

A JOURNEY

THROUGH

TEMPORARY USE



EUROPEAN UNION
European Regional Development Fund



This publication was made with the input and help of our project managers from the 10 Refill cities.

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Read online about REFILL and temporary use:

<http://urbact.eu/REFILL>

<https://refillthecity.wordpress.com/BLOG/>

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NEW USE OF VACANT SPACES SPURS INNOVATION ON A LOCAL LEVEL

OVER THE PAST FEW DECADES, MANY CITIES HAVE EXPERIMENTED WITH FINDING TEMPORARY USES FOR ABANDONED OR NEGLECTED SPACES AND BUILDINGS. THEIR EXPERIENCES SERVE AS A SOURCE OF INSPIRATION FOR INNOVATION AND CHANGE IN OTHER CITIES WHERE TEMPORARY USE CAN ACT AS A DRIVER AND INCUBATOR FOR URBAN DEVELOPMENT.

WHAT IS TEMPORARY USE?

Many of the initiatives at the onset of these experiments have a bottom-up structure. Some are SMEs, artists or craftsmen, organisations looking for meeting space or cultural initiatives. Others are residents who maintain plots of land or initiatives for urban farming, and yet others manage a community centre or are looking for new forms of mobility.

In some cities, grassroots organisations started experimenting with temporary use with little political or administrative intervention. Elsewhere, local authorities have actively looked for ways to facilitate this movement.

FREEDOM FOR URBAN DEVELOPMENT

“Normal” rules do not apply to temporary use, leading to an unusual freedom from the constraints of mainstream management or exploitation of spaces. What looks like a no man’s land one moment, is transformed the next into something new and exciting, a way to see the city from a new perspective. Freedom leads to inspiration, and inspiration to innovation.

REFILL

REFILL is a network of partnering cities: Amersfoort, Athens, Bremen, Cluj, Ghent, Helsinki, Nantes, Ostrava, Poznan and Riga. Its goal is to unite experimented cities

with temporary use and developed tools accordingly, such as legislation, funds, financial tools, agencies, networks, (digital) platforms and so on.

WHAT’S IN HERE?

This publication compiles findings of the REFILL network. It is more manual than report, meant not to gather dust in a drawer but to inspire a wider audience and be actively used. Read it any way you wish: from beginning to end or in short bursts wherever it falls open. You will find it chock full of experiences from other cities, inspirational cases and examples, lessons learnt and recommendations for tools and policies.

HOW TO USE THE MAP

Fold open the included roadmap to explore key steps towards temporary use. Pick those stops that appeal to you and apply to your own context, plan your trip and start your journey towards temporary use! The map guides you through the tools in this publication, provided by the Refill network.



01

LESSONS LEARNT



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TEMPORARY USE OF VACANT URBAN SPACES: REFILL LESSONS LEARNT

— FRANÇOIS JÉGOU, LEAD EXPERT

#1. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Temporary use should be recognised as a practice by the municipal administration and included in the legal frame of building regulations.

Some cities start by mapping vacant buildings and highlighting their temporary use potential. In Riga, urban activists marked locations with an Occupy Me sticker (see also: **CO2**, p. 40). Athens

gave the process an artistic twist with an exploratory walk. Bremen used an existing collaborative web platform whereas Helsinki investigated how open data could help in mapping vacant buildings.

The cities then try to fit temporary use into the existing administrative structure and legal framework. This sometimes requires some “legal creativity”. In Nantes for instance, the SAMOA development agency

works on technical requirements, public access rules, fire and security standards and so on to facilitate each temporary use project (see also: **FO1**, p. 24).

#2. BROKERING

Temporary use requires accurate, dedicated mediation between stakeholders and support in the field for the entire duration of the temporary use, and beyond.

Temporary use requires brokering from the city administration between property owners and people or organisations looking for a space. The mediation should include all stakeholders: resident and merchants, urban planning experts, developers, architects and any others.

To increase the visibility of temporary use, it may help to launch iconic projects as ambassadors to convince stakeholders. In Ghent, this strategy was backed up by an integrated communication strategy to connect with the neighbourhood and by evidence-based policy-making.

Brokering between stakeholders can take on many forms. In Ghent and Amersfoort, civil servants act as neighbourhood managers (see also **F08**, p.31). Athens uses synAthena, an online platform in Athens that connects the social innovation scene. In Bremen, a committee with members from relevant municipal departments takes



Temporary use
of vacant space in the city

**REFILL TOOL #1: TEMPORARY USE FOR DUMMIES
(VIDEO)**

A friendly 5-minute video to spread the idea and save a lot of time! The video was co-designed by the REFILL partners to quickly explain what temporary use is and what it is not. Find it online at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KfZSYslqD9Y&feature=youtu.be>.



REFILL TOOL #2: STAKEHOLDER MATCH-MAKING METHODOLOGY

The REFILL matchmaking approach is a way to connect temporary use candidates with different departments of the municipal administrations. They get to know one another, find out about each other's needs and maybe kick off new collaborations. REFILL city partners co-developed this methodology, which was piloted and improved in Cluj, Poznan and Ghent. Find out more at:

www.urbact.eu/refill-match-makers

on the brokering role, similarly to Athens's vice-mayor for temporary use. Amersfoort has a "business district network" of real estate players. Lastly, in Riga the non-profit organisation Free Riga mediates between property owners and the cultural scene.

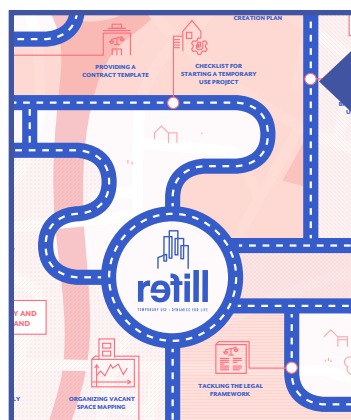
#3. SUPPORT

To benefit from temporary use and fully use its potential, initiatives need support.

Start-ups, social innovators, cultural associations and other initiatives interested in temporary use require mentoring and technical coaching. With its seven years of experience, Bremen's ZZZ (Zwischen-ZeitZentrale) knows what a difference support measures make for temporary use candidates. Their services range from contract templates and advice on safety checks, to support for fire inspections and exit strategies after the temporary use. Building a formal framework helps to institutionalise the practice of temporary use but also risks rigidifying it. Poznan advocates flexible mediation. They offer a toolbox with practical tips, successful medi-

ation solutions and social agreements, a list of useful local contacts and recommendations for temporary use agreements.

As the REFILL partner cities explored how they could best support initiatives in temporary use projects, they also began to question the traditional preference for stability and security. In temporary use projects, the dynamic of regular moves and changes is also seen as positive to inspire innovation and benefit from the positive vibe of different locations.



REFILL TOOL #3: ROADMAP TO TEMPORARY USE

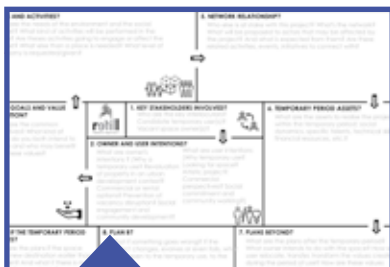
REFILL's partner cities have pooled their respective experiences into a REFILL Roadmap to temporary use. Find the map at the back of this publication.

#4. TEMPORARY USE BECOMES NORMAL

Temporary use is the new normal. Vacant urban spaces are no longer considered anomalies. As a result, temporary use is likely to develop further into a public service.

REFILL cities' experiences confirm that subsidies are always welcome, but also found several requirements for supporting services. It is useful to have a single point of contact in the municipal administration, a mentor to coach projects in the long run, and a temporary use legal toolbox. The latter may contain contract templates, insurance guidelines, licencing tips, etc. Such a flexible, tailor-made service requires either a highly adaptable administration equipped to reach out to each single initiative, such as in Ghent, or can be outsourced to third parties with the necessary qualities like in Riga, Amersfoort and Bremen.

Temporary users expect a certain degree of service but are also providing a service themselves. They maintain the site, reduce costs, add value to the property and provide image benefits for property owners. As such, municipalities aren't just acting as mediators between economically weak temporary users and property owners. All parties are stakeholders collaborating to create value in the city.



REFILL TOOL #4: TEMPORARY USE VALUE CREATION PLAN

The partner cities co-developed a REFILL temporary use value creation plan, a type of informal contract between temporary users and owners. It asks crucial questions, such as: what do you want to do during the temporary use period? What range of values does your project intend to create and who may benefit from them? Do you have plans for the created values after the temporary use or in case you run into problems? Find it online:

[www.youtube.com/
watch?v=m4Bimw8jZkg&
feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m4Bimw8jZkg&feature=youtu.be)

assets.

It is crucial that all temporary use candidates be made aware of the timeframe of the arrangement. Transparency is key. This can be done in the form of mutual declarations of intent and formal contracts. Furthermore, some municipalities invite closer collaboration to work towards common objectives. Nantes, for example, explicitly seeks to become a better “temporary

host” not only to better support initiatives accommodated in temporary spaces but also to increase value creation across the city as the initiatives move forward after the temporary use period.

REFILL partner cities show a range of these evolving collaborations integrating their transition, transformation, or transposition after the temporary use period. In Athens, Traces of Commerce, a new temporary business incubator, is relocating the most promising start-ups after the event is over (see also: **C03**, p. 46). In Ostrava a succession of temporary use spaces ensure the hosting of the Plato contemporary art platform, pending the redevelopment of a permanent location. In Nantes the redevelopment of the former Halles Alstom industrial sites is keeping some spaces “open source”, without pre-defined use (see also: **C01**, p. 38).

