

Case study ID

GR_01

DOURGOUTI ISLAND HOTEL PROJECT

CASE STUDY SHORT SUMMARY REPORT

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UPRUN

DOURGOUTI ISLAND HOTEL PROJECT

Brief description

Dourgouti Island Hotel Project (2015-2016) at Dourgouti neighborhood of Athens is a showcase for the collective cross-field research¹ and management of local cultural capital and for activating a local community network with sustainable features. It is a showcase of the Urban Dig Project, a platform created by awarded Ohi Pezoume Performing Arts Company (TEDxAthens 1st prize, 2011). The group inspires a cross-field horizontal network of scientists, artists, researchers, students, residents of all ages to research and map a neighborhood. The backbone of the research method is the voluntary formation of: (a) a series of community events with the double role of collecting and sharing interesting material about the neighborhood (b) several cross-field research groups created by residents, scientists, artists, University students. The Dourgouti Island Hotel Project effectively demonstrated how civic engagement can influence urban planning and resilience by fostering community participation, reclaiming public space, and strengthening local networks. Through artistic interventions, participatory mapping, and storytelling, the project offered a model for bottom-up urban regeneration, ultimately enhancing both the spatial and social resilience of the neighborhood. Some of the results are:

- Supporting the creation and the operation of a local Oral History Group that still exists
- Contributing to local capacity development through workshops and meetings for knowledge sharing. Based on statistics, most participants chose to offer a much wider variety of skills in the project than what they introduced themselves with
- Supporting local participants of the program to curate their findings about the area into libretti for a music performance celebrating Dourgouti produced by the Onassis Foundation Cultural Center that is based nearby

¹ The term research or research approaches in the whole summary report refers to the project and all the project actions

Interviewees

Initiator

Name (representative) Georgios Sachinis

Name (organization) UrbanDig Project

Contact

-

Motive Identity

Goals Setup Neighborhood

Formation Groups

Structure Top-Down

Modes Tactical

Communication Constructive

Effects Short Term

Financing Donors/Foundations

Governmental body

Name (representative)	Kostas Karras
Name (organization)	Onassis Cultural Center
Contact	-
Motive	Identity
Goals Setup	Neighborhood
Formation	Groups
Structure	Top-Down
Modes	Tactical
Communication	Constructive
Effects	Short Term
Financing	Donors/Foundations

Beneficiary**Name (representative)** Vaggelis Papadakis**Name (organization)** Actress/Architect**Contact** -**Motive** Identity**Goals Setup** Neighborhood**Formation** Groups**Structure** Top-Down**Modes** Tactical**Communication** Constructive**Effects** Short Term**Financing** Donors/Foundations

Types

Resilience-related challenge at the neighborhood level

- Environmental and ecological resilience
- Social and cultural resilience
- Economic and livelihood resilience
- Infrastructure and technological resilience

Civic Engagement Supporting Neighborhood Resilience

- Resident-led and grassroots initiatives
- Collaborative planning
- Advocacy and capacity building
- Volunteer and community service projects

Spatial Determinants Relevant to Neighborhood Resilience

- Residential blocks and shared spaces
- Public facilities and infrastructure
- Green and recreational spaces
- Local commerce and economic hubs

Level of Civic Participation

- Informing
- Involving
- Collaborating
- Empowering

Main Stakeholders Involved

- Community members
- Local government
- Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
- Private sector
- Academic and research institutions

Funding Source

- Public funding
- Private donations
- Community contributions
- Hybrid funding

Implementation Status

- Planned
- Ongoing
- Completed

Impact level

- High
- Medium
- Low

Compendious summary

Introduction

Firstly for the facilitation of tracking the findings, **Giorgos Sachinis** is the founder of the group Ochi Paizoume, and **Kostas Karras** was the Director of the Onassis Foundation's Stegi at the time—an institution located in the neighborhood adjacent to Dourgouti and a key stakeholder in the project. **Vagelis Papadakis** also participated in and closely followed the program in its entirety as a citizen and city representative. For the preparation of this report, all the sources from the supplementary material were utilized, while the remaining information was provided as verbal testimony during the interviews.

