clear about one thing – the neighborhood is missing public spaces and this should remain one. So they formed an initiative “Ledeborg doet het zelf” (Ledeborg do-it-yourself) which soon started a project called “Dirty jobs”. They made an open place accessible for the inhabitants living nearby to start a wide range of activities they cannot undertake in the small houses typical of the area such as: “Bicycle kitchen” - collective repair workshop; “On wheels” - cheap kids bikes renting scheme; Up-cycling furniture atelier; science and tech workshops for kids; give-away shop; weekly vegetable market; a tool library and a Christiana bike renting scheme in preparation; etc. These various initiatives get a great success in the neighbourhood also among the different ethnic communities around.

### MUNICIPALITY INVOLVEMENT

Ledeborg doet het zelf pressed the municipality to buy the place and keep it as neighbourhood open resource. Now that the ownership is secured, the municipality will refurbish it with a new building and appropriate facility of all open-air activities. The renovation will cause the place to close for two years and Ledeborg doet het zelf with the Neighbourhood manager are looking for other vacant places around to keep on going with all the activities during this critical period.

Standaertsite project is supported by Ghent’s temporary







Community garden at Rabot – De Site, Ghent (Belgium).  
Photo by Stad Ghent.





*"Dirty Jobs". Ledeberg doet het zelf, Ghent (Belgium)  
Photo city of Ghent.*

use fund and is overseen by a steering committee from local inhabitants. The fund has given money for transport and installation of the container house here, for installation of water supply and for all necessary actions in order to comply with safety regulations. The overall cost account to the budget bigger than 20.000 EUR.

City uses the fund for both, to support initiatives that address the needs of the neighborhood while its final development is still planned, as well as to engage inhabitants in reimagining the area and creating it together.

De Site, a meeting point in Rabot, Ghent

'De Site is a meeting point for local residents, different population groups and nationalities and people of different ages. It is one of the examples from citizens-driven initiatives as in Ghent where the city administration "let it go" to the population of the Rabot neighbourhood to steer the project to long term planned temporary use.

In 2007, the city, citizens and partner organisations in the neighbourhood started implementing different activities on the waste land: 80 city gardens, an open-air cinema, barbecues, a football field, a traffic park, a kids' farm, etc. attracting the population of the Rabot neighbourhood around to the place.

In 2010, local money called the Torekes was launched: by working on De Site citizens could buy vegetables and other supply in local grocer's shops, restaurants.

De Site provides the necessary infrastructure including a 3000 m<sup>2</sup> urban horticulture plot, mini kitchen gardens, a multi-purpose sports terrain, containers to provide material storage and work space, etc.), but also focuses on developing projects with appropriate content related to both the neighbourhood and beyond.

"To offer every possible opportunity to make the project a success and guarantee maximum sustainability of the

results and effects in/on the neighbourhood and existing (or future) neighbourhood organisations and activities, widespread support is required from within the neighbourhood and at city level.

However, the project would not make much sense without extensive participation from local residents and users. Participation in De Site is layered. The aim is to achieve maximum interaction and cross connection between the different layers and thus interlink various types of expertise, knowledge and experience (i.e. professionals, volunteers, residents, users, workers). This will create a basis for the development of co-ownership and co-production. De Site is supported by 'Samenlevingsopbouw Gent vzw' (SG) a Social Structures Ghent NPO. It offers expertise and independent support to promote the participation of population groups in society, with a particular focus on socially vulnerable groups. This organisation helps them

acquire basic rights and develop solutions for collective problems, by mobilising all stakeholders in this process, with the overall objective of creating a sustainable society. SG focuses on three key social tasks:

- providing support for target groups;
- developing innovative solutions focused on a specific area;
- initiating structural measures.

## **WORKING AT DE SITE IS WORKING TO ADVANCE A LIVABLE ENVIRONMENT**

A project such as De site aims to create the right conditions for pleasant, safe, sustainable and harmonious residential and living environments in relevant areas. Conflicts of interest between people are taken into account and the focus is on 'upward social mobility' rather than 'social mix'. The creation of a 'livable environment' involves both phys-





ical and social dimensions. The physical dimension refers to the material aspects of the residential and living environment (infrastructure, layout, environment, etc.), whereas the social dimension refers to the living climate – in a broad sense – of a residential and living environment (society, local services and provisions, safety, etc.).

“Temporary fulfilment” as is the case with De Site effectively creates a link with the future housing development project of Tondelier that will be built at the same site. A bond is created with a physical location, where structural

work can be undertaken at a later stage.

### MUNICIPALITY INVOLVEMENT

The city of Ghent lets the communities engaged in temporary use activities in De Site and inspire redevelopment of the place. Through the intermediation of the city, the temporary use of this former brownfield proposed a mix of allotment gardening, sport events, cultural experiences, etc. to the communities around. People progressively decided what they prefer and stir the development of the

place. This practice shows a tipping point from a top-down and passive temporary use where initiatives are invited to fit into a predetermined development scheme to a more open and active form of temporary use working as moment of experimentation contributing to the co-construction of urban redevelopment. De Site is an old industrial waste platform converted in a lively meeting place. The case of De Site for instance is emblematic of a practice of letting-go to the communities, experimenting different usages of a vacant place.

De Site has involved citizens in urban renewal process who wouldn’t have been involved through traditional participation methods. It has built a strong community, solidarity in the neighbourhood and it inspired the new large housing project “Tondelier” in development nearby. The existing allotment gardens as the top success of De Site will be incorporated in the new housing project; a ‘neighbourhood management’ will be launched where neighbours guarantee organisation and management of public green, city gardens, plug-in-zones, barbecue zone,





sport facilities, youth services and waste collection.

## GREEN ISLAND AND ILE DE NANTES EXPERIMENTATION, NANTES

The Island of Nantes has been going through a regeneration process mostly concentrating on creative professionals, researchers, students and artists. At one stage of redevelopment phase of the island was aiming at active involvement of citizens and co-development of temporary use initiatives. Green Island is the main initiative.

Green Island was initiated by the SAMOA during Nantes Green Capital 2013. Through a call for citizen initiatives, a total of 8 temporary projects were installed on specific vacant spaces on the island preselected by the SAMOA. The projects had to involve issues addressed or connected to the Green Capital program, which is related to sustainable living and green city. This accelerated and evolved projects around nature in the city, gardening and festive spaces such as vegetable gardens in boxes, a corn field on a derelict land, a music kiosk and chicken farm, open lounge areas facing the river and organisation of collective brunches, etc.

Each selected project benefitted from financial support (15 000 € per project) as well as project management and technical support by one of the SAMOA's project managers.

The goals for the SAMOA were originally identified as the following:

- An accelerator for projects in the urban development of the island
- Leverage for the creation of an inventive city
- The possibility to co-produce urban spaces with the inhabitants of the island
- An opportunity to experiment new ideas through the call for projects

The public spaces preselected by the SAMOA were of different natures, the banks of the Loire river that are since undergoing renovation, a park that suffers from little use and a degraded image, an empty square on which a new building will be built, etc.