#6. URBAN LABS AND STRATEGIC TEMPO- RARY USE

Temporary use is a tool for bottom-up urban planning and a laboratory to experiment with the city of tomorrow.

From experience in the REFILL partner cities, it is clear that citizen initiatives in temporary use projects greatly affect the atmosphere and quality of life in their neighbourhoods. The transformation is a great, gradual experiment in urban planning and the evolution of neighbourhoods. Temporary experiments in Cluj, for instance, aim to reactivate the banks of the Someş river (see also: **C05**, p. 50). Temporary occupations of cultural and artistic initiatives on the Hlubina brownfield in the heart of Ostrava attract the city’s population to the area once more. A preferential rent programme in Poznan involves cultural and social

initiatives to help revitalize the Lower Lazarz neighbourhood (see also: **F11**, p. 34). In Nantes, the occasional accommodation of cultural and artistic initiatives generates an attractive ecosystem for creative industries.

Temporary use of vacant urban spaces allows cities to accommodate a diverse range of initiatives which, all compiled, have a measurable effect on the urban scale. Temporary use functions as a testing ground, co-constructed with the citizens and local actors. It’s an urban laboratory that works both bottom-up and top-down where new ideas may be tested before they are fully and permanently instated.



REFILL MAGAZINES

Each of the topics above has been discussed during workshops, further documented, and thoroughly examined by all the partner city. The outcome and insights for cities were collected in 6 REFILL Magazines published by the network from April to September 2017.

Each issue focuses on a single theme, offering multiple entry points, technical content, lessons learnt, and insights for cities but also stories, testimonies, experiences, and pictures to browse.

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02

POLICY

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS IN 9 QUOTES

POLITICAL REPRESENTATIVES AND SPOKESPERSONS OF THE REFILL CITIES GATHERED IN ATHENS TO DISCUSS WHAT THEY GAINED FROM THE PAST YEARS OF INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGES IN THE REFILL THEMATIC NETWORK. THEY DEBATED ABOUT SOME OF THEIR CHALLENGES AND EXCHANGED VIEWS ON HOW THEY, AS POLITICAL REPRESENTATIVES, CAN SUPPORT THE PROCESS OF TEMPORARY USE.

Their conclusion? Temporary use has become a necessity to fight the social and environmental crisis. It supports active citizens as they explore new urban solutions. But it remains a challenge to adapt city governance into a form of decision-making that is less top-down and more based on co-creation with the people. These nine inspiring quotes summarise the conclusions.

TEMPORARY USE AS A NECESSITY

Empty places and buildings are assets

“Why not use the space that we have?”

Vacant places are no longer seen as a problem but as an asset in REFILL cities. They are used to host emerging practices, incubate new ideas, host social and cultural innovation, empower new urban economies and so on. More than an opportunity, such

spaces have even become a necessity to fight the social and environmental crisis, in order to become more resilient cities.

Temporary use for placemaking

“Temporary use enables a form of urban planning that does not predetermine usages of places.” It allows for experiments in collaboration with citizens before deciding upon redevelopment. “It turns placemaking into a bottom-up process rather than a top-down one.”

Cities as laboratories of tomorrow

“Cities are big enough to think big and small enough to act.” Innovations are growing locally and “Decisions about what needs to be done in a city will increasingly come from the streets.” Temporary use spaces are living laboratories. They are part of what makes “cities tools to invent the future of Europe and to conceive new forms of democracy”.

LEADING TOGETHER WITH CITIZENS

Enabling and accommodating bottom-up actions

“Public places are not owned by the municipality; they belong to the citizens.” Facilitating temporary use and making it a new normal is a way to make “public space available as a public service”, to accommodate social innovation and ensure vibrant and creative cities.

Supporting active citizens

“In the city administration we have too many problem finders and not enough problem solvers.”



© EVELYNE DECEUR



Temporary users bring administrations in touch with active grassroots initiatives exploring new urban solutions. *“Letting some control go to innovative citizens is not losing power. On the contrary, Supportive politicians can be proud of what citizens are doing for the city.”* The role of city administration is to listen to and to activate forces for positive change.

Giving access to vulnerable users

Particular attention should be given to youth and elderly, the economically weak, minorities and migrants: *“We must not forget to also engage groups which are not quite as vocal. They must feel that those projects are interesting for them, too.”* Today it’s no longer sufficient to organise participation by informing or consulting people. Citizens want to act. This active method of participation has the potential to also reach those groups often left aside in traditional participation processes.

TEMPORARY USE AS A TOOL TO CHANGE CITY GOVERNANCE

Temporary use to show obstacles

“Facilitation of temporary use is not an easy ride. Since it is innovative, there is no roadmap.” Temporary use challenges us to think about questions never thought of

before. As an example: how can temporary use trigger citizens’ problem solving capacities? How does it show the ways in which public administration can evolve, away from top-down decision-making and more toward informed co-creation with the people, with less rigidity, more agile procedures and facilitation for emerging forms of active welfare?

Experimental bottom-up governance

“Cities want to be smart. Smart cities cannot be smart without smart citizens”. Creating space for temporary use in the city administration and legal framework is a way to allow citizens to propose solutions for the problems they encounter. “It’s giving cities the freedom to experiment, but also to make mistakes and to learn from them”.

Leveraging on city coalitions to inspire changes

“Taking part to REFILL gave us a legitimation for what we are doing in our city since such practices were unknown and unprecedented here.” Good practices of temporary use, facilitation processes and enabling tools were diffused across the network and beyond. *“Being able to present successful examples of temporary use from other cities can help you convince your colleagues in your own city”.*

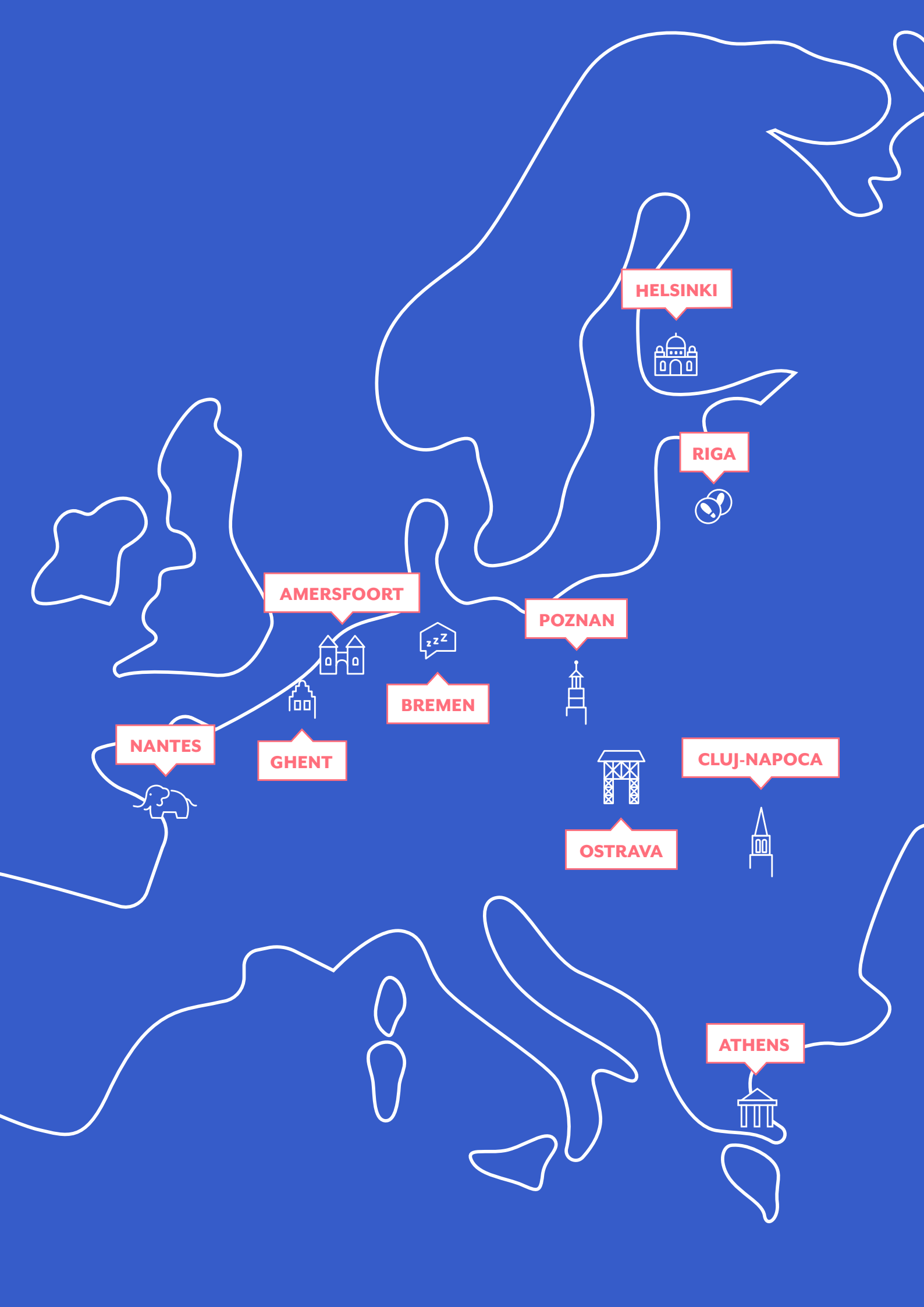
REFILL POLITICAL REPRESENTATIVES

Amalia Zepou, Vice Mayor of Athens for Civil Society and Innovation; **Daniel Termont**, Mayor of Ghent; **Hans Buijtelaar**, Vice Mayor of Amersfoort for Real Estate, Mobility and Finance; **Joachim Lohse**, Senator of Bremen for the Environment, Urban Development and Mobility; **Nasima Razmyar**, Deputy Mayor of Helsinki for Culture and Leisure; **Bassem Asseh**, Vice mayor of Nantes for Civic Engagement; **Katerina Šebestová**, Deputy Mayor of Ostrava for Environment and IT projects and services; **Ovidiu Cimpean**, Director of the Local Development and Project management division of Cluj-Napoca, representing Mayor Emil Boc; **Agnieszka Osipiuk**, Project Coordination and Urban Regeneration Office of Poznan representing Mr Mariusz Wisniewski, deputy Mayor of City Development and Real Estate.

