

Local government and civil society cooperation in Athens

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“Curing the limbo”

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ΔΗΜΟΣ ΑΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ

Athens' context

- Traditionally weak civil society, important role of family social support networks
- Lack of public policies encouraging active citizenship
- Various crises during the last decade created need for new approaches
- Rigid, introvert and overwhelmed Greek public administration with limited culture of cooperation
- New sources of public and private competitive funding
- Local government felt the brunt of the crises and led the way in cooperation with the wider NGO community

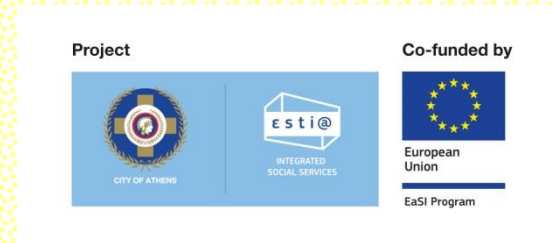


Municipal cooperation with civil society

Open Schools program



Integrated services municipal clinics



Soup kitchens



Solidarity hub



Three innovative ideas

Financial
crisis



Refugee
crisis



Integration
challenge



1.synAthina



2.ACCMR



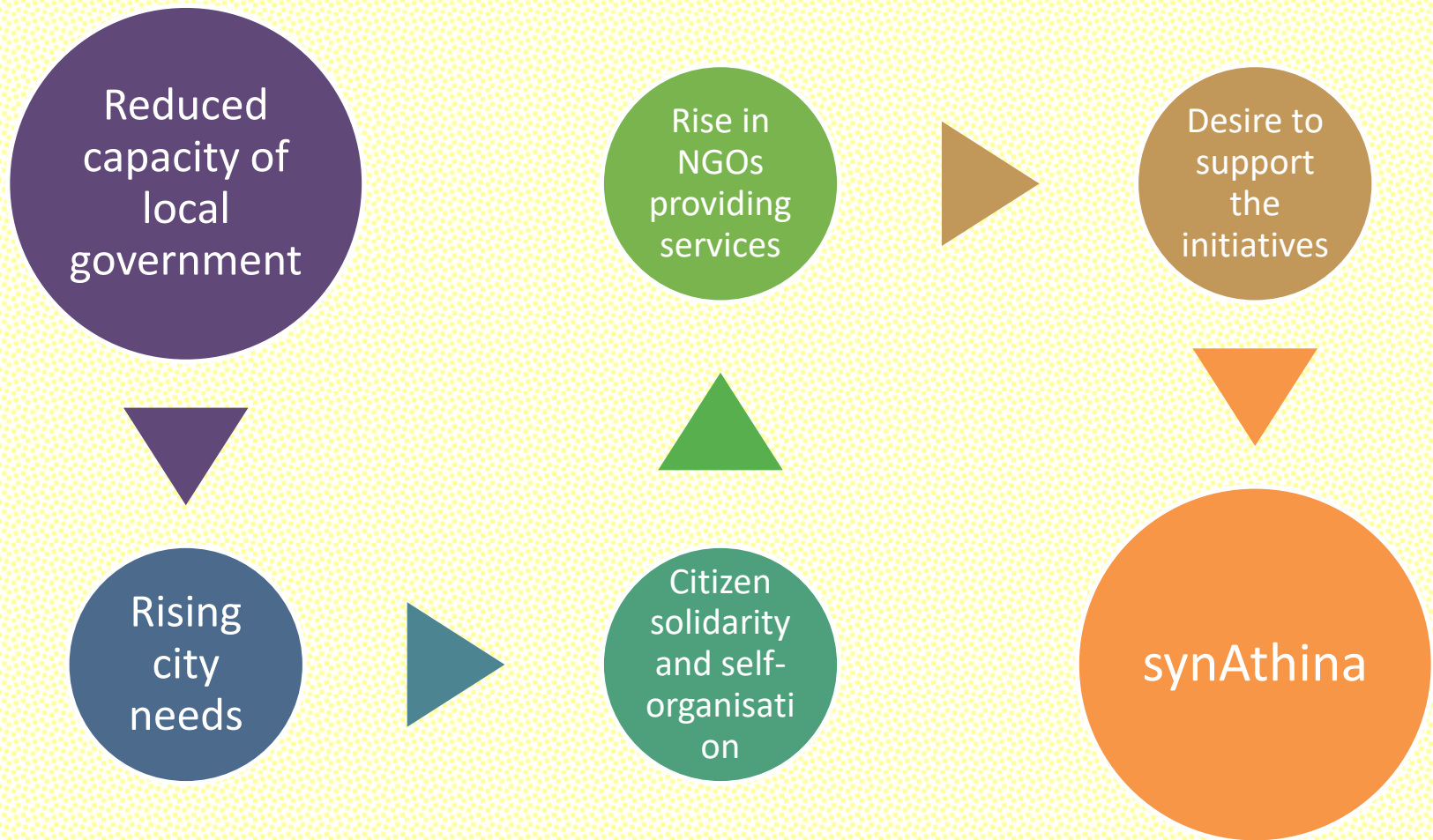
3.Curing the
Limbo



1. Financial crisis: need to improve quality of life



1. synAthina



1. Why synAthina?



- Improve life in a city in crisis
- Collect information and increase public-spirited citizens' capacity for bold solutions with large impact for the city
- Measure the impact of bottom-up solutions to improve city government
- Bring new culture to public policy-making



1. How does it work?



*** Connecting *collecting *sieving *incorporating**

Tools used:

- **Online platform:** mapping, networking tool, thematic directory
- **Public Engagement Officer**
- **Open Mondays** at the city hall
- **Open calls** around city needs
- **Kiosk** in the city-center



1. Results



- Over 3.000 citizens' activities mapped and documented
- Over 200 positive collaborations empowering each other's efforts
- Successful partnerships between citizens and local government, serving local government priorities
- New Department for Innovation and Civil Society within the municipality
- 2014 Winner of Bloomberg Mayor's challenge



SYNATHINA IN ONE PAGE

SynAthena aims to enable a better relationship between the municipality of Athens and active citizens. The team has categorised the activities needed to achieve this into four main stages: **collecting**, **connecting**, **sieving** and **incorporating**. For more detail on what each step entails, see p15.



2. 2015 Refugee crisis: urgent need for humanitarian response



2. ACCMR



Why the ACCMR?