Green Island was an overall success and due to that, the SAMOA has been working on the Green Island 2. Feedback and interviews with the participants of the first project have allowed to raise some interesting questions which helped define the follow-up project :

- The projects that were received by the SAMOA were not set up by citizens or inhabitants of the island. All of them were proposed by existing organizations (NGO's, neighborhood organizations, creatives...), the few citizens that were involved in the projects did so later on (to build, to tend to, or to upkeep for example) and the majority of them were present as simple occupants (to listen to a concert, to join a barbecue, to use the fitness trail...). Only one of the projects managed to set up a local organization of citizens for the upkeep of a garden.
- Although the festive part of the projects was very present and appreciated by all, the ephemeral side of Green Island was seen as a drawback of the project. It was considered one of the reasons that the citizens did not actively participate in the call for projects.

- The factor of time was also identified as key to the success of the involvement of citizens but also to the implementation of the projects and the experimentation. In some cases the 2 months the TU was present on site did not allow for real testing, observing, adjusting, and deciding how to redevelop these uses on different parts of the island.

Green Island 2 has since become Ile de Nantes Experimentation. The basic idea and the objectives stay the same but the methods of implementation and of getting the citizens involved are different with a participatory urban development approach also for permanent urban spaces.

## SQUARE BELONGS TO EVERYONE

Square Belongs to Everyone is another project of Cootour following the multiple temporary initiatives and citizens-based events that the association organised since 4 years throughout the city. The original idea consisted of building a large wooden platform on the Masaryk Square in the centre of Ostrava. But as the amount of available funds for this project was decreased, the project Square belongs to Everyone and the extension of the activities had to be reconsidered. Cootour decided to focus only on the most harrowing vacant lot caused by the demolition of an old Florists hall just on the corner of the main Masaryk Square, place with very high fluctuation of people just in the core of the city center.



Community, Ostrava (Czech Republic).  
Photo by Zazít Ostravu jinak.



Citizens of Ostrava enjoying homemade food together,  
Ostrava (Czech Republic).  
Photo by Zazít Ostravu jinak.





The municipality intends to redevelop this area constructing a group of new buildings recovering the original configuration of the Masaryk Square, but so far any indication of building a new block of buildings is seen from the city. Within the project Square belongs to Everybody it was intended to build interactive scaffolding structure complemented by innovative modules with multifunctional use, such as containers, atrium for discussions and projects, etc. This construction should point out the conditions and appearance of this vacant plot and provide platform for social presentations, promotion of projects and activities of various entities in Ostrava, to try to revive and improve the public space of the city and its administration with a focus on participation and activation of inhabitants of the city.

In recent years, there was organised a number of activities in Ostrava - both at the personal initiative of the population, and at the level of city administration - striving for the same thing. These activities, however, still held separately in enclosed spaces of various buildings with a limited audience. This construction should help among others to link these activities and introduce them to the public, symbolically, at the most open place of Ostrava - on the main square.

The project brings the possibility of extending awareness of participatory activities at the personal level among a broad range of people. Scaffolding structure may be a place for exhibitions, sports activities, lectures, screenings, refreshments, community gardening, or looking for a studio or as public a view of the square.

The project started early in 2016, unfortunately, it has to face many challenges and barriers from its very beginning. As the Czech legislation do not recognize temporary use, it is not possible to provide all permits within a short notice and allowed to build this construction only for few weeks. As the law says, that the purpose of this vacant plot is intended for the construction of buildings, the project the project of "Florist's hall should proceed with all standard building permissions. But seeing the character of the scaffolding structure of the "Florist's hall" would never suit to the standardized and very strict requirements of the Czech legislation.

At this stage, the initiators of the project try to negotiate with the municipality and are searching for possibilities how the band the rules of the Czech building legislation, e.g. call the scaffolding structure of the "Florist's hall" as scenery or decorative construction. The project has sup-

port even from the Office of the Main Architects of the city that helps to find solution, unfortunately, so far, it was not possible to find a way how to get the official stamps and permits.

## EXPERIENCE OSTRAVA DIFFERENTLY

The objective of this event is to improve the city life with the support of the inhabitants, to encourage them to be the actors of their life in Ostrava, to show them their own responsibility to make their city a better place to be. "Experience Ostrava Differently" takes place within the car-free day event, which means that the chosen parts of the city are closed for cars and the streets belong only to the people.

Originally, the event "Experience Your City Differently" was founded in 2006, in Prague, by an initiative called Auto\*Mat promoting a better environment and quality of life in the city, thematically linked to two international awareness activities - European Mobility Week and Car Free Day. The idea behind is that certain streets close down for cars and belong to pedestrians and cyclists while filled with wide range of entertainment for any age group. In Ostrava, the first event took place in 2013 with the title "Experience Ostrava Differently" organised by the cultural centre CoolTour, which is a main representative of a temporary use in Ostrava, and other local bottom - up initiatives and individual contributors.

It is not only about enjoying the city differently, but this event is also about to give people in Ostrava a possibility to experience themselves differently, on different situation, from different perspective. The people in Ostrava can step out of their stereotypes and perceive neighbors as people who can reveal a completely different dimension of their life in the city. To face the fear of the unknown, however, it is surprisingly often more difficult than the marathon thorough all the permits from the municipality. The first year, one of the main residential boulevard in the city center closed entirely to traffic and nearly 2,000 people attended. A year later, the festival is spread into another location nicknamed "Little Copenhagen", right beside the historic center of Ostrava. The overall number of participants reached 5,500 people. Third year, three locations and 8,000 people. Despite the rainy weather, last year the event was organised also at three locations with more than 10,000 people.

The popularity is clearly growing year by year as well as the number of closed streets or parts of Ostrava. Streets

change into rooms full of sports, music bands, dance, fine food as well as activities related to street theatres and other entertainment. Beyond enjoying each of the different activities organized in different spots, the population of Ostrava can experience the city in a different way.

"Experience Ostrava differently" is more than one-day neighborly festival. The greatest added value and benefit of this event is seen in active participation and involvement of the inhabitants. For several months the residents organize and prepare their neighborly festivals, they prepare the program, facilities, improvised stage, the necessary permits and ensure the communication with local authorities. This phase of preparation offers also an opportunity for development of relationships among the community and cooperation between different actors in local society - citizens, NGOs, local businesses, institutions, municipality, agencies, etc.

"Experience Ostrava differently" is also a kind of experiential education connected to urban sustainability. These temporary events and animations seen can be perceived as a one-day laboratory to rethink the concept of urban space and planning of the city.

## REFLECTIONS

"Once you, as a citizen, accept and embrace common things and space as your own you will gain different attitude towards them. People always defend and develop what they love."

Giving space and trust to citizens will boost their interest and motivation to become more active in community related activities and perhaps the will to co-create and positively influence life in their neighbourhoods. It is really important to listen to the inhabitants and hear what they want, need and feel. Sometimes, the right way is also "door to door asking" which gives the municipalities an opportunity to build trust and community in the city.

The examples from Ghent, Nantes and Ostrava also show that the active temporary use can also bring new directions for the city development plans, give a new function to the place which the passive approach would never find. On the other hand, the municipalities should not forget their role. It is necessary to have a clear framework and always show the limits how far they can go (e.g. considering the policy, visions etc.) and to not promise everything and consider all needs regardless of one initiative.

# INSIGHTS FOR CITIES

**1.** Municipalities should not be afraid to pass responsibility to local communities/initiatives and let them experiment with the City.

**2.** Communication and cooperation is important for supporting each other and finding solutions together (for co-production/co-creation).

**3.** Step out of the box :

- Municipalities should involve more in fieldwork, be more open and flexible, listen to needs of their citizens, take part on the active life in the city.

- Public Stakeholders should participate on the events and activities to observe the view of the citizens and thus be more involved and see the value and be more cooperative.

