

Case study ID

CY_02

PARK(ING) DAY

CASE STUDY SHORT SUMMARY REPORT

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PARK(ING) DAY

Case Study at a Glance

Park(ing) Day was selected as a study case as it addresses a pressing urban issue in Cyprus: the lack of shared public spaces for social interaction and community engagement. Park(ing) Day highlights how tactical urbanism can creatively utilize underused urban spaces. Led by the Cyprus Energy Agency, a narrow neighborhood street in Nicosia's old city center was temporarily transformed into a vibrant public space. This initiative demonstrated the potential of reclaiming urban areas for people, aligning with global trends that prioritize livability over car dependency.

The intervention took place in Lefkonos Street in the historic 'Laiki Geitonia' neighborhood, characterized by its pedestrian-friendly layout, traditional architecture, and high urban density. Despite its cultural significance, the area faces challenges such as limited green spaces, inadequate public infrastructure, and a reliance on pedestrianization. The project sought to address these issues by enhancing the area's spatial and social resilience.

Park(ing) Day underscored the potential of small-scale urban interventions to spark broader discussions about urban resilience and public space usage. For urban planners and policymakers, the project offers insights into integrating civic participation into planning processes. Replicable aspects include tactical urbanism, participatory design methods, and leveraging social media for outreach. Future efforts should aim for permanent solutions, robust community collaboration, and systemic changes to prioritize people over cars.

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Case Study Profile

Topic

- ☐ Community Gardening & Urban Agriculture
- ☐ Community Hubs & Cultural Activities
- ☒ Urban Design & Planning Processes
- ☒ Public Space Development & Management
- ☐ Local Economic Development
- ☒ Urban Regeneration & Rehabilitation

Scale

- ☐ Metropolitan / city region
- ☐ City scale
- ☒ Neighbourhood scale
- ☒ Block scale
- ☐ Building scale

Resilience Challenge

- ☒ Environmental and ecological resilience
- ☒ social & cultural resilience
- ☐ Infrastructure and technological resilience
- ☐ Economic & livelihood resilience

Duration

- ☒ Immediate (less than 1 month)
- ☒ Project-Based (1–12 months)
- ☐ Programme-Based (1–3 years)
- ☐ Strategic (3–5 years)
- ☐ Structural / Transformative (more than 5 years)

Stakeholders

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

Type of Civic Engagement Supporting Neighborhood Resilience

- ☐ Resident-led and grassroots initiatives
- ☒ Collaborative planning projects or processes
- ☐ Advocacy and capacity building
- ☐ Volunteer and community service projects
- ☒ Short-term, more flexible project-based engagement
- ☐ Long-term, more institutionalized engagement (development of stable structures, etc.)
- ☐ Protest and resistance mobilization
- ☒ Art-and culture-based civic Engagement

Level of Civic Participation

- ☐ Information
- ☒ Involvement or participation
- ☒ Collaboration or co-creation
- ☒ Empowerment
- ☐ Resistance and protest-based empowerment

Empirical Basis and Methodological Approach

The PARK(ING) DAY case study was developed using qualitative research methods, including semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and social media research. Empirical material consisted of project descriptions, photographic documentation, online dissemination material, and public reactions shared through digital platforms. The methodological approach focused on examining tactical urbanism as a form of temporary spatial intervention and civic activation. In addition, social media monitoring and web-based observation were used to evaluate public engagement, community responses, and the broader visibility of the initiative. This combined approach enabled an assessment of how small-scale urban actions can influence perceptions of public space and stimulate discussions around urban resilience and participatory urbanism.

Compendious summary

Introduction

This case study was selected because it highlights a critical urban issue in Cyprus, namely, the scarcity of shared public spaces. The lack of accessible, inclusive areas for social interaction and community activities has significant implications for urban livability. Park(ing) Day exemplifies how tactical urbanism can address this gap. By temporarily transforming a narrow neighborhood street in the old Nicosia City Center into a vibrant public space, the Cyprus Energy Agency demonstrated the potential of underutilized urban areas to serve as hubs for social connection, creativity, and community engagement. This approach aligns with global trends in reclaiming urban spaces for people rather than cars, making it a highly relevant case study for addressing shared space deficiencies in Cyprus.

Besides interviews, the case study utilized social media and web research to evaluate the project's impact. Social media platforms were monitored to gauge public reactions, community engagement, and the overall reach of *Park(ing) Day*. This method provided valuable insights into how the initiative was perceived, the level of participation, and the types of stakeholders involved in discussions.

Neighborhood challenge

The area of intervention, Lefkonos Street, is located in the heart of Nicosia's walled city within the 'Laiki Geitonia' neighborhood, is a pedestrian-friendly area celebrated for its traditional architecture and vibrant cultural atmosphere. The neighborhood is characterized by high urban density, with tightly packed low-rise buildings showcasing vernacular styles, and narrow streets that create an intimate, human-scale environment. Land use is predominantly mixed, featuring small shops, galleries, restaurants, and some residential units, while green spaces are limited to nearby public parks, such as the moat surrounding the Venetian walls and Eleftheria Square. Despite its charm, the area faces resilience-related challenges tied to its historic layout and infrastructure. Additionally, the reliance on pedestrianization highlights the need for well-maintained public spaces to support social resilience and enhance quality of life for both residents and visitors.