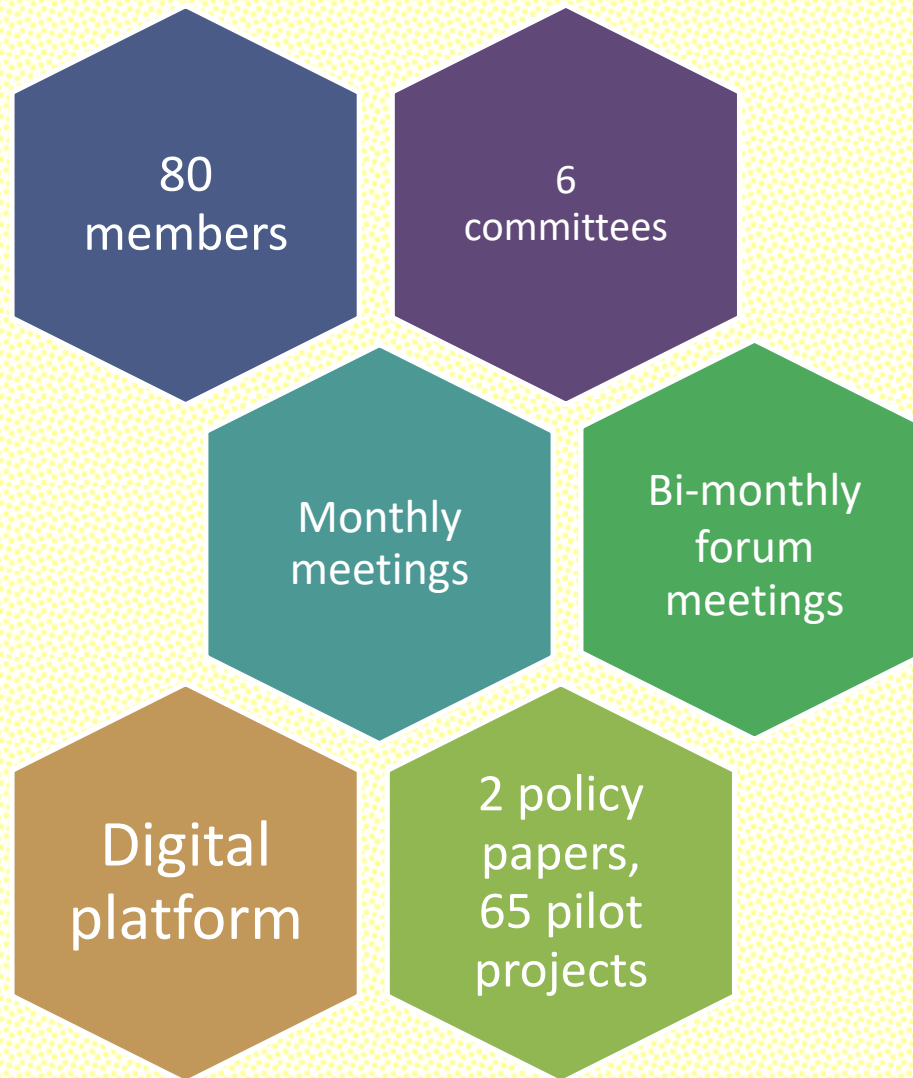
- Increased INGO presence
- Lack of experience and / or local government competences
- Growing number of local initiatives
 - pressing need for coordination and efficiency by the City
- Private-donation led initiative by Stavros Niarchos Foundation

Objectives:

- Efficiently connect organizations with municipal services
- Develop synergies to build capacity for municipal services and smaller organizations
- Create a framework for collaboration amongst organizations
- Generate proposals and initiatives in uncharted waters for the city



2. How does it work?



2. ACCMR Results

1.

- Bottom-up and transparent operations helped promote ownership

2.

- Opportunity for traditionally introvert public administration to experience different ways of doing/ thinking

3.

- Municipal umbrella facilitates synergies between different stakeholders

4.

- Flexibility which helps provide more efficient services for both the city and refugees by surpassing strict municipal framework