- In addition, the municipalities should involve more workers from different departments in order to provide higher support and trust to the colleagues working on the projects and activities focused on the public participation, sharing experience and showing the best practices in reality is the key aspect (e.g. inviting the colleagues to events and happenings organised by the citizens etc.) and they will get involved emotionally .

- Communities should not fear the "unknown", should take responsibility for themselves

**4.** Working together and finding ways how to bring to life local projects and how to bend the rules is essential

**5.** The municipalities should address and get involved more people from different target groups (usually, the same group of active people are initiating the projects), the balance of different city needs and actors is required.





# HOW CAN CITIES TAKE ADVANTAGE OF TEMPORARY USE AS AN EXPERIMENTATION TOOL IN URBAN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT?

*Somes Delivery, Cluj (Romania).  
Photo by Radu Padurean.*

## Somes delivery as a manifest event

Experimental planning through demonstrative events in Cluj-Napoca

*By Miruna Draghia, Urbasofia and Marius Moga, MASS (Romania)*

Somes Delivery was envisaged as a project that encourages testing and experiencing through temporary uses.

“Personally, I would like to test a different means of communication using water. I imagine a place where you can launch and receive floating messages and get in touch with people you don’t know. A kind of water messenger.”

In terms of REFILL topic <URBAN LABS AND STRATEGIC TEMPORARY USE>, Somes Delivery case study is a good example of how cities managed to overcome their barriers and promote temporary use as an experiment in urban planning and development processes. Particularly, Somes Delivery didn’t aim to become an urban planning action, but aimed at setting the basis for new models of urban regeneration, as well as providing fresh ideas related to the urban landscape.

“Temporary use as an experiment was the tool used to approach the river’s potential and give hints on how it can be better integrated into the city life, by creating an urban laboratory open to all citizens.”

Somes Delivery is an independent project that challenges local communities to integrate Somes river into the city life of Cluj-Napoca. It is a challenge to enhance citizens’ creativity, engagement and commitment, it represents the beginning of a continuous preoccupation for re-activating the river front, which consists of ephemeral manifestations, but can inspire permanent uses.

On a long-term basis, it addresses a different segment of the river, yearly, analysed through a multidisciplinary perspective, as follows:

- Spatial dimension: responding to the need of identifying opportunities and problems of each river segment and test temporary inter-

ventions in different river banks’ landscape, in order to give the administration directions of usage.

- Social/ community dimension: animated temporary events, workshops and competitions were set up in a particular segment of the river, designed and calibrated specifically for the space needs, aimed at improving its attractiveness. Workshops and public debates related to the role of Somes in the city life were organised by young professionals.

- Environmental dimension: sanitation actions were conducted for each segment of the river, especially before the events. Other workshops were organised in order to raise awareness towards environmental topics, such as the importance of flora and fauna in the aforementioned area.

Somes Delivery 2015 (1st edition), as a novel and unexperienced initiative







Somes Delivery (2016), Cluj (Romania).  
Photo by Radu Padureanu.



Somes Delivery (2016), Cluj (Romania).  
Photo by Radu Padureanu.



Somes Delivery (2016), Cluj (Romania).  
Photo by Radu Padureanu.



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Photo by Radu Padureanu.



Somes Delivery (2016), Cluj (Romania).  
Photo by Radu Padureanu.



Somes Delivery (2016), Cluj (Romania).  
Photo by Radu Padureanu.

was a huge success in terms of activating local communities and spaces. Within the 1st edition, *Somes Delivery Pavilion* was designed as a modular, multifunctional, temporary building, aimed at creating a link between Cetatuia Park, the green river shore and the water, to signalize an urban happening on the *Somes* river. The building hosted an exhibition of the entire project explanatory, mapping and describing every single intervention. The 2nd edition, *Somes Delivery 2016* was even more ambitious in terms of actions implemented and citizens' engagement. Within this edition, experiments were made in terms of co-designing methods: translucent panel where anyone can draw the shores of *Somes* as an invi-

tation to community's direct involvement in decision-making. Other temporary installations were built, such as: group of bright silhouettes passing on the river shore - a nocturnal invitation to get closer to the river, *Pier-to-Pier* cable cork ferry, which enables the river crossing where pedestrian linkage is needed, *Somes View* - a staged garden on the riverfront with a broad perspective on the surrounding landscape. Already at its 3rd edition (*Somes Delivery 2017*), this project proves to be not only a temporary event aimed at raising awareness on the importance of a neglected river, but more of an initiative which perpetuates yearly due to its well-framed response to local community's demands. The necessity of re-activating vacant

or neglected areas in Cluj-Napoca is more than obvious. Before planning actions, the city needs a framework for testing ideas coming from local citizens, who are more than willing to become actors in the urban development process and assume their role as a pro-active community. The biggest challenge faced by *Somes Delivery* was to develop each dimension and to find the right people in order to obtain a higher impact for the city. "With time, we've realized that the Space and Events dimensions worked better, people are more aware of the urban space and it's uses. On the other hand, the Community dimension gave us difficulties in terms of reaching nearby inhabitants, who opened up only after experimenting several types of approach-



es. Also, the Environment dimension is still undergoing work with less results than expected.”<sup>3</sup>

## LESSON LEARNT

Lessons learned from the 1st edition were good input for the 2nd one and they could also be important insights and useful experiences for cities facing the same challenges. Firstly, the community is not necessary the community we think or we’ve imagined it to be. Sometimes, it might not even be a community yet there, only people living in the same neighbourhood, and so their involvement in the project is less than expected. In order to gain a higher impact, what we have done was to select the most efficient manner, so we’ve discovered that neighbourhood lunch and the Flea market worked better than regular meetings and special temporary constructions to accommodate and approach them. Secondly, the environment is still something that is lacking attention, something still unimportant, left on the side. Yet, this dimension needs to become more important, as it holds the key to how we can change the way we see the river and how we can better relate to it.

In other words, co-designing and testing different methods remains an important part which needs to be implemented within a mix of top-down and bottom-up approaches. Citizens’ solutions to pressing urban problems, even if temporary sometimes, might be the key to obtain favourable results leading to urban welfare. In our case, temporary solutions and events opened up the possibility to test and experiment freely, possible development ideas coming from lo-

cal community. Therefore, we considered essential to involve all stakeholders, from local residents, extended communities, to public authorities and institutions.

## IN A NUTSHELL

As an envisaged outcome, public authorities and institutions responsible for the area of Sömes gradually opened up to new approaches, especially regarding co-designing methods and showed their interest in working together for the common goal of re-activating Sömes River. “Sömes Delivery urban laboratory gave me the possibility to better understand the relation between the city as a whole and the river, how the river is perceived by the community, who is curious about it, who is responsible for the way it looks, and more important, how we can exploit the huge potential of it.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Quote of Serban Tiganas, one of Sömes Delivery founders and a recognized name in architecture, holding the position of President of the Architects’ Order in Romania.

<sup>2</sup> Quote of Marius Moga, architect at Atelier MASS and one of Sömes Delivery founders

<sup>3</sup> Quote of Marius Moga, architect at Atelier MASS and one of Sömes Delivery founders

<sup>4</sup> Quote of Marius Moga, architect at Atelier MASS and one of Sömes Delivery founders

# Insights for cities

In-sights and useful experiences as an advice for cities facing similar challenges:

1. Try to find a common language between the public administration and local initiatives, even better if possible to have someone in-between: working as an administration official, but representing the voice of the initiatives;
2. Events’ organisation could be a favourable frame to create a stable network of stakeholders, but try to keep the events as independent as possible in order to avoid systematic and institutionalised festivals which can easily become old-fashioned and less attractive;
3. Try to plan in an iterative way (and stimulate urban planners to act as entrepreneurs) by following a testing and prototyping approach and step from the classical planning to a more flexible, cheaper and effective manner.