- The case study belongs to TYPE: A cultural activities program created by a theatrical company located in a neighborhood called Neos Kosmos in Athens. In Greece, historically, theatre has played a central role in educating and raising the audience's awareness of social and political issues. The Dourgouti Island Hotel Project (2015-2016) in the Dourgouti neighborhood of Athens is relevant to the UPRUN project as a showcase for the collective cross-field research and management of local cultural capital, as well as for activating a local community network with sustainable features. Mapping the needs of an area defines the attitudes of people regarding local development. The collective good, according to the narratives of local residents, cannot be expressed by existing authorities. Historical research, participatory initiatives, and collective action give new meaning to human relationships and encourage locals to utilize and reclaim existing resources. Greece does not have a strong culture of participation. These actions potentially promote two main types of social capital in community development, which belong to the UPRUN project: bonding and bridging. Bonding social capital refers to networks of homogeneous groups of people, which tend to produce resources that help individuals to "get by." In contrast, bridging social capital concerns individuals having access to networks across social divisions, which helps them to "get ahead."
- The methodology employed in this project for local development closely resembles Asset Mapping, a method officially utilized by local authorities. The organizers' active participation in all fieldwork, coupled with a sense of inclusion in the Urban Dig Project's collective processes, fostered a safe environment that encouraged individuals to expand their comfort zones regarding collaboration. This environment enabled participants to work alongside individuals with whom they might not have otherwise engaged. Local community groups collaborated with geographers from the university, while students from three universities presented their ideas for bottom-up development and management of the neighborhood's cultural capital to the residents, soliciting their feedback. Innovative artists formed friendships with local neighbors, and several workshops and projects involving the neighborhood required the hosting or collaboration of prestigious nearby cultural centers and hotels to establish meaningful connections. The organizers successfully "reclaimed" vacant local shops, with the assistance of the municipality, transforming these empty spaces into exhibition venues. The project attracted local companies and organizations, which contributed to hosting various

events. For instance, the local senior citizens' friendship club provided their space to the Dourgouti Oral History Group; Panteion University offered its sports facilities for performers' rehearsals; Hotel Athenaeum Intercontinental provided a conference room for a meeting between the neighborhood and three university courses focused on producing research and proposals for the area's development; and the local tavern "Vassilis" served as the project's local "office" throughout its duration.

Neighborhood challenge

Dourgouti, originally an undeveloped district near the Ilisos River, began to grow after the improvement of Syngrou Avenue in 1904. In 1914, Armenian refugees fleeing persecution in Turkey arrived. Following the Asia Minor Catastrophe, the area became overcrowded with makeshift housing for refugees. The Greek state, struggling to address the housing crisis, introduced horizontal ownership. In 1935, just a few modern refugee apartments were constructed in Dourgouti, designed in a Bauhaus-influenced style, with further expansions under the Metaxas regime.

Despite its marginalization, Dourgouti developed a strong and diverse community of Greek migrants, repatriates, and Armenians. In 1965 a major redevelopment plan started leading to the expropriation of the shantytown and the construction of modern housing. By 1968, the military regime completed the transformation, adding fifteen apartment buildings and a twelve-story refugee complex surrounding pockets of green spaces. Over time, Dourgouti evolved into Neos Kosmos, integrating various ethnic groups, including migrants from Macedonia, Epirus, and Pontic Greeks. Today, it stands as a vibrant urban district shaped by its rich refugee heritage.

When Dourgouti was a shantytown (until 1960's) with muddy roads and Ilissos was an open river, flooding and pollution of the river and its connected minor streams in the area where major issues. Now that it is full of housing blocks and the river is covered this is no longer an issue. Resilience-related challenges now have to do with the use of the area as parking space for the hotels, universities and other institutions on the adjacent Syngrou avenue, with the neglect of the old 1935 buildings still remaining and with the recent gentrification of the area.

Response to the challenge

The Dourgouti Island Hotel project was initiated by the non-profit organization "Ohi Pezoume" under the UrbanDig Project to blend performing arts with community engagement. **The main role in identifying, defining, and addressing the challenge of gentrification involved:**

- Recognizing Dourgouti's rich but underappreciated history, shaped by migration, refugees, and urban transformations.
- Using oral history, mapping, and artistic expression to explore and narrate the neighborhood's cultural and social identity.
- Encouraging active participation from residents, artists, and scholars to collectively define challenges and aspirations.