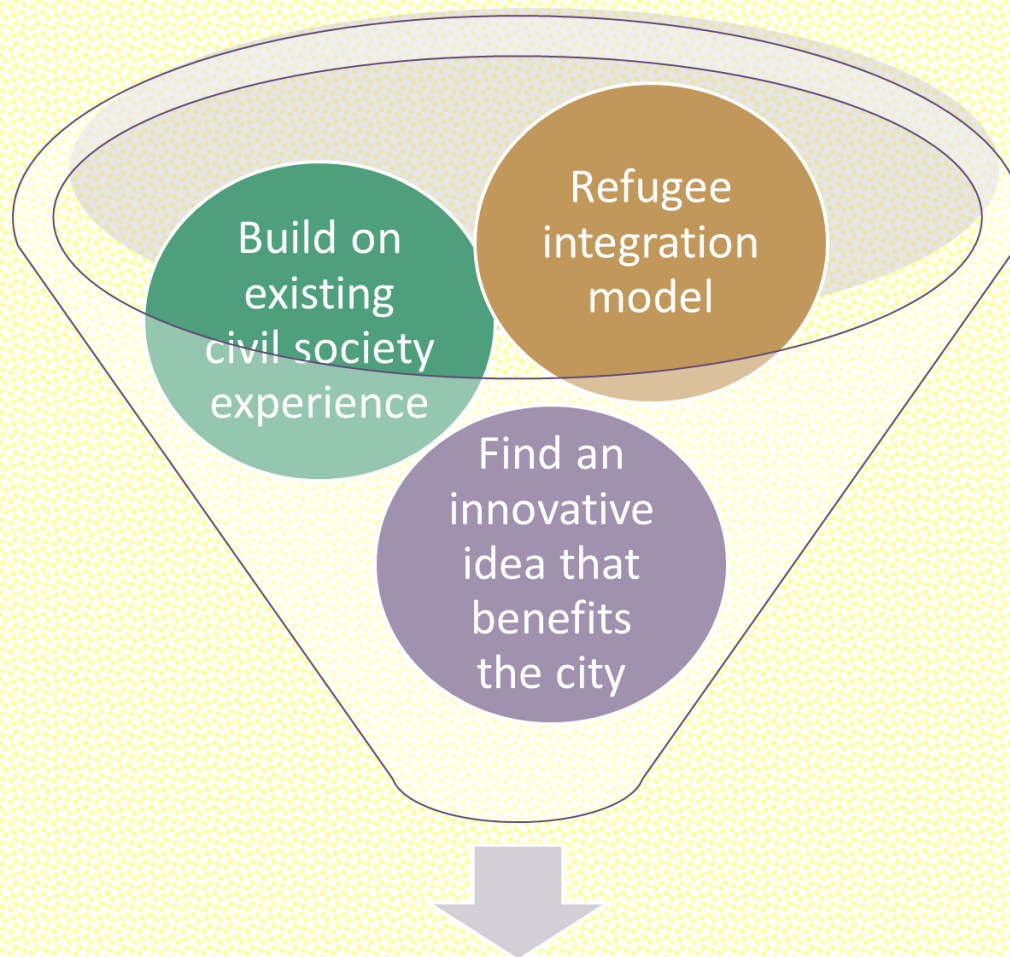
5.