# DREAMS COME THROUGH THE COMMUNITY

## Creative District Provoz Hlubina

By David Mírek, Hlubina and Marta Pilanová,  
Ostrava (Czech Republic)

Provoz Hlubina is a creative district in the former black coal mine previously called Hlubina. After the reconstruction in 2015 it offers a background for non-profit activities such as civic associations and other initiatives which are interested in the place they live in and want to change it actively.

Provoz Hlubina, is the NGO managing the premises of “Hlubina”. At the beginning, the first activities and events were organized on temporary use (TU) basis by people currently working in Provoz, the entire project was initiated from bottom-up. The participants’ motivation came from the need to address the vacant space of degrading buildings of the old factory site which is located right next to the city centre seeing the potential of becoming multicultural centre.

The history of Hlubina is really rich and starts around 1850. The aim of the initiatives was to build future of the area on the basis of its history. The big surprise was to reveal how rich the cultural life in the time of mining era was. The first puppet theatre in Ostrava and famous folklore company were founded there. All these activities were initiated and led by miners themselves and their families in their leisure time.

But how Provoz Hlubina became the biggest creative district in Czech Republic?

Everything started in 2009. There were no space in Ostrava for NGO’s with focus on contemporary art (theatre, art,



Old factory, Provoz Hlubina, Ostrava (Czech Republic).  
Photo by Jan Groh.





film etc.). But there were a lot of empty venues. Artists and NGO's were seeking the right place to rehearse, make art, crafts and present it afterwards. That is how Hlubina become the right place for short term projects (i.e. festivals, temporary residences for artists) in different venues. Thanks to these activities the advantages and disadvantages of each space were identified. After the event called "Dream Factories 2009" (three events in the old industrial venues) it became clear that the "old black coal mine" Hlubina was the best place to be revived into to creative district the initiators dreamed of.

From then on, number of events such as creative residential camp Deepcamp, international cinematography festival Camera Eye (Kamera Oko), theatre festival Dream Factory Ostrava were held in these authentic industrial spaces of Hlubina and dozens more events of various genres and sizes. The initiators travelled around Europe to find inspirations and ideas in order to define the right concept for the future of Hlubina.

Project initiators started to develop a project of reconversion into a multifunctional educational and cultural district as well as the negotiation strategy in order to approach the City Administration and the owner of the premises.

As a positive result, in 2011/2012, the owner applied for European Structural Funds to support the redevelopment project. Soon after the first phase of reconstruction begins during which the vacant spaces still remained opened for temporary use activities. In fact, a series of large scale artistic events that significantly contributed to attract the population of the city to that former industrial place and facilitated its requalification.

Currently, after the transition, Provoz continues to organize artists' residences, supports creation of artworks, hosts creative professions in 17 art studios, 8 Music studios, 2 cinemas and rents spaces for events, i.e. complex of 3 large halls. Provoz intends to develop more projects such as Art & Crafts Incubator or a Beach to complete the requalification of the place into a cultural district.



Camera Eye event, Provoz Hlubina, Ostrava (Czech Republic).  
Photo by Provoz.





The project of Provoz Hlubina has been ongoing and continuously growing and to keep up the speed and the pressure, it is sometimes a hard work. Creative district is nowadays more of a cluster rather than a single organization. There are many independent organizations in the area of Hlubina (Cineport, Tendon Hlubina, Heligonka, Club Hlubina, Festivals, Maryčka Café, Art&Craft Incubator) but together they operate as “Provoz Hlubina” (old name of the Mine).

Nowadays, Provoz Hlubina consists of 6 renovated buildings which are used as ateliers, Art & Craft incubator, coffee shop, event halls, etc.

Main benefits of the reconversion and transition:

- portfolio of cultural events has widened up
- conservation of industrial heritage for next generations
- tourist attraction
- facilities for cultural activities and space for new initiatives
- regular maintenance of previously dilapidated space
- the rich cultural program attracts (new) visitors to the entire area, so also to other parts of the old factory site
- it holds international conferences
- anyone can rent space there for any kind of activities

Consistent marketing through a range of channels has been in place, divers program attracts different target groups (families with children, young people and students, artists to older generations).

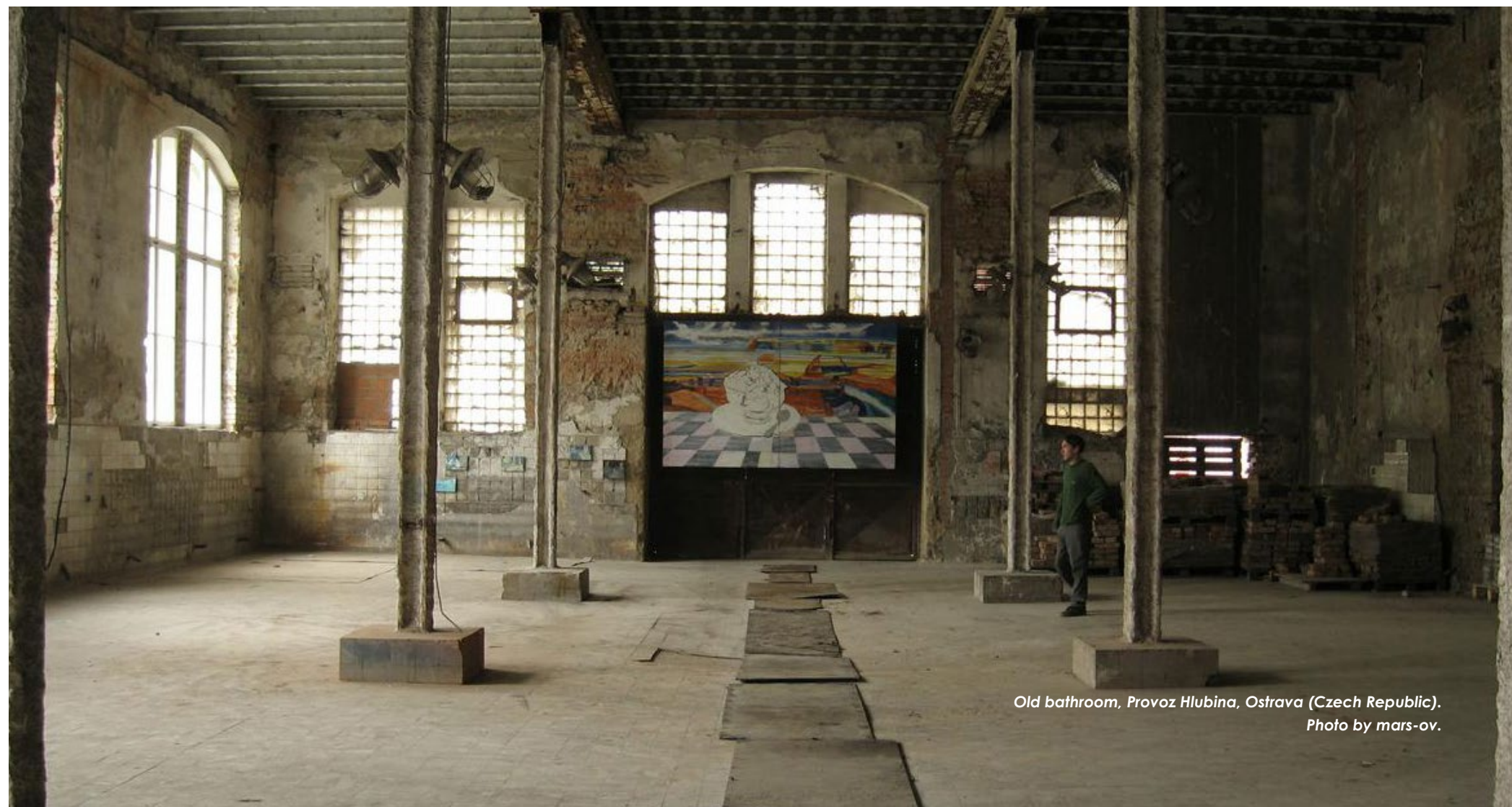
The aim of the owner and the city (City of Ostrava is a partner) is to gradually transform the entire area (number of degrading buildings) into multifunctional district.