Response to the challenge

The Park(ing) Day project, initiated by the Cyprus Energy Agency, sought to activate a public space temporarily in a car-dominated neighborhood as a pilot initiative to test how urban interventions can foster community interactions and raise awareness about alternative uses of urban space. As an organizer, the Cyprus Energy Agency role involved activating the parklet, contributing to brainstorming sessions, managing event logistics, and disseminating information before and after the initiative. While the parklet itself was a small-scale project, it highlighted key spatial issues, such as the lack of public spaces in a heavily car-oriented urban layout. The action unfolded over a short time, providing a stepping stone to larger initiatives like the Car-Free Day in Agioi Omologites, organized by OPU (Organization for Positive Urbanism). However, due to its temporary nature, the parklet reverted to its original state as a parking area shortly after its conclusion.

Mechanisms of civic engagement

Public involvement in the parklet project was initially limited due to its small scale and short duration. The engagement methods primarily utilized informal channels, such as brainstorming sessions with stakeholders and organizers, along with logistical planning and communication efforts. While direct community participation was minimal, the project laid the groundwork for future initiatives, like the Car-Free Day, which integrated more participatory activities that encouraged deeper community interaction. However, inclusivity presented a challenge, as the parklet did not attract many residents from the neighborhood, highlighting the need for more targeted outreach and improved mechanisms to engage marginalized or less-informed groups in future urban interventions. Residents had mixed reactions, with some accepting the temporary loss of parking spaces, while others participated in activities or simply enjoyed the newly created public space. Interactive games and idea-gathering tools were particularly effective during Park(ing) Day, sparking valuable dialogue and feedback about public space use. Barriers, such as limited information dissemination and adverse weather conditions (e.g., extreme heat), contributed to lower participation, underscoring the importance of more adaptive and inclusive engagement methods for future projects.

Case study findings and lessons learned

Although the parklet project had a limited impact on resilience due to its temporary nature, it acted as a catalyst for larger-scale interventions, such as the Car-Free Day, which fostered community dialogue and improved relationships among neighbors, strengthening the sense of community spirit. Key lessons from the project emphasized the importance of aligning urban interventions with residents' actual needs and using participatory methods like co-design workshops or collaborative mapping to ensure more inclusive and impactful outcomes. Positive feedback from Park(ing) Day participants revealed that even temporary changes could shift perceptions of urban space usage. For example, some residents expressed openness to temporary changes in parking, while others actively engaged in the new public space. A significant obstacle identified was the car-oriented nature of Cypriot neighborhoods, which calls for systemic changes to infrastructure, incentives for sustainable behaviors, and ongoing support for advocates of urban change. Furthermore, challenges in securing permits from local authorities and addressing residents' concerns about parking and traffic safety highlighted the need for early stakeholder involvement and careful logistical planning. To ensure long-term sustainability and resilience, future projects should focus on creating permanent, multifunctional public spaces, addressing inclusivity barriers, and prioritizing collaborative planning that empowers residents as key stakeholders.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Park(ing) Day highlights the significant role of civic engagement in shaping urban planning and fostering neighborhood resilience. While the project has not yet led to long-term effects, it has already influenced perceptions, encouraging a shift in how residents and stakeholders view the use of public spaces. The case study demonstrated that even small-scale spatial interventions could stimulate civic engagement and initiate changes in mindset. Positive feedback from participants emphasized the importance of showcasing the potential of innovative urban practices. Although the project's impact on

resilience is still in its early stages, it has laid the foundation for rethinking neighborhood spaces as more adaptive and inclusive.

Park(ing) Day underscores the value of integrating structured and inclusive civic engagement into urban planning processes. It suggests that urban planners and policymakers must prioritize active community participation to co-create resilient neighborhoods. By doing so, resilience strategies can be more grounded in local needs and expectations, fostering stronger community ownership and long-term sustainability. According to the Cyprus Energy Agency, to enhance future civic engagement, it is essential to broaden the scope of activities, expanding them to larger scales, such as an entire street, to maximize their impact. Building partnerships with diverse stakeholders, including local organizations, businesses, and civic groups, can provide additional resources and extend outreach. Clear and structured communication is crucial to ensure all residents have meaningful opportunities to participate actively. Furthermore, showcasing successes through social and traditional media channels can build trust, inspire community confidence, and encourage broader participation in future initiatives.

The approaches tested in this case study can serve as a model for other urban contexts, particularly in fostering democratic urban governance. Key replicable elements include small-scale pilots to demonstrate value, participatory activities to draw in residents, and targeted communication to build support. These practices can be tailored to different cultural, social, and spatial contexts, offering a flexible framework for urban planners aiming to strengthen neighborhood resilience. Ultimately, this project highlights the transformative potential of civic engagement in urban planning. By building on these lessons, future efforts can create more inclusive, resilient, and vibrant neighborhoods.

Attachments

Photos

Photos 2024:













Photos 2023









All photos and further information can be found here:

[\[English text follows\] Είναι πάντοτε χαρά... - Cyprus Energy Agency | Facebook](#)

[🙏 Ευχαριστούμε πολύ όλους και όλες... - Cyprus Energy Agency | Facebook](#)

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