- Interest from 13 other Greek cities for replication

3. 2018 Social cohesion challenge: Refugee integration

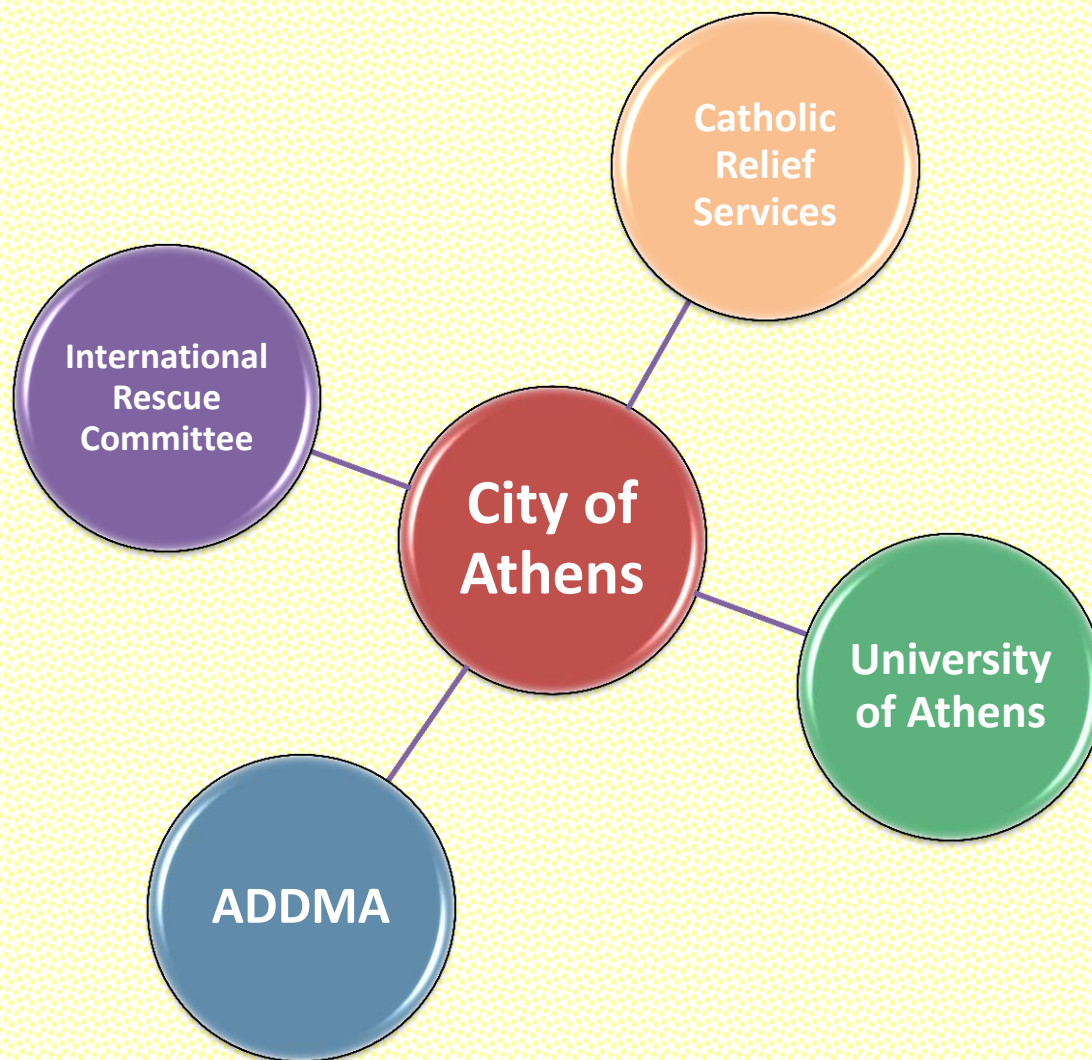


3. Why “Curing the Limbo”?



“Curing the limbo”

3. Project Partnership with INGOs



3. Project goals



The Urban Lab of Europe!

- Create a social exchange model that benefits refugees and the city, both “in limbo”
- Provide refugees accommodation in public and private properties in return to refugees engaging in community service and a program of skills development
- Test a new model of integration and share knowledge with stakeholders

Help refugees and the underprivileged to move from apathy to motivation, create strong bonds with the local communities, acquire new skills, solve local problems together with active citizens, improve the quality of life in the neighborhoods and build self-confidence and self-respect



ΔΗΜΟΣ ΑΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ



LINK TO THE MARKET

New micro businesses
Social enterprises
Higher opportunity for employment



POLICY CHANGE

Model for proprietors to
activate their properties



PROTOTYPE FOR CITY PRESSING NEEDS



Open Calls:

- psychological & cultural support
- technology workshops
- professional matchmaking (internships)



- » mobile laundrette
- » keep the block clean from graffiti
- » urban farms on the roof-tops
- » food recycling
- » ethnic cuisine labs



VACANT PROPERTIES TRANSFORMED TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING



CRS shelters
Limbo Exit Lab in Serafio



Refugees receive
affordable apartments
and in return they
give back work for
the public benefit



REFUGEES & MIGRANTS



Refugees support
the needs of the
local community



On-the-job language learning courses,
psychological support and soft-skills
training will be offered to the
target groups during all the
phases of the program



University

University of Athens provides
expertise and trains local unemployed
to become mediators