## INSIGHTS FOR CITIES

1. Make sure that you don't create victims of their own success.
2. Culture is not for free.
3. What is the vision of the city?
4. Don't make too many “babies”.
5. Temporary users can become spokesman for the temporary tools they use.
6. Cultural clash in temporary use as a reflection of the historical development of the country (e.g. negative approach to top down actions in former communist countries).
7. Do not create competition top down.
8. Be a servant for the city needs and the city makers.
9. Does every city need ZZZ?
10. Find your activist in your city.
11. Clarify the cultural model you currently have and define the ideal model you aim to have.



Art Exhibition, Provoz Hlubina, Ostrava (Czech Republic).  
Photo by Roman Pett.



Old bathroom, Provoz Hlubina, Ostrava (Czech Republic).  
Photo by mars-ov.





# REVIVING LAZARUS IN POZNAN

*Temporary activities as tools to revitalise St Lazarus district in Poznan.*

*By Natalia Madajczyk & Agnieszka Osipiuk, Poznan (Poland).*

## SITUATION BACKGROUND:

There are several historic districts in Poznań. One of them is St Lazarus - in Polish św. Łazarz - which used to be a small village. At the beginning of XX century Łazarz was formally incorporated to Poznań and became a vital district with its own marketplace and main street Głogowska that divided it in two parts. While its upper part was developed into luxurious settlement for local officials, with beautiful park and palm house, the other "lower part" with large marketplace was inhabited mainly by workers, craftsmen and tradesmen. In the 90s of XX century, due to urban sprawl many people moved out from Łazarz and Głogowska street became mostly transit road from the main city centre to neighbouring communes out of Poznań. Gradual degradation of the entire district was partly stopped in "Upper Łazarz", where beautiful "fin de siècle" architecture and park greenery attracted developers and creative sector. At the same time "Lower Łazarz" became somehow forgotten and with very bad reputation due its deteriorating economic and social conditions. One most visible signals of this situation were "empty spaces" - former shops and workshops left behind by craftsmen and traders who moved out.

## BOTTOM-UP INITIATIVES:

The idea of "reviving Lazarus" through cultural and social activities was developed by an umbrella organisation called "Open Zone of Culture". It includes several local NGOs and galleries that found "Lower Łazarz" a very interesting part of Poznań to develop their activities. In 2014 they developed a concept of revitalising Lower Łazarz through culture and social activities which could activate local inhabitants, improve districts spatial conditions and its general reputation. One of the main objective



was to develop programme of preferential rent to "fill in" local empty shops located around most neglected streets. In 2015 the partnership received grant from the City Hall for their common project entitled "Switch on Łazarz" and implemented portfolio of different cultural activities in this area. This was the first "kick off" of their activity in the district that enabled them to get to know with local society and District Council. The project has been continued since than every year.

## COOPERATION

Activities of bottom - up initiatives were very well received by the District Council and Poznań City Hall. Their approach was perceived as a very important element of revitalisation process that could positively influence local development. In 2015 an informal partnership was created between Open Zone of Culture, local District Council and City Hall's unit - Project Coordination and Urban Regeneration Office.

The partnership created Programming Group that includes representatives of each party and cooperates in planning of main activities in two areas - managing local Culture Incubator PIREUS and Preferential Rent Programme.

The idea of Cultural Incubator concentrates on providing inhabitants and activists with free off charge space, where they can develop their ideas and - if they find them sustainable - "export" them into other individual locations, preferably in Łazarz district. The place was rented and refurbished by the City Hall in the former Greek restaurant called Pireus - the Incubator kept this name, which was already widely recognised for the location. The place started at the beginning of 2016 and is open for different temporary activities selected by the Programming Group.

It is managed technically by the Project Coordination and Urban Regeneration Office. Slowly, it gets its positive reception in the neighbourhood, and hopefully it will become one of the most important centres of local activities. Its main role is to "radiate" on the neighbourhood and stimulate its re-development.

The biggest challenge that partnership took upon in 2016 was preparation and implementation of "Preferential Rent Programme". The Programming Group prepared rules of the programme in cooperation with Municipal Real Estate Management Company (ZKZL), that manages many city owned empty shops in the district. The Company selected several locations that were presented in the call for proposal. The refurbishment and covering monthly costs of maintenance. The call was open for proposals of activities that offer social and cultural activities available free of charge for local society. It may also include commercial activity but not entirely.

Managing the programme was very important "experiment" for the Programming Group. The Group was very much involved in preparation of programme rules, but the main technical management of the call (negotiations, preparation of formal agreements, contact with selected "winners") was led by the City Hall, as the administrative partner of ZKZL. Due to poor condition of several locations and administrative difficulties only 5 out of 10 selected applicants finally signed the rent contracts and started their activities. Among them we have some very interesting ideas - like for example small gallery presenting furniture designed by Polish designers in the communist period. The furniture - due to shortage of material and "too much exclusive character" - could not be produced in the 60s and 70s. At the moment these projects regain appreciation that they certainly deserve and some examples



## Insights for cities

will be presented in Łazarz. Hopefully they will attract admirers and clients to this part of the district. Despite all difficulties, the City and the Group plans to announce the second call of “Preferential Rent Programme” for other locations in 2017. We hope that experiences of the first edition will be used and make the process much easier both for initiators and users.

### LESSONS LEARNT

The cooperation of three different sectors is very difficult – that is our main conclusion of this already two-year process. One may say that it is like the “marriage of convenience”. We have the same goal – reviving the district – but different expectations and conditions which rule each party’s functioning. Like with every marriage of convenience, a real “prenup agreement” should be signed before one enters the partnership. All rules and expectations, as well as aims to be achieved should be clear to all parties and still they must keep cautious confidence. Real time frame for some processes and launching new programmes can differ from planned one. Especially when the condition of dedicated for temporary use vacant space is bad and requires serious refurbishment.

But most of all - cooperating between activists, municipality and local councillors proved to be a never-ending search for compromise. This situation might be very difficult to handle by people, who are not flexible and open. Sometimes helpful is redefining range of tasks, job descriptions of people engaged in the whole temporary use process, creating “urban agents”. Such change can introduce new level of cooperation.

Nevertheless...nobody said that “Reviving Lazarus” and generally speaking temporary use would be easy. But for sure it is exciting new area for exploring for local government officials 2.0.