- Creating a multi-layered city map, incorporating historical, sensory, and community-driven data to address spatial and cultural gaps in public awareness.

The initiator's intervention took place in a plane tree at the junction of Kalirrois and Syngrou behind a high iron fence wall and next to workers' houses inhabited by a population ranging from low-income Greeks to refugees. Many abandoned apartments were in the workers' housing buildings. The participants offering or collecting stories are participants-spectators in the process. They do not just witness the stories of others; they are responsible for curating or directing how they wish to deliver these stories to the research groups. This process as well as the types of activities outlined earlier consists of tour audience development plan. The aim is not only to develop an active audience, but most importantly to create ways of seeing, that the city is the "stage". By participating in the project, members are automatically involved in excavating, synthesizing and articulating their own narratives.

The **key spatial issues of Dourgouti** revolved around its historical marginalization, underutilized public spaces, and lack of cultural visibility. Once a vibrant refugee settlement, the neighborhood had seen its identity fade over time, with neglected squares, abandoned buildings, and an absence of community-driven cultural initiatives. The **Dourgouti Island Hotel** project addressed these challenges by **reactivating forgotten spaces**, such as public squares and closed shops, turning them into hubs for artistic performances and community engagement. Through **cultural mapping and storytelling**, the project **documented and preserved local history**, while digital and physical tools helped integrate this knowledge into public awareness. Additionally, by fostering **cross-sector collaborations between the community, academia, and cultural institutions**, the initiative strengthened the area's cultural infrastructure, ensuring continued engagement beyond the project's duration. Most significantly, the project successfully **reclaimed "Dourgouti" as the area's name**, reinforcing its historical and social significance in Athens' urban landscape.

The initiator believes that the key spatial issues were:

1. Identify the place where the performance would take place (next to the fast moving traffic of Syngrou and Kalliroi under a plane tree where a zen-like was created environment under an old tree)
2. Search for materials for the construction of the shack from abandoned houses in the surrounding area.
3. Construction of the shack
4. Composition of elements that give the feeling of a viable shack (armchair, frames, library, kitchen, etc...)
5. Dramatourgic outline of the performance.
6. Musical background that played continuously in the space, Maria Callas' aria J'ai perdu mon Eurydice from Gluck's opera Orpheus and Eurydice. It gave a sense of hearth, creating a calm environment of existence and reinforced the dramatic axis of the performance since at the end of the performance. He asked the audience, before they leave and passe the underpass (and thus the passage to Hades), to give Eurydice a greeting and tell her he was well.

The **Dourgouti Island Hotel** project unfolded over a period of **14 months**, starting in **April 2014** and concluding in **October 2015** with a major site-specific performance in the streets of Dourgouti. The project was structured around various community-driven events, artistic explorations, and research activities aimed at documenting and revitalizing the cultural and social identity of the neighborhood.

Chronology of Action

The project began in **April 2014** with **introductory presentations** at **Panteion University**, where the core ideas and objectives of the initiative were shared with students and researchers. This was followed by **a series of exploratory walks and neighborhood mappings** in May and June 2014, where participants engaged in firsthand observations of the area's history, urban fabric, and cultural dynamics.

Throughout **2014 and 2015**, numerous activities were organized, including:

- **Community meetings and workshops** involving local residents, students, and artists to gather stories and historical narratives.
- **Collaborations with academic institutions**, supporting university dissertations and research projects.
- **Cultural mapping sessions** to document the social, artistic, and urban history of Dourgouti.
- **Interactive tours and urban performances**, where the community engaged with the neighborhood's spaces through guided walks and artistic interventions.
- **Festivals and public events**, bringing together diverse groups such as local elderly associations, student bands, and cultural institutions.
- The project culminated in **October 2015** with a **large-scale site-specific performance**, featuring over **40 performers**, including **actors, musicians, dancers, and visual artists**. This final event took place in the streets of Dourgouti and coincided with the **World Day of Street Arts and Free Expression in Public Space**, serving as a grand celebration of the neighborhood's reclaimed identity and cultural heritage.