CITIZENS INITIATIVES



synAthina

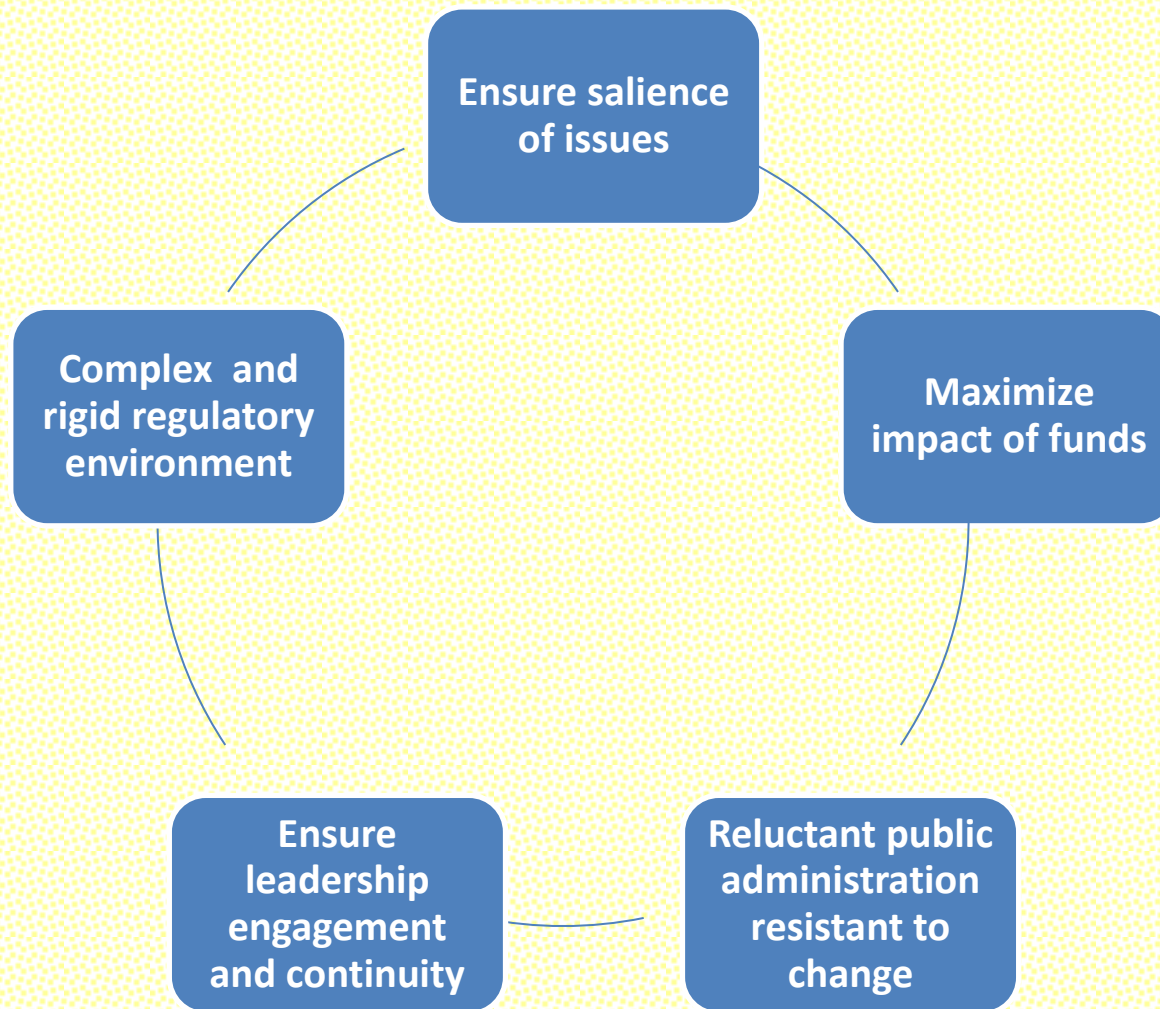


lessons
learned

Challenges coming from civil society



Challenges coming from local government



Conclusions

- Local initiatives are ‘first respondents’ to changing city needs.
- Close cooperation improves policy responses
- Building relations is a process and incorporating new knowledge by the public administration takes time
- Continuity needs to be ensured starting from the political level but bottom-up is also vital for sustainability of initiatives





www.synathina.gr



www.accmr.gr



<http://www.uia-initiative.eu/en/uia-cities/athens>



ΔΗΜΟΣ ΑΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ

Thank you!

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