03

PARTNERS





HELSINKI



RIGA



AMERSFOORT



POZNAN



BREMEN

CLUJ-NAPOCA



NANTES



GHENT



OSTRAVA



ATHENS





AMERSFOORT (THE NETHERLANDS)

The real estate market crisis led to a rise in vacant properties in Amersfoort. Citizens took matters into their own hands: one group set up a foundation for the Preservation of Postmodern Industrial Heritage while others were taking over the management of community centres which had to close down because of public budget cuts. Community involvement and social entrepreneurship in the city are growing. The city supports this movement through policies such as temporary use with preferential rent for citizens' initiatives.

The municipality is working on a coherent policy to actively stimulate temporary use, especially to improve the transparency of municipal decision-making and the equal treatment of different initiatives. A coherent policy for temporary use will contribute to social innovation while also solving the issue of vacant spaces. As citizen initiatives rise in Amersfoort, both social entrepreneurship and area development are greatly improved.

ATHENS (GREECE)

The economic downturn caused public and private real estate programs to stall in Athens. This has left many urban spaces empty and unused. Yet the depression created a new role for citizens: grassroots communities, political thinkers, architects, people with a need to reshape their city. The municipality of Athens stepped in to facilitate certain projects.

The synAthina initiative emerged as a promising practice to capture, reinforce, and synergise these dynamics online. The platform connects grassroots initiatives and was a starting point for the first temporary use initiatives. Many projects show great potential, such as one project called Traces of Commerce, a business incubator that helps young entrepreneurs test their commercial potential in temporary use spaces (see also: **C03**, p. 46).

Athens wants to develop a process to connect creative actors with grassroots initiatives, the private sector and the municipality. The city is now looking into ways to turn the experiences from the synAthina into an action plan for temporary use.



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BREMEN (GERMANY)

An independent database called the vacancy detector shows that there are over 750 abandoned spaces in Bremen. This number clearly illustrates the need for vacancy management in Bremen. In 2006, the city set up a temporary use agency for the old harbour site which was expanded to the whole of the city a few years later. The ZZZ (ZwischenZeitZentrale) is a group of architects and urban planners tasked with bringing new life to dormant buildings and spaces in Bremen. Temporary use has also been incorporated in the municipality's services such as construction law, contract drafting and guidelines for marketing.

Thanks to the ZZZ, temporary use has become a reliable tool for urban development and has become widely accepted within the Bremen administration. Now, the new challenge created by the arrival of massive numbers of refugees could be an opportunity for temporary use to reach its full potential. Bremen and ZZZ aim to take a first step towards experimenting with an urban lab for urban and social integration.

CLUJ-NAPOCA (ROMANIA)

There are many vacant and abandoned industrial sites and buildings in Cluj. In response to this problem, the city began to implement temporary use projects, encouraging new activities in these spaces to test the community's response. The projects were successful: the community became increasingly interested in co-designing public spaces, and in rebuilding and adapting them to suit its own needs. Two temporary use projects—initiatives along the banks of the river Someş (see also: **C05**, p. 50) and the accommodation of artists and galleries in Fabrica de Pensule—became emblematic for the city.

Cluj boasts a booming cultural scene, which needs space. It is an internationally renowned incubator for contemporary art. The city's many students contribute to its lively, dynamic atmosphere. Cultural initiatives in Cluj range from grassroots social innovation and community engagement to street art festivals and contemporary fine arts. Temporary use activities in vacant buildings must, in some way, contribute to the way the city is experienced, either by way of temporary installations or with occasional events in public spaces.





© DE SITE

GHENT (BELGIUM)

Even though the city of Ghent is short on urban space, it has some brownfields, vacant warehouses, empty factories, unused retail spaces and wastelands awaiting renewal projects. Ghent has been experimenting with temporary use for over a decade. Two iconic cases were initiated by the city as part of urban renewal projects aimed at citizen participation (see also: **C04**, p. 48). These two projects have allowed the city to generate new temporary bottom-up initiatives in other neighbourhoods.

The city has embraced temporary use as a way to involve citizens in urban regeneration and to provide breathing room for existing social innovations. The municipality has stepped up as a powerful broker for temporary use. The city's neighbourhood managers act as neutral mediators. Ghent wants to become a citizen-oriented eco-system where pioneers and citizens have the confidence to take the initiative, to experiment, and to coordinate temporary use. The city wants to apply insights from temporary use projects to permanent urban development as a form of slow urbanism.

HELSINKI (FINLAND)

The city of Helsinki aims to make temporary use of public areas and empty spaces for citizen-led and cultural uses easier. The city itself acts as facilitator and is a testing ground for new innovations. The redevelopment area of Kalasatama in particular has demonstrated the use of developing areas as urban laboratories. Temporary use is seen as a way to improve public services and use them more flexibly. This approach to temporary use broadens REFILL's focus on vacant spaces in the city by adding unused public assets into the mix. Helsinki uses smart systems to support temporary use as a public service.

Helsinki is evolving into a more transparently governed city. This transparency ranges from the sharing of public data, including those on vacant city-owned buildings, to the use of smart systems to unlock spaces and on to user-driven development of policy. The city hopes to enable temporary use practices more efficiently through transparent, bottom-up, and responsible approaches.



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NANTES (FRANCE)

As Nantes's industrial harbour activities disappeared, the central river island or Île de Nantes was left behind as a derelict brownfield. Since the early 2000s, the city of Nantes has begun to redevelop the island, which is now one of Europe's largest urban regeneration sites. Temporary use developed on the island as an opportunity to redefine the territory, involving different stakeholders and creating a sense of ownership in the process of building the city (see also: **CO1**, p. 38).

The creation of a new creative district attracts new economic actors to the centre of Nantes. The island serves as a laboratory for urban redevelopment. This living lab is likely to go on inventing its own future and that of the city. As vacant space on the island is becoming scarce, the challenge for developers is to avoid "freezing" infrastructure and coming up with forms of reversibility that are open to temporary experiments. Meanwhile, the city of Nantes is looking into expanding the experiment and developing a structure for citizen participation through their Integrated Action Plan.

OSTRAVA (CZECH REPUBLIC)

Ostrava has been labelled the "black city" and "city of coal" in the past, but now its image has been changing. Deserted factories and vacant shops are being used for cultural events and educational purposes, turning the city into a cultural and educational hub. Ostrava's citizens are doing their part through multiple bottom-up initiatives and cultural events. Events and festivals are attracting people from in and around the city to discover its new dynamic and fascinating industrial heritage.

To more fully exploit the city's potential and redevelop the citycentre, the municipality recognises temporary use as an important tool. During the REFILL project, Ostrava tested several pilot projects based on collaborations between the municipality and active citizens. The project raised significant interest in temporary and its potential. Ostrava continues to experiment with temporary use as a standard practice.





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POZNAN (POLAND)

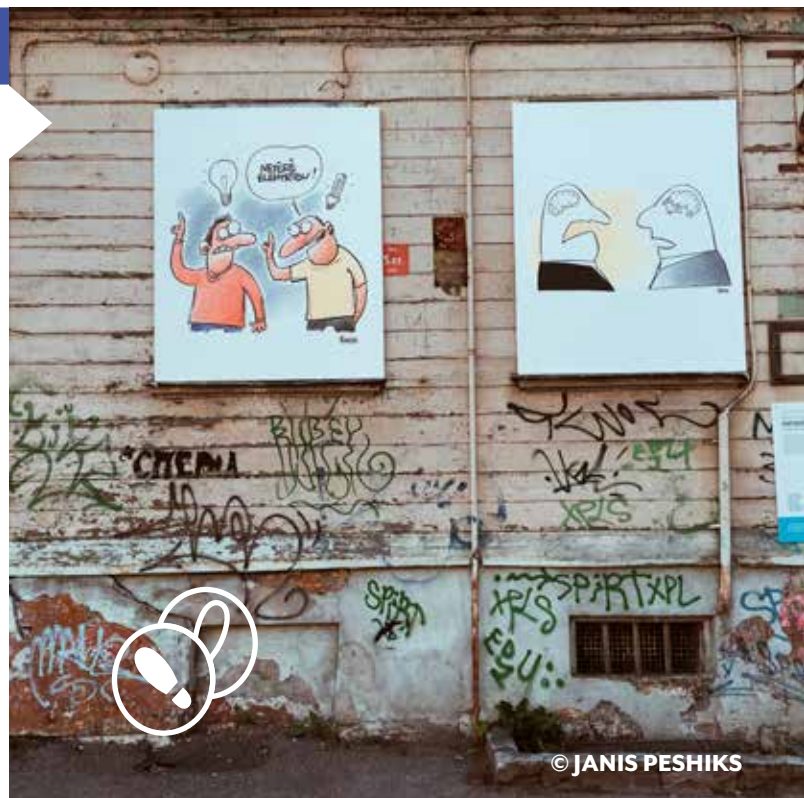
Urban sprawl has greatly increased the amount of vacant space in Poznan, especially in the city centre districts. Even though most empty buildings are privately owned, those owned by the municipality are often located in the heart of the city and significantly impact the city's image. Poznan is therefore actively introducing temporary use of vacant spaces. The city is working on new policies and processes to make temporary use possible and fruitful for all stakeholders.