Duration and Impact

Over its **14-month duration**, the project hosted more than **110 days of activities**, involving **630 participants** from various backgrounds, including residents, artists, scholars, and students from Greece and abroad. In total, over **4,000 spectators** engaged with the events, demonstrating a significant impact on the local and wider Athenian community. The initiative also led to the formation of **new community groups**, ongoing cultural collaborations, and media interest, ensuring a lasting legacy for Dourgouti as a historically and culturally significant neighborhood.

By integrating **art, history, and community engagement**, the **Dourgouti Island Hotel** project successfully revitalized public spaces, strengthened social ties, and brought Dourgouti back into the cultural consciousness of Athens.

The action that the initiator participated lasted about 15 to 20 minutes. It was a meeting point for different groups of people following different walking routes in Drougouti before they 'crossed over' towards the end of their walk. After greeting them with his craftsman's gloves doing some final construction work in the shack, he described his idyllic life in that particular place, share with them his personal character moments and offer them warm tea or tsipouro with olives while dialoguing with them. The actor greeted them at the end asking them to give my kisses to my beloved Eurydice.

Mechanisms of civic engagement

The public played a crucial role in the Dourgouti Island Hotel Project through both formal and informal channels. The initiative was structured as a participatory, bottom-up approach where local residents, artists, and organizations collaborated to document and interpret the neighborhood's history and cultural capital. The project fostered engagement through oral history collection, public workshops, mapping exercises, and a final site-specific performance.

Citizens and civic groups actively participated in co-design workshops, history-mapping projects, mapping of the neighborhood's needs, and artistic interventions. Over 630 individuals collaborated, including university students, educators, artists, and local residents. These interactions facilitated community storytelling and neighborhood reactivation.

Engagement methods included sensory and historical mapping, storytelling workshops, a participatory board game for needs' mapping (Dourgoutopolis), and interactive performances. These activities encouraged residents to contribute their narratives and insights into the urban fabric. **A living proof of such creative dialogue is the collaboration** that came about after the Dourgouti Island Hotel Project with the nearby Onassis Cultural Centre. With the participation of members of the project's community, both locally-based and coming from outside, some of the Dourgouti stories were adapted into libretti for a concert, and were the inspiration for an exhibition and a free open-air dance piece. In doing so, we created a community project where local residents and friends of the neighbourhood became active audiences collecting, viewing and curating its narratives, attracting more participants and resulting into a site-specific performance at the end of the project. **67 groups**, institutions and companies ranging from the local home for the elderly and a student band to three Greek universities and a foreign one (UC Leicester); have been collaborators in Ohi Paizoume events. Around **435 people** in total have collaborated (either through these groups or as individuals) including international artists, scientists, community activists, students and many residents etc. In addition, more than 3,000 spectators have participated in the events.

The **voluntary basis** of the activities resulting in economic profit from local companies- as a result of **Dourgouti becoming a destination of visitors -contributed to quickly establishing friendships**. The Urban Dig Project creates voluntary research groups and research activities, considering as "profit" the collection of the hidden local cultural capital and the relationships and partnerships formed during the research process.

The project led to the formation of two local community groups and a performers' group that continued working in the area. Additionally, a local oral history research group emerged, ensuring the continuation of participatory storytelling beyond the project's completion.

The project involved a mix of stakeholders, including local government, NGOs, universities, and cultural institutions. While the project was largely citizen-driven, collaboration with academic and municipal actors ensured broader institutional support and dissemination of findings.

Outline the role of the Governmental Body the Onassis Cultural Centre / Onassis Stegi is a major contemporary arts centre initiated by the Onassis Foundation. Situated on Sygrou Avenue, Stegi was always aware of its ambivalent relationship with the neighbourhood of Dourgouti. It is part of the thin façade of modern, prestigious buildings on the avenue, that have in that sense little or no relationship to what lies 'inland'. On the other hand, there has always been a desire to engage the neighborhood, and to bring it into Stegi's program. This happened at various levels:

- Through the educational program addressed to schools in Dourgouti (though not exclusively)
- Through artistic projects (for example <https://www.onassis.org/whats-on/soundscapes-landscapes>)
- Through special discounted ticket prices for local residents
- Through improvements in local infrastructure, especially playgrounds and sports courts
- Through urbanistic studies of green spaces etc.