**1.** Clear rules and expectations agreed from the beginning and well communicated are crucial. However, sometimes it is not possible to predict in early stage the final range of rules. Be prepare for reestablishing principles process.

**2.** Changing environment of the city can influence also the core idea of your cross -sectoral partnerships. Respect all parties to each other and flexibility will be helpful in up-dating “the strategies” of common initiative.

**3.** Be patient and brave. The cooperation of three sectors, delivering for the first time common “product” is a challenge and can require a long time to succeed. In some cases it requires also relentless leaving the own ‘comfort zone’ and stop using clichés like: “Social activists should know rules agreed by administration concerning activities they are interested in” or “administration’s role is only to pay to organizations for some city tasks implementation and it should not interfere in quality of tasks, as they are not experts in that field”.

We are all city-makers in our cities.

## MAINTAINING AN EQUILIBRIUM

### The example of the Creative District in Nantes, a balancing act of urban planning and economic development

*By Marieke Zeegers, SAMOA (France)*

From its very early existence (since 2003) the local urban development agency of the Island of Nantes, the SAMOA, has directly worked on the notion of temporary use. The 2003 team of 4 people installed their offices in the huge empty 30 000m<sup>2</sup> of the Alstom Factory Halls, before moving onto permanent offices. When the Creative District was born in 2011, the team also started working in the Alstom Factory Halls which by then had become a reference on the island for all imaginable types of temporary use (from not so legal activities, to an international electronic music festival, to office spaces reserved for companies working in the creative and cultural industries). In a way, temporary use is part of the DNA of the SAMOA, being itself a “temporary” company until the end of the rehabilitation of the island of Nantes.

The SAMOA is a bit of an outsider in the landscape of urban development agencies since it has 2 distinct activities. Its first, and historic, mission is to redevelop the island of Nantes. For this part the team is composed of engineers, urban planners and architects. The second mission of the SAMOA is to push the economic development of the creative and cultural industries through the Creative District cluster. These two activities allow the SAMOA to be present at different levels on the island, from the very day-to-day functioning and activities of a small company working in the field of graphic design for example, to the strategic political decisions on the top level in terms of urban planning. But then one could wonder, what is the point of this unusual combination of urban planning and econom-

ic development ? How and why did this originate ? And what does temporary use have to do with any of this ?

### FROM A SIMPLE OPPORTUNITY TO A LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

When the SAMOA still had its offices in the Alstom Factory Halls where the initial team was a bit lonely (4 people working in 30 000m<sup>2</sup>), they figured they might as well invite other companies to share the space with them in return for a small financial contribution allowing to pay the bills (electricity, security, water, Internet...). The demand was such that the SAMOA decided to approach the question in a more strategic way since the western point of the island offers many similar opportunities with its empty spaces.

This awareness coincides with the first organizations working in the creative and cultural industries taking an interest in the island of Nantes. A new cultural scene was starting to root on the island, the companies interested in renting office space in the Alstom factory often worked within the sectors of the creative and cultural industries, the architectural school decided to move to the island in 1995 and inaugurated their new building in 2009, and several European funded projects in the metropolitan area were exploring the possibilities of pushing the economic development of the creative and cultural industries.

Around 2008 emerges the idea of the Creative District





cluster, which concentrates on the western point of the island of Nantes different organizations, professionals and students. The goal by 2020 is to dedicate 15 hectares to the creative and cultural industries with over 4 000 students, 100 researchers 26 000 m<sup>2</sup> of office space and to create over 1 000 jobs in the different related economic sectors. An economic development agency is created, called the Creative District as well, to pursue and to push the development of small companies and start-ups. This development agency joins the SAMOA in 2011, and allows for the team to have an excellent knowledge of the reality and the needs of businesses working on the island. One of the particularities of companies and entrepreneurs in the creative and cultural industries is their small size (on average 3 to 4 people work in such companies) and little financial stability (most companies have about 6 months ahead of them). Creating affordable and small offices spaces are one of the ways that the SAMOA can support these companies. And although the SAMOA is not a real estate company and will never be one, it does own quite a bit of empty industrial buildings on the island waiting for their redevelopment.

## TEMPORARY USE AS A TOOL, BOTH IN URBAN PLANNING AND IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The first emblematic temporary use site on the island was the Alstom Factory Halls (see topic 5). Since then the SAMOA has developed several other sites such as the Karting, the Solilab, and the Centrale. All of these buildings have been redeveloped temporarily into small office spaces destined for entrepreneurs and small companies working in the sectors of the creative and cultural industries or the social and solidarity economy. The temporary notion is used here on a long-term scale since the buildings are redeveloped for another 10 years. After these first initiatives oriented towards economic development, temporary use is also very present in the participatory methods and getting the local citizens involved in the urban planning of the island. The Green Island project and Ile de Nantes Experimentation are examples of this. Temporary use has become strategic for the SAMOA on several levels, and goes far beyond land management or avoiding that part of the island turns into a no-man's land :

- It gives opportunities to experiment and test the future uses of the city. It allows to implement a project in a temporary way, offering the possibility to test new functions and uses of the city without taking too much risk. Since it is temporary, and is always presented as such, there is no permanent engagement and can thus

be interrupted when the experiment is not conclusive.

- The Karting, Solilab and Centrale show a guaranteed return on investment. It allows simultaneously for low rent, since the SAMOA does not want to make a profit from these office spaces but simply wants to recover the money invested in the light rehabilitation of the buildings.

- Temporary use allows to showcase, to demonstrate and to convince different local stakeholders (colleagues, politicians, real estate promoters, citizens...) of new uses and functions. The Karting and Solilab have clearly showed this.

- The physical presence of the entrepreneurs and companies on the island gives the team of the SAMOA an excellent knowledge of their activities and needs as well as feedback on the way they experience the temporary use and other services offered by the Creative District Team.

The programmed "end" of the available vacant space on the island (horizon 2030) is now pushing the Samoa to think about ways to incorporate temporary use in the permanent urban projects. The rehabilitation of the Alstom Factory Halls (see article topic 5) is the first example of this.

## THE BALANCING ACT

The integration of economic development within an urban planning agency gives the SAMOA a presence during the whole chain of the projects, from the planning through the implementation until the daily use of the spaces developed. A reiterative process has emerged with the possibility to adapt, adjust and improve temporary use and think of ways to deploy it on a larger scale. In a way it gives the SAMOA more flexibility but also more control (especially in time and budget management).

However, there is some complexity to this type of organization. It needs strong and continuous political support. The SAMOA has been very lucky with the presence of the politicians who are involved (which is quite logical when considering the size and potential in terms of urban development on the Island) in the redevelopment of the project since the beginning, including in the temporary use aspects. On the operational level the teams on the urban planning and the economic development work with very different time scales, budgets and methods which can make communication quite complicated. It takes time to find a common ground and the capacity to adapt is essential within the teams.

# Insights for cities

## 1.

Think of ways to have a global approach to urban development that includes activity after the urban planning itself has finished. For example, the approach of the Samoa to include an economic development agency in an urban planning agency. The economic agency works directly with the users which allows for feedback that can then be re-integrated in the urban planning projects.

## 2.

As an organization, make sure to be transparent about the nature of complexity with the members of the team, and support their capacity to adapt and to integrate frequent change.