An early experiment with preferential renting was not entirely successful. With the insights from that earlier experience, the city has launched a Preferential Rent Programme in 2015 which implemented more user-friendly terms and included incubation and networking activities for starting businesses. The administration takes up a role as mediator between the owners of the vacant spaces and the local actors looking to rent them. The city of Poznan and the Malta Foundation are working together to finish the guidelines for temporary use.

RIGA (LATVIA)

Many construction projects in Riga were put on hold because of the downturn in 2008, resulting in a boom of vacant properties and degraded territories and properties or even ruins. Over 450 vacant properties have been identified, mostly in the city centre and about 89% privately owned. Riga devised an Integrated Action Plan including a framework for temporary use. The strategies outlined in it were designed to build trust between the parties involved.

Free Riga, an intermediary between owner and potential users, helps socially sustainable initiatives and local entrepreneurs to find suitable spaces for their activities. It informs the public about temporary use and gives advice on critical issues like security and rehabilitation. The temporary users provide a service by redeveloping unused or dismissed urban areas. With the proper coordination and under the Urban Redevelopment Plan, temporary use may help to reshape previously desolate areas and breathe new life into neighbourhoods.



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04

FACTSHEETS





FACTSHEET: PRECARIOUS OCCUPATION AGREEMENT

© VINCENT JACQUES

WHAT?

On the river island in the centre of Nantes, the local development agency SAMOA sought a solution for the degradation of several old industrial buildings that it owns while they were awaiting a new destination. The solution was found in flexible contracts—Precarious Occupation Agreements—which offer the available buildings as basic office space to small companies in exchange for a small fee.

The Precarious Occupation Agreement offers a minimal legal framework for a flexible, temporary commitment between owner and tenant. It clearly defines the temporary nature of the arrangement, the type of activities allowed, maintenance expectations of the tenant and a few other basic legal clauses. For SAMOA buildings, the maximum duration of the contract is 23 months, renewable once for another 12 months. Compensation for office space in SAMOA buildings is 150 EUR/m²/year including electricity, internet and taxes.

WHEN?

Since 2004

WHERE?

Nantes, France

WHY?

- Cheap basic office spaces for small companies
- A pragmatic solution for building degradation and squatting
- A flexible solution within a legal framework

LESSONS LEARNT

It quickly became clear that the success of the contracts depends on their flexibility. There is a natural turnover of tenants as companies or startups move on to more comfortable office space. The SAMOA has found it good practice to help tenants find new accommodation when a building is closed for construction. If, at the end of their contract, companies have not yet found suitable accommodation, they are allowed to remain a bit longer.

HOW TO TRANSFER

The Precarious Occupation Agreement is a flexible solution for the temporary use of spaces that might otherwise degrade or be occupied by squatters. Setting up a similar agreement should be simple as long as a lawyer or notary evaluates its legality. The simplicity of the agreement is key, with light conditions and the clear mention that the occupation must be temporary.

- **Create a legal framework for temporary use occupation**
- **Clearly define the conditions of temporary use for both owner and tenant**



FACTSHEET:

ZZZ – ZWICHENZEITZENTRAL

WHAT?

After a successful pilot project, the German city of Bremen has set up an agency for temporary use: the ZZZ (ZwischenZeitZentrale Bremen), which is managed by a private company. The agency supports, initiates and oversees temporary use projects all over Bremen. The Senate departments of Economic Affairs, Labour and Ports; Sustainability, City Development and Transportation, and Finance provide a budget of 560,000 EUR to support temporary use projects. A steering committee from all three departments meets monthly to discuss and advise the projects.

Since 2009, the ZZZ has become known in Bremen as a supporter of cultural, social and economic activities in the city. Because it is run by a private company, it has taken on a mediator role between owners and tenants on the one hand, and the administration on the other. The ZZZ has one full-time and one part-time employee.

WHEN?

Since 2009

WHERE?

Bremen, Germany

WHY?

- Improvement of deprived neighbourhoods
- Reduction of running costs of vacancy
- In support of local entrepreneurship

LESSONS LEARNT

The direct contact between the ZZZ and the owners and tenants of the buildings has proven crucial to remain in touch with the needs and questions of both. Most of the ZZZ's work has been with part-time start-up businesses and in deprived neighbourhoods, particularly in areas outside the public perception. The meetings of the steering committee help to keep the aims of the administration and the users aligned.

HOW TO TRANSFER

The ZZZ shows that it is possible for administrations to work with a private stakeholder to support and oversee temporary use projects. The investment in personnel for the temporary use agency is a necessary one. These employees should be able to mediate between local initiatives and the administration. Monthly meetings between stakeholders are a good way to keep track of projects and discuss issues.

- **Support local initiatives, entrepreneurship and neighbourhoods**
- **Redevelop deprived neighbourhoods**
- **Experiment with new uses of old buildings**



FACTSHEET: LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTATION PROCESS

WHAT?

Built in the 1930s, the Kypseli Municipal Market in Athens, Greece, was used as a market until the early 1990s. As a result of suburbanisation, the decline of the area and the proliferation of supermarkets, the market stalls gradually closed down. Local groups and neighbourhood organisations took over to give the building a new function. After a refurbishment from 2011 to 2016, the municipality looked for a more permanent purpose for the building.

After a consultation round with the neighbourhood, an open call was launched in 2016 for the management of the project. The winner was Impact Hub Athens' proposal of a combination of three activities: an urban lab for social and entrepreneurial experimentation, a conscious mall to support the local economy, and a Culture Hive for cultural and educational events.

WHEN?

2016

WHERE?

Athens, Greece

WHY?

- New use for an old market
- A sustainable solution for the building, the neighbourhood and the municipality
- A repeatable experiment with temporary use

LESSONS LEARNT

The model used to ensure a sustainable temporary use of the Kypseli Market was successful. This sort of experimentation where civilians participate in the consultation process can now be applied in other empty public buildings in Athens. These projects may be helpful in confronting some of the key challenges that Athens faces, such as the refugee crisis, unemployment and poverty. The involvement of citizens was effectively facilitated by a theatre actors.

HOW TO TRANSFER

Theatre play as a consultation technique proved useful to reach a larger segment of the population than a formal meeting would. The municipality made a choice to outsource the temporary use project through an open call rather than taking its support upon itself. The Kypseli Market experiment shows that a single project can provide a clear context for future temporary use projects.

- **Develop and pilot a model for the management of temporary use in municipal buildings**
- **Develop and pilot a process to support future temporary use projects**
- **Set the price and terms for renting out temporary use spaces**



FACTSHEET:

MAPPING VACANT SPACES

WHAT?

Cultural and artistic initiatives find it increasingly difficult to find suitable space for their activities in the city of Cluj. The available space tends to be concentrated in the city centre, leading to gentrification. The city launched an experiment in a peripheral neighbourhood to map the available, vacant spaces in that area.

The mapping of these spaces took the form of an urban exploratory walk through the neighbourhood, followed by a roundtable discussion with the stakeholders. It became clear that there are indeed empty or underused properties with an uncertain legal status and little immediate perspective for valorisation. Such spaces have great potential for temporary use.

LESSONS LEARNT

An in-depth analysis of the plots and buildings discovered during the exploratory walk is needed. Moreover, the walk has also shown a need for the creation of a digital platform where vacant spaces can be presented and through which users can obtain information and access. Ideally, this would also function as an interactive environment for discussion between all actors. The next step is a more in-depth analysis of the available spaces. The municipality can play a role as mediator between owners and potential tenants or users.

HOW TO TRANSFER

Thanks to the participative format, this event brought out more opportunities than a top-down analysis would have. It is a good way to reach many different target groups and involve them from the initial phase of the process, that is the choice of a pilot area for the experiment. The owners of the properties are crucial players, but they are not always easily approachable. It is useful to pre-identify owners and intuit their potential needs. The benefits of temporary use must be clear to them and to potential users alike.

WHEN?

2017

WHERE?

Cluj-Napoca, Romania

WHY?

- Unearthing hidden spaces for cultural and artistic activities
- Reduction of running costs of vacancy
- Activation of peripheral neighbourhoods

- **Organise an exploratory walk with local stakeholders**
- **Map temporary use opportunities in a pilot area**
- **Create awareness and interest in areas with potential for temporary use**



FACTSHEET: MATCHPOINT, CREATING SPACE FOR SOCIAL & ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

WHAT?

Most of the empty spaces in Amersfoort are privately owned. Local initiatives and businesses had a hard time finding each other. Amersfoort has engaged the networking organisation Matchpoint to create a platform for the two parties to find one another. Matchpoint has set up a website and is building a strong database. Events are organised where parties can network and find their match. Some of these are specifically meant as networking events, drawing up to 150 guests. Others are smaller and focus on practical themes, such as a workshop for owners.

The city of Amersfoort has engaged Matchpoint for the period of 2017-2018. The project started out with an experiment with temporary use in a developing industrial area. A request for tender was launched for initiatives in circular economy and temporary use. The project received over 60 proposals.

WHEN?

2017 - 2018

WHERE?

Amersfoort, The Netherlands

WHY?