Nonetheless, all these initiatives were 'top-down' in the sense that they were developed by Stegi in relation to the neighborhood, but without the effective involvement of residents.

At various moments, attempts were made to establish a more regular context for discussion and input by residents, but these never actually resulted in programmatic content.

Stegi also engaged with the Dourgouti Hotel project, both through facilitating a small number of workshops and presentations, and through the development of a specific artistic project: <https://www.onassis.org/whats-on/music-new-world> The idea behind the project was to commission a series of new compositions using the archival materials developed by Urban Dig in Dourgouti. One can therefore say that can be said is the fact that although Stegi was continuously interested in engaging with Dourgouti, it always did so from its own perspective and position of power and capability.

The project aimed to be inclusive by engaging participants of different age groups (15-80 years old) and backgrounds. Women constituted 61% of participants, and efforts were made to include marginalized groups through community-driven activities

Case study findings and lessons learned

The project strengthened social resilience by fostering a sense of place, activating neglected public spaces, and establishing cross-sectoral collaborations. These efforts helped reclaim public spaces, reduce social isolation, and promote cultural heritage

The most effective methods included participatory mapping, co-design workshops, historical storytelling, and interactive performances. These approaches ensured active citizen participation and a sense of ownership over the project.

The project introduced new ways of using public space through performance-based engagement. Abandoned areas were revitalized, and digital mapping tools were developed to document cultural assets.

The obstacles that limit the success of social resilience efforts were categorized and explained below:

- **Bureaucratic Resistance and Institutional Barriers**

The project faced difficulties in collaborating with local government bodies, as decision-making processes were often top-down and did not adequately include community voices. Municipal authorities lacked established structures to incorporate participatory planning, making it difficult for grassroots initiatives to be fully recognized or institutionalized

- **Economic Constraints**

A major obstacle was the lack of financial resources to sustain long-term engagement. Many cultural and community-driven activities depended on limited funding, making it challenging to ensure the project's continuity beyond its initial phase. This was particularly evident in efforts to maintain public spaces activated by the project

- **Tensions Between Community Desires and Technical Feasibility**

While the community had clear aspirations for reclaiming public spaces and strengthening neighborhood identity, there were conflicts between what residents wanted and what was technically or legally feasible. Urban planning constraints, zoning laws, and pre-existing property ownership often limited the ability to execute interventions as envisioned

- **Unequal Access to Decision-Making and Representation**

Certain marginalized groups, such as economically disadvantaged migrants, were less represented in decision-making, as they were not frequenting the public activities of the program. This limited the inclusivity of the project and created disparities in how different social groups benefited from interventions

- **Sustainability and Continuity Challenges**

While the project successfully engaged local residents during its active phase, sustaining participation beyond the project's lifespan proved difficult. Without long-term institutional support or continuous funding, some initiatives faced challenges in maintaining their impact

Conclusion

UrbanDig's last showcase in Dourgouti, Dourgouti Island Hotel Project started in August 2014 and finished with a site-specific performance on the streets of the neighborhood in October 2015. Examples of impact of the program include:

- **Creating engagement of ages** spanning between 15-80. About half of them being locally based and the rest coming from other places of Athens and the world (61% female / 39% male)
- **Supporting 2 new locally based community groups** and a performers' community to continue to work in the neighborhood. Supporting free workshops in the neighborhood by Greek and International performers and institutions.
- **Instigating not-for-profit cross-sectoral collaborations** on local cultural research. 4 bridges between the community Academic and Cultural foundations as well as groups related to live and digital tours in Athens continue to thrive.
- **Creating interest for Dourgouti by the Media**, Tech and Sport sector, Universities, other neighborhoods, the European Cultural Foundation, the Municipality, historians and Foundations. The team and/or local partners have been invited to present Dourgouti Case in more than 23 workshops and conferences in Greece and abroad.
- **Creating International mobility of Greek artists in 7 world destinations**. Creating International mobility to Dourgouti from Austria, France, Australia, England.
- **Student support for 2 University dissertations** (Bsc and PhD) with topics related to Dourgouti and more than 300 student reports from 6 University courses.
- **Activating locations within the neighborhood** that were no longer visited (public squares or closed shops, etc).
- **Mapping the cultural capital and community** interests to be given back to the community along with related digital cultural management and educational tools.
- **Participation of local schools in conferences** in Greece (primary schools) and festivals abroad (local high school).
- **Capacity development of participants** through workshops and exchanges in meetings. Based on statistics, most participants chose to offer a much wider variety of skills in the project than what they introduced themselves with.
- Reclaiming "Dourgouti" as the name of the area, forgotten for years.