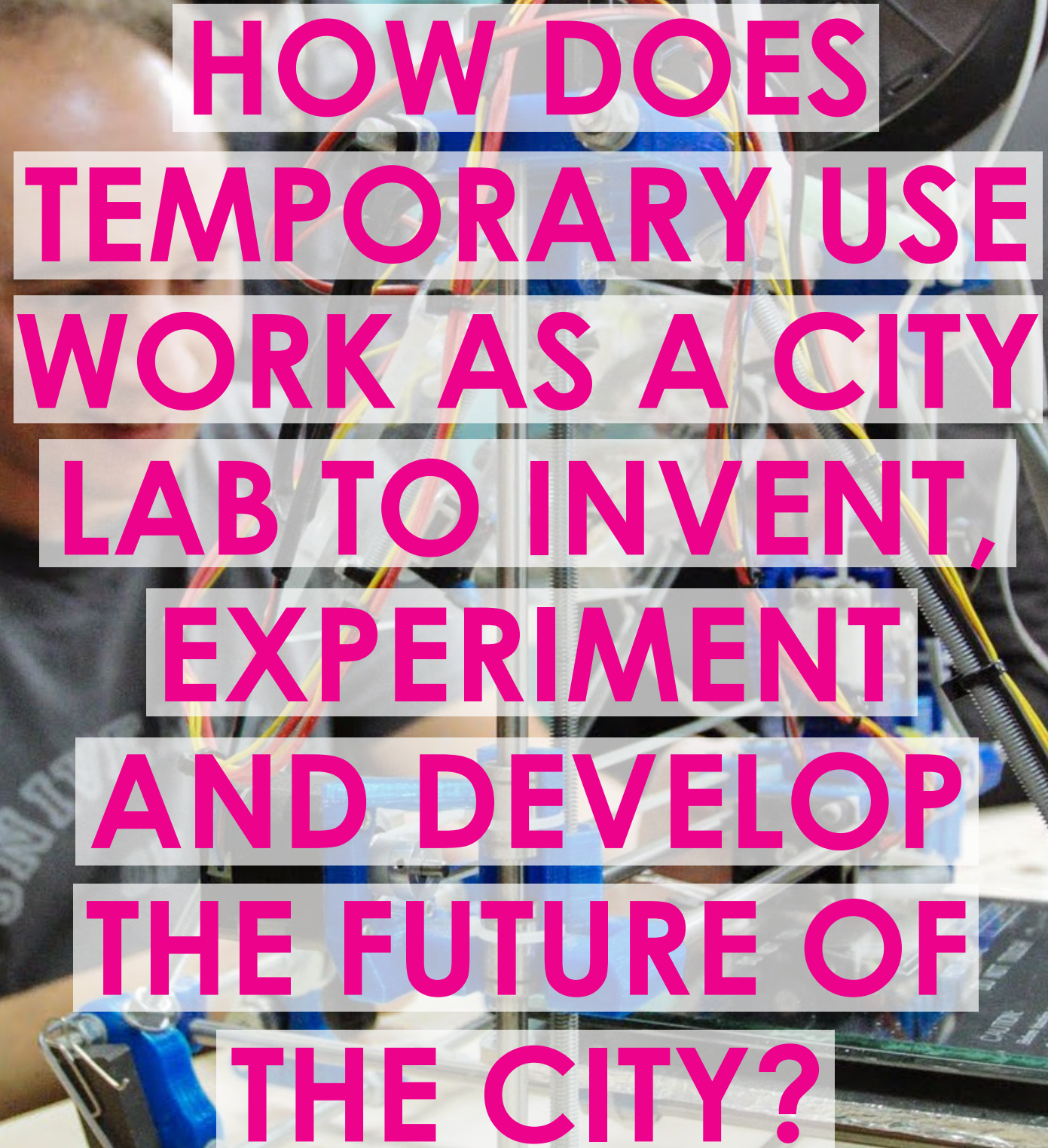
Part of the Alstom Factory Halls, Nantes (France).  
Photo by Vincent Jacques.



Part of the Alstom Factory Halls, Nantes (France).  
Photo by Vincent Jacques.







# HOW DOES TEMPORARY USE WORK AS A CITY LAB TO INVENT, EXPERIMENT AND DEVELOP THE FUTURE OF THE CITY?

*Traces of Commerce, Athens (Greece).  
Photo by Babis Giannikakis.*

## CITY LABS REINVENT THE CITY

### Bringing the people to the forefront of experimentation

*By Annaliina Niitamo, Helsinki (Finland).*

A City Lab means using the urban environment as a living laboratory to test ideas and services the city, its residents and businesses have. Why take the risk of not testing an idea before putting it into action on a bigger and more permanent scale? A real environment with real people gives you feedback on every step of the way and – most importantly – develops the city to look like its inhabitants. This article explores how temporary use can work as a city lab to reinvent the future of the city.

In these Labs, people are needed to keep the Lab up and running, balance between order and chaos, find new resources and maintain the lab in order. The experimenters in the Lab test, try out, document and also mix things up and add surprising ingredients. It's also important to tell others about the results and see who else could use the findings.

First, let's have a look at some examples from the partner cities of REFILL.

#### **WURST CASE, BREMEN: NEWLY FOUND POST-IN- DUSTRIAL GLORY**

WURST Case is a temporary use pro-

ject that finds new uses for an old meat factory in Hemelingen, Bremen. Hemelingen doesn't have the best reputation as a place to live in and WURST Case wants to turn this around. WURST Case is a first step towards a bigger neighbourhood shift. The project got great media coverage and has affected city development plans of the area.

Heard during the project: "A group of people interested in getting an office here didn't show up in the end, because they are vegan and heard, that this used to be a meat factory!"

#### **SMART KALASATAMA, HELSINKI: DIGITAL TOOLS TO REVEAL UNDERUSED SPACES**

Kalasatama is a new neighbourhood and an ongoing construction site in a central area in Helsinki. Kalasatama will only be finished in the end of the 2030's, so its inhabitants are living amidst trucks and cranes for a long time. The whole neighbourhood is a living lab for smart city development. One example of this is Flexispace project, where empty and underused spaces are opened through digital

solutions. Anyone can rent a space for example for one or two hours for their own projects, gatherings and hobbies. Super temporary use! On the long run, the experiences gained can lead up to more permanent use.

Heard during the project: "In increasingly urbanized Helsinki, we live in smaller and smaller apartments. Why not see the whole city as your living room, working space and event venue? We need flexibility from our surroundings and digitalism can provide it."

#### **FROM TRACES OF COM- MERCE TO KYPSALI MAR- KET, ATHENS: BRINGING LIFE TO RUN-DOWN SPACES**

Athens is a beautiful historic city that has suffered severely from the financial crisis. The number of empty buildings in Athens has risen dramatically in recent years and consequently neighbourhoods are degrading. At the same time there is a constant demand from citizen groups for affordable and functional spaces. Traces of Commerce – a vacant shopping passage – and the Kypseli Market – a vegetable





and fish market from the 1930's – are two projects that have revitalized unused spaces by inviting new creative users to put up shop or office in the old commercial spaces.

Heard during the project: “The upside of the financial crisis is the emergence of citizens’ initiatives and the creation of more effective approaches to current issues. We can offer these initiatives a physical space.”

### LIVING STREETS, GHENT: TANGIBLE CHANGES ON THE STREET

Living Streets is an experiment that allows citizens to temporarily transform their street into a sustainable place they’ve always dreamed of. During a time period of two months some streets in Ghent are turned into a beautiful and lively meeting space covered with a green carpet, plants, playgrounds for children, shared meals and a whole range of activities that cannot take place normally when these streets are used for traffic. In three years the project has grown from two living streets to twenty-five living streets.