- Matching temporary use projects and owners
- Finding a partner organisation to facilitate matchmaking

LESSONS LEARNT

The initial goal was to set up a business case for Matchpoint over the course of one year. Several funding partners were found, but another year is needed to build a strong business case. Some estate brokers see the matchmaking service as a competitive action and don't want to collaborate with Matchpoint. As a neutral partner outside of the municipality, Matchpoint is in a better position to make matches than a department within the administration would be.

HOW TO TRANSFER

The matchmaking service is transferable to cities wanting to replicate a similar service outside of their own administration.

During the first years, while building a viable business case, the matchmaking service will need funding.

The network events are a great way to draw attention to and create a positive energy around temporary use.

- **Explore matchmaking between non-profit organisations, businesses and real estate owners**
- **Present good practices of temporary use**
- **Open up space for social and economic activities**



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FACTSHEET: TEMPORARY USE FUND

WHAT?

The city of Ghent started using a Temporary Use Fund in 2014 as a financial incentive for new ideas and initiatives related to temporary use. The funding goes to initiatives that propose a new use for empty land or buildings that also contribute to the liveability of the area or the city. The Fund distributes 300,000 EUR annually, to be used on infrastructure, safety measures and soundproofing, insurance, maintenance and in some cases communication. Individual projects receive between 6000 and 35,000 EUR.

The application process is relatively simple. Applicants fill in a standard form and are then invited for an interview with a multidisciplinary jury. Its members represent different departments of the city administration. They examine each application according to a set of criteria and decides on the allotted budget.

WHEN?

Since 2014

WHERE?

Ghent, Belgium

WHY?

- Financial support for bottom-up initiatives
- Encouraging citizens to come up with new ideas

LESSONS LEARNT

Since the outset of the Temporary Use Fund, there has been an increase in smaller, bottom-up temporary use projects in the neighbourhoods of Ghent, supported and coordinated by citizens.

The multidisciplinary jury plays an important role in the intake and the decision-making process. As a result, the initiators of temporary use projects more easily connect with the relevant departments of the municipality.

HOW TO TRANSFER

This Fund thrives in an open and participative atmosphere between citizens, bottom-up initiatives and political and/or organisational structures. The broad and open framework is key to its success.

In the case of Ghent, the jury has operated independently, making adjustments along the way based on self-evaluation and feedback from the applicants.

- **Support bottom-up initiatives for temporary use**
- **Provide a financial push for new ideas**
- **Connect with bottom-up initiatives**



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FACTSHEET: MATCHMAKING WORKSHOP FOR AN EMPTY LIBRARY

WHAT?

Having moved its main municipal library to a new location, the City of Ghent was looking for a temporary purpose for the old library building before its redevelopment into offices for the municipality. The building offers over 6700 m² of vacant space. The city went looking for a single coordinator for the entire project who would propose an overarching concept and business model for the temporary use of the library during a period of eight months. At the same time, 147 potential initiatives were invited to join a matchmaking workshop to see whether their activities could fit into the overall concept.

Each candidate for the coordination role was asked to pitch their project, concept and business model on stage. Meanwhile, candidates for use of the available space presented their activities in small booths and on a message wall. This way, they could meet each other and the coordinators to discuss collaborations, either within the temporary use project for the library or outside of it.

WHEN?

2017

WHERE?

Ghent, Belgium

WHY?

- Finding a temporary purpose for an old library building
- Collective project for temporary use
- Supporting creative initiatives looking for temporary space

LESSONS LEARNT

The event, facilitated by the City, brought new and creative initiatives together to build a strong proposal to use and manage an empty place. The city administration played its brokering role creating the opportunity of match-making and lets it go to the citizens. The network event significantly increased the quality and relevance of bids for the temporary use of the library.

HOW TO TRANSFER

This concrete question—offering space to new initiatives and ideas—was a good momentum for the city to facilitate a network event.

The network that was created and the links within the administration and between the projects still goes on. Initiatives that have not taken a role in the empty library, have found other matches and projects.

- **Organise an informal networking event**
- **Explore a brokering role for the city administration**



FACTSHEET: NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGERS

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WHAT?

The City of Ghent has sought ways to empower citizen participation since the 1990s. In 2018, the Policy Participation Unit within the administration consists of five staff members and fifteen neighbourhood managers. This unit answers directly to the mayor's office and continuously works to communicate with citizens and encourage new, innovative methods of participation.

The neighbourhood managers actively encourage citizens in their neighbourhood to initiate new activities and make plans around themes that matter to them. They also function as brokers for temporary use: they are well connected to citizens who want to take action, signal opportunities such as empty plots or buildings, and link these to the needs of the neighbourhood whenever possible.

WHEN?

Since the 1990s

WHERE?

Ghent, Belgium

WHY?

- Bridging the gap between the administration and daily life in the city

- **Encourage and improve participation of citizens**

- **Empower citizens to take action**

- **Take on a brokering role in temporary use projects**

LESSONS LEARNT

True participation requires a closer relationship between civil servants and citizens than is traditionally the case. The civil servant working behind a desk, away from the public eye, cannot bridge the distance to citizens' everyday lives and needs. Neighbourhood managers can, and do. They act as intermediaries, inform the neighbourhood about projects and policies, and forward signals from their neighbourhoods back to the city to inform future policies or plans.

HOW TO TRANSFER

The approachability of neighbourhood managers is crucial to the success of their role. They must be able to listen and communicate, create a network, be sensitive to the political framework but also come up with creative solutions. Mediation and negotiation skills are essential qualities. The broker role should be officialised by giving neighbourhood managers real authority within the administration at a high level.



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FACTSHEET: FLEXI SPACES SERVICE MODEL FOR SHARING SPACES

WHAT?

In Kalasatama, Helsinki's smart city neighbourhood, the city has experimented with an online service that lets people find and book spaces by the hour. The neighbourhood, once an old harbour, has been developed as a living lab for smart and sustainable innovation. It made sense that the concept of temporary use was first explored here as a tool for urban development.

The city and its innovation unit Forum Virium Helsinki entered into a collaboration with the startup Flextila for the development of Flexi Spaces, a service that allows people to find and use spaces for a wide range of activities. Once a space is booked through the online service, users get access for self-service use through a smart lock.

WHEN?

Piloted in 2016-2017

WHERE?

Helsinki, Finland

WHY?

- Browsing, booking and paying for spaces online
- Helping people find space close by for work, hobbies or events

LESSONS LEARNT

Flexi Spaces makes it easy for citizens and organisations to browse and book available spaces near them. Small time slots — an hour, a day or a week — allow people to test a space without making a commitment. One challenge is that the 'first come, first served' model does not necessarily guarantee the optimal outcome. Some level of 'curation' of users may be needed. New tools are needed to facilitate the communication between the owner of the temporary use location and the user. The service can help with this.

HOW TO TRANSFER

A service like Flexispace is helpful in making available spaces visible to potential users, as well as managing short term contracts. It is useful to test the service in a smaller network, like Helsinki did in Kalasatama, before expanding it to a wider area. There is also great potential in expanding the service, allowing people to book not only temporary use locations but also spaces in other local, city-owned locations such as schools and libraries as well as privately owned spaces in residential or office buildings.

- **Develop an agile, easy-to-use online system for flexible reservations**
- **Find systems and processes that may be used more broadly than for temporary use spaces alone**



FACTSHEET: ANALYSIS OF INTEREST

WHAT?

Temporary use was not a new concept in the city of Ostrava, but it happened without the involvement of the city administration and was not viewed as a useful tool for urban development. That changed when the city implemented an analysis of interest to see whether, and if so how, temporary use could be a solution for empty buildings and vacant plots.

The analysis was conducted over the course of three months and consisted of the following steps: (1) an analysis of good practices within the Refill project and categorisation of projects according to their field of focus; (2) an online questionnaire for owners and users of temporary use projects; (3) in-depth interviews with several stakeholders who had specific projects in mind; and (4) a public event where the results of the analysis were presented and its opportunities discussed.

WHEN?

2017

WHERE?

Ostrava, Czech Republic

WHY?

- Fact-based assessment of the pros and cons of temporary use

- Offer decision-makers proof of interest in temporary use as a service

- Map and connect with potential temporary users and property owners

- Raise awareness and show good practices of temporary use

LESSONS LEARNT

This analysis has offered important insights into the workings and opportunities of temporary use in Ostrava. It is good proof of evidence for decision makers within the administration, and made it possible for stakeholders and municipality to exchange views. The success of the analysis depended in large part upon its wide communication through various online and offline channels.

HOW TO TRANSFER

This approach may be beneficial when considering the establishment of a new service. In this case, the analysis of interest may later be used as a guide when setting up temporary use as a service. It has highlighted benefits and hurdles, allowing the administration to assess the pros and cons of temporary use. The same system may be applicable when expanding the target group for temporary use projects, e.g. from non-profit to for-profit entrepreneurs.



FACTSHEET: PREFERENTIAL RENT PROGRAMME

WHAT?

The Preferential Rent Programme of Poznan allows initiatives to occupy vacant spaces in the city centre while also refurbishing them. During the first few years, they are allowed to use the spaces free of rent until their business becomes profitable. After a rent-free period of three to five years, they start to pay full rent. The quality of the space determines the length of the rent-free period. At the end of their contract, initiatives are free to leave or extend their tenancy at market rates.

This financial aid programme is meant for initiatives that meet social concerns in their area. Applicants must present a clear approach of their project and its social or cultural benefits to the city and the neighbourhood. They must also show how they intend to improve or refurbish the space during their tenancy and present a business plan to prove their solvability and ability to pay full rent in time.

WHEN?

Since 2015

WHERE?

Poznan, Poland

WHY?