The **Dourgouti Island Hotel Project** successfully demonstrated how **civic engagement can shape urban planning and resilience** by fostering community participation, reclaiming public space, and strengthening local networks. The project provided a **model for bottom-up urban regeneration** through artistic interventions, participatory mapping, and storytelling, ultimately influencing both **spatial and social resilience** in the neighborhood.

The project engaged **over 630 participants**, including local residents, students, artists, and international collaborators. By **using creative mapping, oral history collection, and site-**

specific performances, it allowed community members to **co-own the storytelling and cultural representation of their neighborhood**. The **interactive workshops and collaborative mapping activities** successfully activated **neglected public spaces**, fostering a sense of place and local identity.

The initiative **reactivated underutilized urban spaces** by turning **abandoned squares and closed shops** into venues for artistic performances and social gatherings. This process **transformed previously disconnected spaces into active community hubs**, reinforcing **local engagement and spatial resilience**. Additionally, it introduced **participatory street redesign concepts**, enhancing safety and accessibility through **community-driven interventions**.

Several **pioneering methods of civic engagement** emerged, making the project particularly effective:

- **Participatory mapping and urban storytelling**, ensuring historical and sensory documentation of the area.
- **Dourgoutopolis**, a board game designed to facilitate community discussions on local challenges and opportunities.
- **Digital mapping tools**, such as online archives and walking tour applications, which **preserved and disseminated local knowledge**.
- **Site-specific performances**, enabling residents to share their experiences in immersive artistic settings.

The project fostered **intergenerational dialogue**, enabling **residents of all ages to interact and collaborate** in reimagining their urban environment. The **active participation of local schools and universities** facilitated **knowledge transfer and academic contributions**, including over **300 student reports and 2 university dissertations**. Additionally, it **empowered local advocacy groups**, leading to claims for **landscape improvements and resistance against gentrification**.

While the project concluded with a **site-specific performance in October 2015**, its impact continues through:

- The **formation of new local community groups** focused on oral history and cultural mapping.
- The **integration of Dourgouti's cultural identity into academic discourse and urban planning frameworks**.
- The **strengthened connection between local residents and international cultural institutions**, such as the Onassis Cultural Centre.

The **Dourgouti Island Hotel Project** provides valuable lessons for urban planning and policy, demonstrating how **community-led cultural interventions** can play a critical role in urban resilience and participatory planning. The project successfully integrated local narratives, artistic engagement, and spatial interventions to **revitalize neglected areas, promote social cohesion, and encourage bottom-up decision-making**. Below are key implications for urban planning and policy drawn from the project's findings:

1. Fostering Bottom-Up Urban Development

One of the most significant takeaways from the project is that **grassroots participation and cultural mapping are essential tools for sustainable urban planning**. By engaging the local

community in storytelling, co-creation, and performance-based interventions, the project **empowered residents to reclaim and reimagine public spaces**. Urban planners can use similar approaches to ensure that redevelopment efforts **reflect the lived experiences and aspirations of local communities**.

2. Strengthening Social Resilience Through Cultural Participation

The **Dourgouti Island Hotel Project** emphasized the **role of cultural activities in strengthening social ties and enhancing urban resilience**. Through site-specific performances and interactive urban actions, the project **activated public spaces, brought together diverse groups, and fostered a shared sense of belonging**. Policymakers should recognize cultural initiatives as a **vital component of urban planning**, integrating them into long-term development strategies to support social resilience.