Heard during the project: “Experimentation is a huge opportunity to strengthen a neighbourhood’s social contacts. During the process almost all inhabitants get in touch with each other as they use their streets as parks. These intensified contacts stay after the testing period is over.”

### CITY LAB IS A MINDSET THAT BUILDS A STURDY GROUND

What differentiates a Living Lab or City Lab from a hub or an incubator? A City Lab is usually built around a theme or an issue that they address. They might aim at creating a shift towards a more inclusive or environmentally friendly neighbourhood. City Labs have a selection of functions, such as coordination and or facilita-



Kypseli, Athens (Greece).  
Photo by Stathis Mamalakis.



Kypseli, Athens (Greece).  
Photo by Stathis Mamalakis.







Smart Kalasatama, Helsinki (Finland).  
Photo by Jussi Hellsten.

tion services, and they do communication, and run and bring together wide networks. Sometimes Labs can host hubs for offering meeting places and working spaces for their networks. Labs can help to scale up the ideas that are tested in them. Here they might also collaborate with business incubators. "Testing in a living lab produces scalable ideas to be put into use some-

where else. These experiments can be done by citizens, startups or the municipality itself. The key idea is light experimentation without risk", says Maija Bergström from Smart Kalasatama. By feeling out the needs of the environment before making permanent plans, the end result is on a more founded ground. It is low-threshold and affordable for the space owner

and the user. The city lab project offers its network and expertise for the users and help them achieve their goals. Emma Tytgadt from Living Streets agrees. Urban issues are complex but you should make them concrete for the participants. "Make it small and tangible so people want to participate. By testing on your own street, for example by removing cars and testing alternative mobility, citizens can real-

ly experience how the changes work. They will physically see the street become green and social." "Don't make too many restrictions. See what happens organically. It is great to see the new users of our meat factory offices make the space their own and make it into a better place", Oliver Haseman from WURST project adds.

## COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION ARE KEY

One important role for the City Lab is to help, support, coordinate and facilitate the interplay within several projects and a wide network. Usually you are handling quite an orchestra of different players. This requires lots of communication, especially with the

surrounding neighbourhood. They need to be introduced to the project but also involved in it. It is equally vital to create a sense of trust among the new users and entrepreneurs of the space. "People are very fine with working with each other, but there is a need of a moderator to matchmake them. Especially when integrating people from different backgrounds, for example in





Wurst Case, Bremen (Germany).  
Photo by Daniel Schnier.



Wurst Case, Bremen (Germany).  
Photo by Daniel Schnier.

our case with refugees, start-ups and neighbours”, says Oliver Haseman. Convincing real estate owners is one challenge, but another challenge is getting the right message across to the public.

“When turning an abandoned arcade into a building, it is important to create reasons for people to pass by the space on their way to work without a particular reason”, Vassilis Stamogiannis and Nicholas Karachalis say from Traces of Commerce.

To efficiently reach people, you have to offer them digital services. This is what Helsinki has learnt. Digital solutions uncover invisible spaces in the city. Imagine reserving an office space for a day of remote work to be as easy and quick as reserving online movie tickets! The networks of easy access spaces could itself work as a city lab to support pop-up events the same way that more traditional temporary use now works for longer term projects. “It is an open, transparent and easy way to open up resources for everyone’s use”, Maija Bergström says.

## TEMPORARY USE TO STEER URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Bottom-up experiments are challenging local government and finding new ways of solving urban issues. A city lab experimenting temporary use can bring positive change to troubled neighbourhoods and bring along new opportunities for the whole community.

“The physical place itself is a good way to allure new types of people and desired functions to the area. When you are testing with the physical space in interaction with the residents, you get a concrete idea of what the strengths of the area are”, Maija Bergström says. Temporary use is also beneficial for the image new neighbourhoods, for

example Kalasatama in Helsinki. Kalasatama has become very popular among a young creative class living in a close-by bohemian district, Kallio. Now, many new residents move to Kalasatama from Kallio and other surrounding areas.

One central reason for the high interest are the cultural events and the image of a communal and active neighbourhood that started developing early through temporary use of empty areas. New service providers and agile service pilots the whole neighbourhood can participate in contribute to this positive image.

“As an urban planning tool, a City Lab can be useful for cities that face the challenge of vacancy within the economic crisis. Our method can be applied in many Greek cities”, Vassilis Stamogiannis and Nicholas Karachalis say. “A vibrant community creates new ripples of creativity and good ideas.”

“It is no free lunch though”, Emma Tytgadt reminds. “In order to create new solutions, all parties have to work together, think outside of the box and work on an integrated approach. However, practical experience can make structural changes.”

A common experience is that you will usually have to convince different actors about your project: the landowner, municipality, future users of the space, neighbours... A good way to do this is to pick a theme or a flagship topic that is easily understandable to them. The theme can be anything from food and urban gardening to entrepreneurialism, green solutions or social issues such as unemployment or segregation.

But the most important key to success: “Collaborate and match-make! Don’t invent the wheel all over again. Invite people with talents you don’t have yourself.”

## INSIGHTS FOR CITIES

1. Choose what you want to be: city lab or living lab, hub or incubator? Maybe even combine these, or look for cooperation with those who can enlarge your offering.

2. Use the space to allure new types of people and organisations, support networking between them. Start with small tests, demos and pilots: gain practical experience – it can lead to structural changes.

3. Essential part of the lab is the role of facilitator and networker: in addition to space, you need people to bring different parties together and make them work towards shared goals.



# Do you want to know more about Refill?

Check out the issue #1 of the **REFILL MAGAZINE!**

By Marcelline Bonneau, Strategic Design Scenarios

If you have missed out the other magazines, you do have a chance to catch up! Why not start back from the start with the issue #1? Have you ever wondered how temporary use could develop? Ever wondered the way temporary use could be recognised as practice by the city administration and the way it would benefit from an adaptation of buildings? In the next issue of the REFILL magazine we will investigate these in more details, and in particular:

- How can cities map the potential of vacancy and temporary use offer?
- How can cities find space for temporary use within the current administrative structure and legal framework?
- How can cities adapt technical requirements, security standards, public access rules to facilitate temporary use?
- How can cities deliberate democratically between social, environmental and economic benefits around temporary use and property economic value?

Examples from our partner cities will showcase some of the ways these issues have been addressed so far: in Amersfoort (Urban Gardening and Decision tree), in Bremen (Vacancy detector), in Cluj (Local taxes Policy for temporary use of public spaces), in Ghent (Economic pop up regulation), in Helsinki (Open data experiments), in Nantes (Precarious Occupation Convention), and in Riga (Free Riga, Free Riga memorandum).

Do you want to know more about these? Check out the issue #1 of the REFILL magazine!







# refill

TEMPORARY USE - DYNAMICS FOR LIFE

REUSE OF VACANT SPACES AS DRIVING FORCE  
FOR INNOVATION ON LOCAL LEVEL

## PARTNER COUNTRIES

Ghent (Belgium-Lead partner) - Amersfoort (Netherlands) - Athens (Greece)  
Bremen (Germany) - Cluj-Napoca (Romania) - Helsinki (Finland) - Nantes (France) - Ostrava  
(Czech Republic) - Poznań (Poland) - Riga (Latvia)

[www.urbact.eu/Refill](http://www.urbact.eu/Refill)



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