- Creating support for initiatives in the start-up phase
- Promoting temporary use of unused spaces
- Generating urban renewal

LESSONS LEARNT

The programme not only supports initiatives in the often-difficult start-up phase, but also gives them a strong incentive to quickly become profitable. It has, however, become clear that many initiatives need additional support to do this. This is a point of improvement for the next round of the programme starting in 2018. For now, the status of the programme within the city management structure is unclear. A more integrated, strategic approach at the city level is needed.

HOW TO TRANSFER

The crucial aspect of this programme is the gradual increase of the rent. This must be clearly specified in the specifications of the call for applications. The contracts must also specify the conditions for ending the project. For now status of the programme within the city management is temporary and limited. A more integrated, strategic approach at the city level could be beneficial in other areas of municipal interest, other than urban redevelopment.

• **Help starting initiatives by offering them rent-free working space**

• **Organise incubation activities for participants**



FACTSHEET: SPEED DATING EVENT FOR MATCHMAKING

© FELE SZ

WHAT?

The city of Cluj organised a matchmaking event where potential temporary use tenants—such as local initiatives and businesses—could meet different municipal departments and investigate potential collaborations. This was at once an opportunity for the municipality to find out about the needs and wants of potential users and for the latter to find out about the priorities of the administration.

Temporary use initiatives and departments from the city administration were invited to an informal gathering for a co-construction workshop. Using speed presentations, each stakeholder elaborated upon their plans and perspectives. Then followed a speed dating session focused on linking initiatives to the right city department for their case.

WHEN?

2016

WHERE?

Cluj-Napoca, Romania

WHY?

- A first encounter between administration and (potential) users
- Quick and informal matchmaking

LESSONS LEARNT

Before this exercise, the city departments believed they were aware of most of the local initiatives. As it turned out, both the city and the initiatives themselves were fully informed about each other's ideas, work and priorities. The workshop proved that there is great potential for temporary use in the city of Cluj. The administration now has a better sense of what is needed to support local initiatives in their projects.

HOW TO TRANSFER

A matchmaking event is an excellent networking opportunity and a good starting point for collaborations between compatible initiatives and city departments. It may be a good idea to start out with a small group of easily approachable stakeholders. A presentation of good practices and potential scenarios will kickstart the conversation and show all participants that temporary use is a win-win scenario.

- **Collaborate successfully with stakeholders**
- **Build a framework for easier matches between stakeholders**
- **Create a wider understanding of temporary use**



FACTSHEET: FREE RIGA

WHAT?

The crisis of 2008 halted a great many planned reconstruction and development projects in Riga. Buildings were left unfinished, abandoned and neglected. Meanwhile, the cultural sector was booming and looking for space. The NGO Free Riga was founded in 2015 by organisers of temporary use projects to raise more awareness of temporary use. It has launched more than twenty temporary use projects in the past few years.

Free Riga maps vacant spaces and promotes temporary use as a solution for the costs of empty buildings. It intermediates between property owners and users and works with the municipality to make such collaborations financially interesting for all parties. As a cooperative platform, Free Riga shares its knowledge and experience with organisers of temporary use projects. By offering a custodian service, Free Riga is developing a sustainable business model so it can be self-financing.

WHEN?

Since 2015

WHERE?

Riga, Latvia

WHY?

- Promoting the use of vacant spaces and buildings
- Supporting the local cultural scene

LESSONS LEARNT

Free Riga has become an intermediary between owners of empty spaces and potential users. That role has lent temporary use credibility as a useful instrument in combatting vacancy. For the municipality, Free Riga is a helpful intermediary between them and Riga's citizens. The city administration can take on a bigger role by providing incentives for temporary use, like tax reductions or administrative support.

HOW TO TRANSFER

Free Riga is a grassroots answer to the difficulties cultural and artistic actors face in cities that don't offer many financial programmes to support them. Any city can form such partnerships as long as there is an emphasis on trust and openness between all stakeholders. Collaborations like this one must be reinforced by other stimuli such as tax incentives, support for property owners and other benefits.

- **Collaborate with an independent actor to implement policy**
- **Gain insight into the reality of the field**



05

CASES



SLOW URBAN PLANNING REVIVES THE ÎLE DE NANTES

IN THE MIDDLE OF THE LOIRE RIVER IN NANTES LIES A SMALL ISLAND, THE ÎLE DE NANTES OR ISLAND OF NANTES. FOR A LONG TIME, ITS USE WAS PRIMARILY RELATED TO TRANSPORT AND INDUSTRY. BY THE LATE 20TH CENTURY, HOWEVER—MUCH LIKE ELSEWHERE IN EUROPE—THE SHIPYARD AND PORT PRODUCTIVITY HAD STARTED TO SHUT DOWN. THE ISLAND SOON TURNED INTO AN ABANDONED WASTELAND.

Private developers had their own ideas for the redevelopment of the island, such as building a new hotel or a big international congress centre. In 1989, the newly elected mayor Jean-Marc Ayrault—who stayed on until 2012—stopped all project planning and adopted a new approach. The island was to be developed as the centre of the entire city of Nantes.

BUILDING IN NO MAN'S LAND

One of the city's first steps was to build a new courthouse here, in a time when no one wanted to build on the island. In 2003, an organisation was established for the purpose of bringing new life to the

area. The SAMOA (Société d'Aménagement de la Métropole Ouest Atlantique) buys land, rezones it and resells it under strict conditions for redevelopment. In this way, the island is being upgraded to serve the public while giving new functions to the industrial heritage. The SAMOA works on the entire 330ha of the island, 115 of which used to be occupied by industries.

LE KARTING

One example is an old warehouse, later used as a go-kart racing circuit, and a large brownfield around it. The building is centrally located and in close proximity to a recently redeveloped area and the Loire river. The SAMOA bought the plot

from its private owner and decided to use the warehouse instead of leaving it empty or tearing it down for new development. If the plot had been sold on the market, this would certainly have been the result. Waterfront areas are, after all, highly sought-after locations in cities. Nantes chose a different route: rather than redevelop the area immediately, the SAMOA has chosen to keep it as is for now. It will be the last area to be rebuilt.

“ONE OF THE CITY'S FIRST STEPS WAS TO BUILD A NEW COURTHOUSE HERE, IN A TIME WHEN NO ONE WANTED TO BUILD ON THE ISLAND.”

GRADUAL URBAN PLANNING

Scattered on the island are three large halls, all of which have been refurbished to allow small businesses to rent spaces from 12 to 96 m². Le Karting is one of them and is now used by innovative, creative and cultural businesses; another has become home to businesses that work in social and solidarity fields; and a third houses media companies. In total, the buildings house 180 companies. The project is so successful that there is a waiting list. The project launched in 2012 and is meant to run for ten years, after which the city will decide upon a more permanent purpose for the area. The timeframe is deliberate; careful and gradual urban planning takes time.

CHANGING AMBITIONS

An approach like the one in Nantes is possible only within a stable political landscape. The project must be allowed plenty of time to grow naturally and take its course. This does not mean, however, that changes along the way are impossible or even unwanted. At the onset of this project, its goal was to change the image of the island. Later on, it became the development and connection of certain areas. More recently, the project's ambition has turned to answering the challenges of innovative economy and urban growth. Accordingly, the current direction of the project is to turn it into an innovative district with larger parks along the riverbanks.

Temporary use agreements play a crucial role in the Nantes approach for urban development. They offer the city a way of keeping empty buildings in public ownership while also giving incentives to creative ventures. The SAMOA's task of buying and developing deserted plots is successfully combined with its role of offering empty spaces to innovative companies.



CO2



OCCUPY ME STICKER CAMPAIGN LEADS TO ONLINE COLLABORATIVE MAPPING OF RIGA'S EMPTY SPACES

OCCUPY ME, A STICKER CAMPAIGN TO MARK VACANT BUILDINGS IN RIGA, WAS PART OF THE 2013 EDITION OF THE ANNUAL CONTEMPORARY ARTS FESTIVAL SURVIVAL KIT. THE IDEA CAME FROM A SMALL GROUP OF FAMOUS ARTISTS, CULTURE ORGANIZERS, AND CITY MAKERS, WHO HAD ALL PREVIOUSLY ORGANISED ACTIVITIES OR FOUNDED TEMPORARY SPACES BASED ON VACANT PROPERTY.

The artists behind OCCUPY ME observed a paradox between the large numbers of vacant spaces, and the lack of space for new cultural, artistic, and social initiatives arising in the city. Five thousand OCCUPY ME stickers were printed and distributed to the public in Riga's creative neighbourhoods and hotspots. The

sticker campaign's initiators marked the first 100 vacant buildings themselves and co-authored a manifesto highlighting the paradox. Hard copies of that manifesto were distributed in the creative neighbourhoods and places, and it was shared on Facebook.

This arts action turned out to be a great success. The online manifesto was spread and shared among no fewer than 100,000 Facebook viewers and garnered many thousands of likes and shares. After only a single day, all the OCCUPY ME stickers had been picked up from the creative hotspots. The campaign led to articles and interviews in Latvia's largest media outlets. Initiators were invited to discuss the topic with representatives of

the national and municipal real estate institutions. That kicked off the partnership with the Property Department of the Riga City Council. Only a short time before, this department had begun tackling another side of the problem, namely the degradation of property left unused over long periods of time.

Inspired by their success, the initiators created a website where the public could add empty and abandoned buildings to a map. Although the tool was campaign-based rather than permanent, it helped to provide information on more than 350 empty buildings. People submitted not only the buildings' addresses, but in many cases they also entered valuable information on the building's history and ideas for possible use.