3. Encouraging Cross-Sectoral Collaboration

The project demonstrated that **successful urban resilience efforts require collaboration between municipalities, cultural institutions, local businesses, and grassroots organizations**. In Dourgouti, partnerships with universities, NGOs, and international artists helped **expand the impact of the initiative beyond the immediate community**. Urban policies should **promote multi-stakeholder collaboration** by creating frameworks that support **cross-sector partnerships** and encourage knowledge exchange.

4. Integrating Participatory Design into Urban Policy

A key lesson from the project is that **participatory urbanism enhances both the physical and social fabric of a neighborhood**. The use of **collaborative mapping, co-design workshops, and community-led storytelling** created a framework for inclusive urban development. Policymakers should implement **formal participatory planning mechanisms**, such as neighborhood assemblies and cultural mapping exercises, ensuring that residents actively contribute to **decision-making processes regarding urban space**.

5. Replicability and Policy Adaptation

The **Dourgouti Island Hotel Project** serves as a **model for other urban areas facing challenges of social fragmentation and spatial neglect**. Urban policies should:

- **Encourage cultural heritage-based revitalization projects** in neglected neighborhoods.
- **Incorporate artistic methodologies** in participatory urban design.
- **Institutionalize community-led storytelling** as a tool for shaping urban policies.
- **Scale similar projects across different urban contexts**, ensuring adaptability based on local needs.

Recommendations for future civic engagement:

Artistic and site-specific performances have proven to be **effective tools for community engagement**. They serve as **ice-breakers** between diverse stakeholders, **bridge social divides**, and create **interactive ways to rethink urban space**. Future urban policies should:

- **Institutionalize performative urbanism** by integrating **artistic and storytelling methods into participatory planning**.

- **Use performances to reclaim urban space**, activating neglected areas while **giving voice to local stories and cultural narratives**.
- **Create funding mechanisms for site-specific cultural projects**, ensuring that **performance-based engagement becomes a sustainable practice**.

The **Dourgouti Island Hotel Project** revealed that **local knowledge and cultural mapping** are **powerful tools for urban resilience**. To strengthen **community-driven spatial activities**, cities should:

- **Encourage participatory mapping initiatives**, allowing residents to document **their histories, spatial concerns, and aspirations**.
- **Support grassroots interventions** that transform public spaces based on **local needs and cultural identity**.
- **Establish urban laboratories** where residents, urban planners, and cultural organizations collaborate on **co-designing sustainable public spaces**.

To sustain civic engagement, cities should **institutionalize long-term participatory frameworks**:

- **Develop community-based advisory boards** within municipal planning departments to ensure continuous **resident input in urban development**.
- **Facilitate cross-sector collaboration**, bringing together **artists, urban planners, policymakers, and local communities** for shared decision-making.
- **Integrate digital participation tools**, such as **interactive mobile applications**, to increase accessibility and **democratize urban decision-making**.

Despite its success, the **UrbanDig** projects faced **barriers such as social exclusion, lack of institutional support, and financial limitations**. To overcome these obstacles, cities should:

- **Ensure inclusivity by providing multilingual engagement tools**, addressing the needs of **migrant communities and marginalized groups**.
- **Offer technical and financial support** for resident-led initiatives, preventing **grassroots projects from being short-lived due to funding constraints**.
- **Bridge the gap between informal civic engagement and formal policy-making**, creating **direct channels between local activists and municipal authorities**.

To replicate the success of **UrbanDig** and **Dourgouti Island Hotel**, participatory urbanism should be scaled and adapted across different urban contexts:

- **Establish regional networks for knowledge-sharing**, where different communities can exchange best practices on participatory urbanism.
- **Expand participatory urban planning beyond cultural hubs**, incorporating it into **urban resilience strategies at the municipal level**.
- **Encourage universities and research institutions** to collaborate with local communities on **long-term civic engagement projects**.

Replicability:

The **Dourgouti Island Hotel Project** and **UrbanDig** initiatives provide adaptable frameworks for **civic engagement, participatory urbanism, and democratic governance**. Their success

in integrating **art, performance, and grassroots activism** into urban resilience efforts suggests several scalable approaches for other cities.