The success of the visualisation campaign led to the formation of an NGO: Free Riga. This organisation has since set up various activities to promote and facilitate the temporary use of vacant spaces for cultural and social purposes and is now a Riga City partner addressing the issue of vacancy.







OSTRAVA: SECRET CINEMA

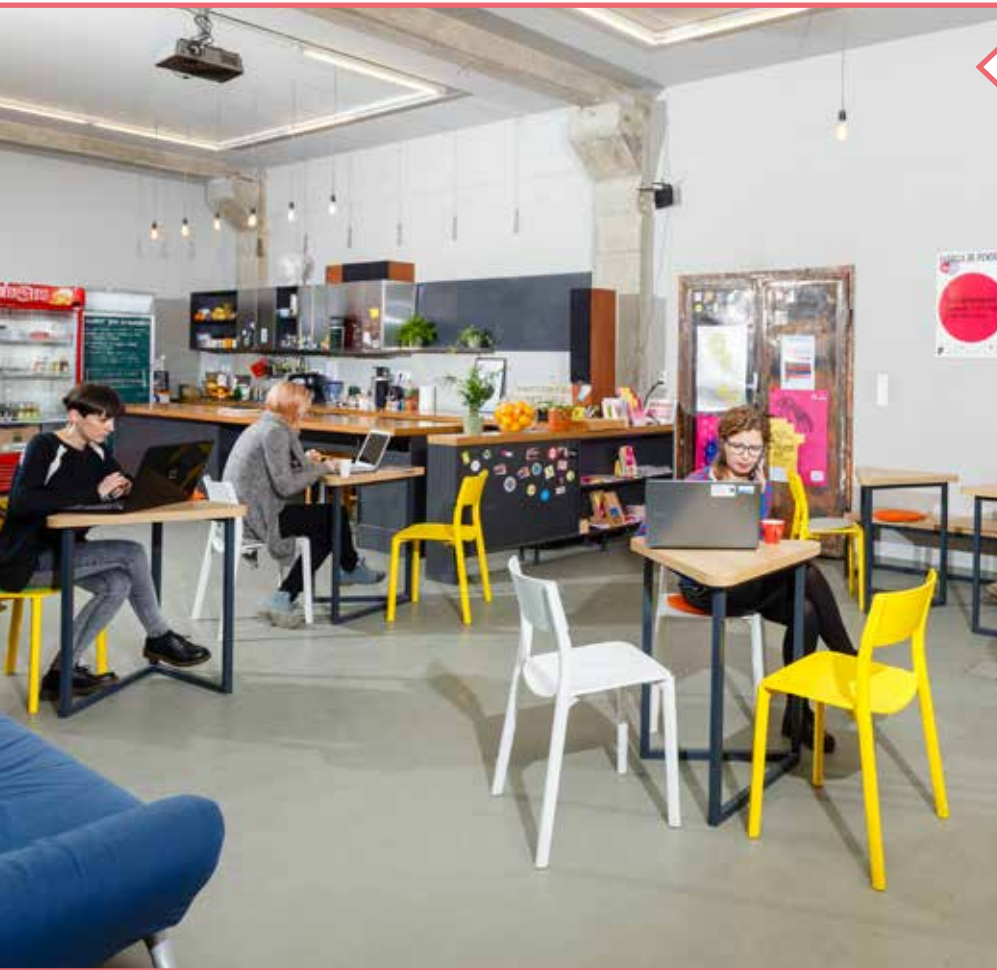
Cinema Royal started as a “secret cinema” where participants would receive a date, a place to meet and a dress code. Their invitation led them to abandoned places in Ostrava for a film screening, such as unused factories and the dilapidated Hotel Palace. This project has raised awareness of vacant spaces in the city and challenged citizens to think about the reuse of such places. It was a good showcase to make the spaces more attractive for future hosts.



AMERSFOORT: POP-UP BICYCLE REPAIR SHOP IN A FORMER LIBRARY

When the former building of Amersfoort’s public library was put up for sale, the city wanted to give it a socially relevant temporary function. The building became a bicycle repair shop for a period of four months until it was sold. One difficulty of temporary use is that initiatives become anchored into neighbourhoods very quickly and also invest in the place where they are housed. This makes it difficult to leave the place after the agreed period.





CLUJ-NAPOCA: FABRICA DE PENSULE

Fabrica de Pensule is a former paintbrush factory in the historical industrial area of Cluj, near the river and the railway tracks. The impressive five floor industrial building hosts an independent art centre with 35 artists' studios, 8 art galleries and 2 performance art companies. Fabrica de Pensule became the largest residence for artists in Rumania and an incubator for up-and-coming talent.



GHENT: NEW MEETINGPLACE IN THE OLD GRAVEL- TANKS

At the end of 2012 the gravel bins got a new function. With some targeted interventions, architect Sarah Melsens and artist Roberta Gigante transformed them into an original meeting space. Activities and events such as theater performances, exhibitions, sports competitions, picnics, flea markets and concerts were organised. The decorated graveltanks are free to use by anyone who wants.



© ILOTOPIA

NANTES: ILOTOPIA AND THE OLD EUROMASTER GARAGE

An old car repair shop on the Île de Nantes, a river island in the Loire in the middle of Nantes, became the home of the Ilotopia project. In the Euromaster garage, Ilotopia works with inhabitants of the Île de Nantes to shape the public space around them. Citizens co-define projects, which are temporarily tried out in public spaces before they are integrated in the final development plan.



ATHENS: SYNATHINA KIOSK

In front of Athens's Central Market, a symbolic spot in the city, stands a small kiosk. In it, any initiative can host activities and events. All they need to do is book beforehand and pick up the keys from the nearby Municipal Office. Its central location and the square around it make it a beloved place for such gatherings.

POZNAN: RETURN TO THE RIVER

The project Plaza Miejska, which started in 2012, has become a yearly occasion for Poznan. Every summer, it turns the Warta riverbank into an urban beach and recreational area. The densely built city has only a few open spaces, so this municipal beach fills a gap for many different age and interest groups. Plaza Miejska provides cultural and recreational activities in the centre of the city in close contact with nature.



BREMEN: THE WURST CASE

The office building of the Könecke meat factory was left empty in 2013. The temporary use agency ZZZ, with support from the Economic Board of the Municipality, negotiated temporary use with the owners. They organised workshops with potential users interested in subrenting a space in the building. Three years later, nearly all of the office spaces are sublet to artists, craftsmen, fashion designers and other cultural or creative initiatives.



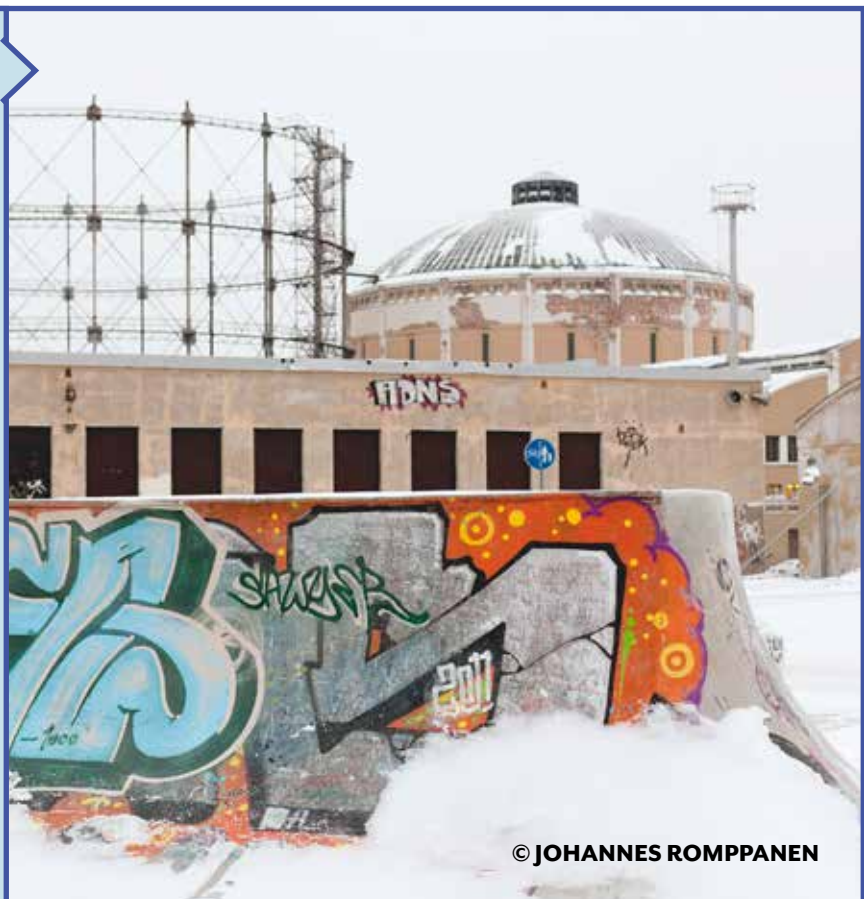
RIGA: ZUNDA GARDEN REVIVES THE RIVERBANKS

In the early 2000s, the former furniture factory Grivas Mebeles and the neighbouring tractor factory were turned into a new creative quarter. The owner hosted avant-garde contemporary theatre shows, music festivals and other cultural activities on the site. Later, temporary use NGO Free Riga negotiated various temporary use contracts with the owner. The grounds were turned into a public garden bordering the Zunda channel. Temporary use became a way of experimenting with Riga's underused waterfronts.