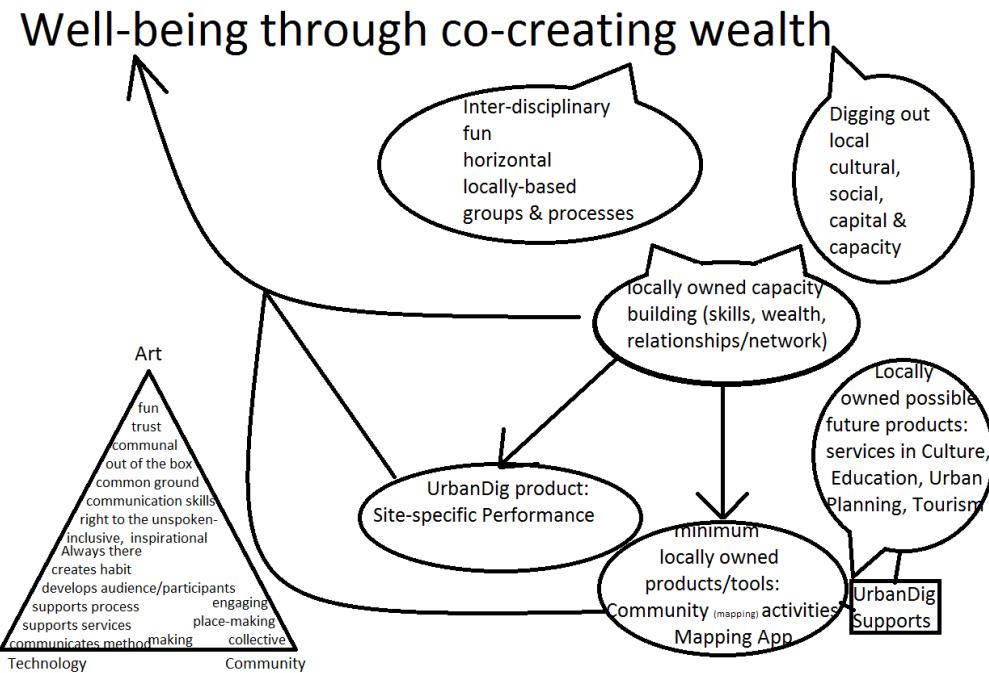
1. Integrating Art and Performance into Urban Planning

- **Site-specific performances** can be used to activate underutilized public spaces and engage diverse communities.
- Municipalities can **institutionalize artistic urbanism** by integrating **theatrical storytelling and creative placemaking** into urban policies.
- 2. Expanding Participatory Mapping and Storytelling
- Community-driven **oral histories and digital mapping** can help document local knowledge and cultural assets.
- Urban planners should incorporate **participatory mapping workshops** to involve residents in spatial decision-making.
- 3. Establishing Long-Term Collaborative Mechanisms
- Cities can create **resident advisory boards** within planning departments to ensure continuous civic engagement.
- **Multi-stakeholder partnerships** (local governments, universities, and NGOs) should support participatory urban projects.
- 4. Enhancing Accessibility and Inclusivity
- Offering **multilingual engagement tools (even non-verbal)** ensures broader participation, especially in diverse urban areas.
- Providing **financial and technical resources** to community groups enables sustainable grassroots interventions.
- 5. Scaling and Institutionalizing Participatory Governance
- Developing **urban resilience hubs** where communities, artists, and planners co-create solutions.
- Expanding **peer-learning networks between cities** to share best practices in participatory urbanism.

References

- 1. Sachinis and Zontou (2017), UrbanDig project: Theatre for Neighbourhoods, Book chapter
- Chatziefstathiou D., Ananiadis C., Sachinis G. (2018), Dourgouti Island Hotel Project :An UrbanDig ProjectUniversal Journal of Management 6(3):91-97, 2018, <http://www.hrpublishing.org>. DOI: 10.13189/ujm.2018.060302

- **Community-Led Data:**



Documents



Photo Credit: Irene Fosgeraou



Photo Credit: Irene Fosgeraou



Photo Credit: Irene Fosgeraou



Photo Credit: Irene Fosgeraou



Photo Credit: Anna Kanta