HELSINKI: LIVE-IN RENOVATORS AT ORANSSI

Oranssi (Finnish for the colour orange) has a dual goal: to provide affordable housing and support for cultural and artistic activities. Volunteers move into old, neglected buildings, pay a very low rent, and renovate the place while they live there. The same was done with an old industrial building that offers free space for rehearsal and small shows. Oranssi is able to renovate buildings three to four times cheaper than the market price thanks to the work of the volunteers, lower comfort standards and the use of recuperation materials.



© JOHANNES ROMPPANEN



REVIVING THE ARCADES, ATHENS'S “MOST CHARMING SECRETS”

THE ARCADE OF MERCHANTS (STOA EMPORON) IS A SHOPPING PASSAGE IN THE CITY CENTRE OF ATHENS. DUE TO THE FINANCIAL CRISIS, THE SHOPS CLOSED DOWN AND THE ARCADE WAS ABANDONED. AS AN EXPERIMENT TO REVITALISE THE ARCADE, THE PROJECT “TRACES OF COMMERCE” PUBLISHED AN OPEN CALL FOR TEMPORARY USE PROJECTS IN THE SHOPS.

Users would be allowed to use the spaces free of rent and in return were expected to organise public events, such as workshops and seminars. Importantly, their activities had to be unpaid. This was a condition set by the owner of the property, a state-run pension fund.

2X12 INITIATIVES

Over a period of four months, over 300 initiatives applied. Of these, two groups of twelve were selected to be housed in the arcade for eight months. Their projects included a fab lab, a hat making workshop

and a silversmith workshop, a fanzine library with over 300 magazines, a typography workshop and many others.

ALL-ROUND SUCCESS

Traces of Commerce was a success for all parties involved, from the property owner to the City of Athens, the temporary users themselves, the public that was drawn to the activities in the arcade and the businesses in the immediate area. For the city, this project has triggered discussions about the issue of empty arcades in Athens. These are considered, in the words

of the architect G. Tzirtzilakis, the most charming secret of Athens. The users, on the other hand, found their experience useful for the growth of their commercial activities. The project attracted quite a bit of media attention and drew many visitors. As a result, business also improved for the nearby shops, cafes and bars.

LIVELY CITY

In Athens, Traces of Commerce has served as a model for other publicly owned empty buildings. Athens went on to apply the model in other parts of Athens, such as in the Kypseli Market (see also: **F03**, p. 26). As a next step, Athens is measuring the social impact of these projects and looking for a sustainable financial model. This way, the arcades may once again be turned into lively spaces, actively used by the people of Athens.



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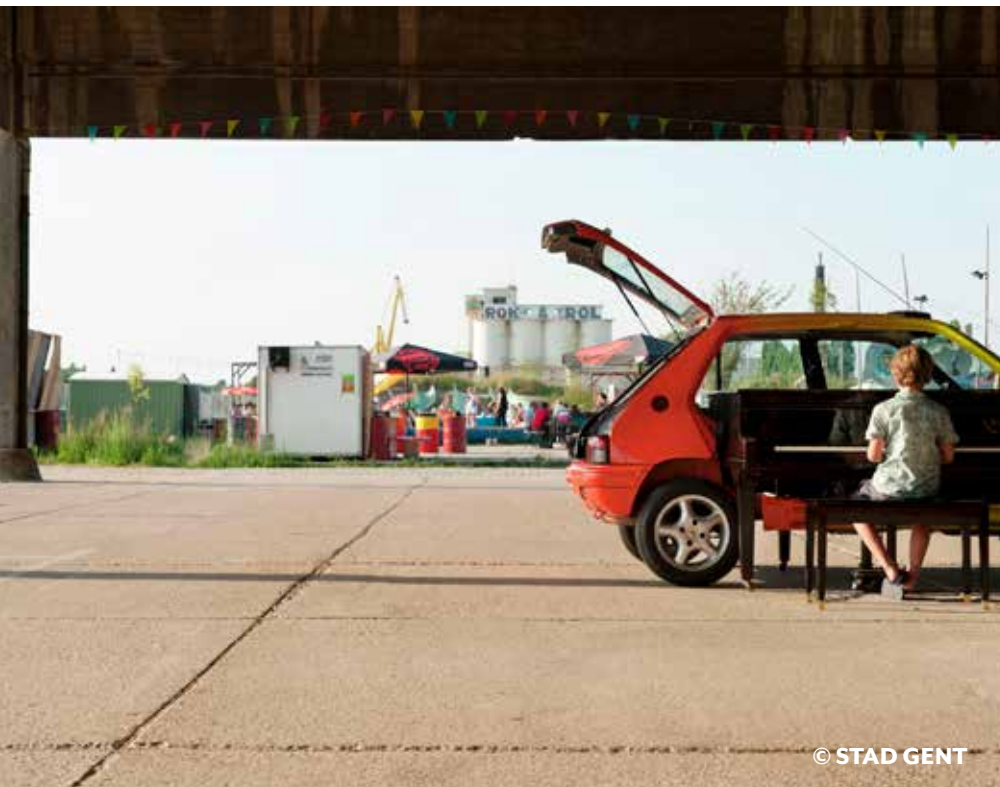


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“DE SITE” AND “DOK”, TWO ICONIC PROJECTS MARKING THE START OF TEMPORARY USE IN GHENT



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The City of Ghent has been experimenting with the temporary use of brownfield sites and empty buildings for over a decade—often in the context of urban planning. These usually take very long to get from the development to the implementation stage. Using the sites and buildings in the interim counters neglect, brings a new dynamic to neighbourhoods, and offers added value for the city’s development.

“De Site” and “DOK” are two iconic projects marking the start of temporary use in Ghent, inspiring many future temporary use initiatives.

DE SITE

In 2007, the City of Ghent, social partner Samenlevingsopbouw Gent (Social Structures Ghent), and social-artistic organisation Kunst in de Stad (Arts in the City) started the temporary use project De Site on the location of former telecom factory



© DE SITE

“THE TEMPORARY USE PROJECT GAVE TIME AND SPACE TO THE NEIGHBOURHOOD’S WISHES, DEMANDS, AND QUALITIES AND RESPONDED TO SEVERAL IMPORTANT NEEDS IN THE DISTRICT.”

Alcatel Bell in the Rabot district. De Site became a creative meeting place that got residents involved in their district and set them thinking about urban renewal. They helped reshape their neighbourhood. Allotments, a greenhouse, urban horticultural plots, a football pitch, a bike playground, and an urban farmstead with

a chicken coop were set up. Additionally, in 2010, the alternative currency Torekes was launched. By working on De Site, residents could earn Torekes to buy vegetables and other supplies in local shops.

De Site involved residents in an urban renewal process that traditional participation methods would have left them out of. The temporary use project wasn't just another analysis of how poor, densely populated, diversified, and young Rabot is. It gave time and space to the neighbourhood's wishes, demands, and qualities and responded to several important needs in the district.

DOK

Another large-scale urban renewal project is underway at the Oude Dokken, Ghent's historical harbour docks. The plans entail a new residential area with some 1,500 homes, as well as recreational facilities

and public services. The temporary use project DOK was started in 2011 as a co-initiator of concerts, open-air cinema events and flea markets. In 2014, DOK's role evolved into that of facilitator for DOK residents. Thanks to DOK residents' great diversity, a wide array of activities can take place. Flexibility is at the core of DOK's working environment. The area remains in use during construction, so residents have to make smart investments and work around the construction site and the plans for the Old Docks.

In recent years, DOK has given the derelict industrial site a positive image, transforming it into a lively, inspiring meeting place with events for all ages and a beach near the water. This has drawn in the inhabitants of Ghent and put the Old Docks back on the map, making it the place to be on sunny summer days.



NEW CREATIVE LIFE ON THE BANKS OF THE SOMEȘ IN CLUJ-NAPOCA

SINCE 2015, “SOMEȘ DELIVERY” HAS BEEN A YEARLY REOCCURRENCE. THE EVENT DRAWS VISITORS TO THE RIVER AND GIVES IT A NEW AND MORE CENTRAL ROLE IN THE CITY. AT THE SAME TIME, THE INITIATIVE OFFERS A WELL-FRAMED RESPONSE TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY’S NEEDS.

SPACE, PEOPLE AND ENVIRONMENT

Someș Delivery tackles a different area every year. It approaches that particular area from a multidisciplinary perspective. The opportunities and problems of the space itself are analysed and temporary interventions devised to see what might work as a more permanent solution. Temporary events, workshops and competitions are held to bring the community together and improve the attractiveness of the area. At the same time, the riverbanks are cleaned up and sanitised while workshops raise awareness for environmental topics. More initiatives, such as the festival Someș - I Am Riparian, have also drawn attention to the river Someș and helped to re-integrate it into city life.



© FELE SZ

CREATIVE ANSWERS TO URBAN QUESTIONS

Over the years, Someș Delivery has seen many different actions succeed. The Someș Delivery Pavilion, for instance, was a large temporary building at the river shore which linked the nearby Cetatua Park with the river and drew attention to the event site. Visitors and passers-by could draw their own ideas for the riverbanks on large boards, thus interacting directly with the city. A pier-to-pier cable ferry allowed people to cross the river and marked the need for a pedestrian bridge.

Another temporary installation took the form of a group of bright silhouettes passing on the river shore, a nocturnal invitation to get closer to the river. Someș View was a terraced garden, offering a wide view of the surrounding landscape.

All of these temporary functions have shown the importance of co-designing and testing different methods, be it top-down or bottom-up. Citizens’ solutions to urban problems, even if temporary, may well be the key to urban well-being.



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We hope that our REFILL experience has inspired many readers to get engaged with the concept of temporary use and to start their own journey through temporary use.

The REFILL Team

