

**City of Warsaw
Supporting the Creative
Industries
in Praga Północ**

**Guidelines
for Development
of an Action Plan**

Warsaw, December 2010

Disclaimer

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The views expressed in this report are based on qualitative research conducted in the district of Praga Północ. The research was comprised of informal interviews and four all-day workshops involving more than 175 artists, creative entrepreneurs, city officials, NGOs and residents active in the district.

The public consultation process took place in the months of August and September of 2010. This report was written in October based on the information gathered at the workshops. In November it was reviewed and accepted by officials of the City of Warsaw for submission to the partners of the Creative Metropolises programme.

These Guidelines for Development of an Action Plan do not represent an endorsed or budgeted strategy by the City of Warsaw, but rather they feed into the city administration's decision making process for increasing support to the creative industries.

Creative Metropolises Team

Warsaw, December 2010

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1

Goals of the Guidelines for an Action Plan to Support the Development of a Creative District in Praga Północ

In September 2010 a series of workshops and discussions was held under the title *"By Praga, for Praga. Support for a creative and entrepreneurial district."*¹ Their goal was the development of solutions aligned with the creativeness of Praga's residents (youth, children, parents, the elderly) to support creative enterprises and local initiatives of the creative sector.

1.1. Why support the creative industries

Since 2008 the *City of Warsaw*² has been involved in a European Union project known as *Creative Metropoles: Public Policies and Instruments in Support of Creative Industries*³. The project came about in the framework of the BaltMet Baltic Metropoles Network, there are 11 partners participating in the project – Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, Birmingham, Helsinki, Oslo, Riga, Stockholm, Tallinn, Warsaw and Vilnius. Primarily composed of municipal governments, there are also local agencies supporting enterprise development as well as research institutions. The project is financed by the EU assistance vehicle Interreg IVC, from the "Innovation and the knowledge economy" priority.

The Creative Metropoles project applies the *definition of the creative sector* developed by the UK Department for Culture, Media and Sport, which defines it as „those industries which have their origin

in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property."⁴ The creative industries are defined as: advertising, arts and antique markets, crafts, design, fashion, film, video and photography, software, computer games and electronic publishing, music, visual and performing arts, publishing, television and radio.

It is worth highlighting that the British definition has been accepted by many countries due to its inclusiveness, yet many aspects of it remain under discussion. The creative sector is difficult to define as its base is formed by the intellectual values used and acquired in it. In the framework of the creative sector we may find organizations that are involved in the creation of strictly cultural values, which serve as the source of future undertakings at the conceptual, production and consumption levels. At the same time, activity in the creative sector may on the one hand be directed at the economic sphere, and on the other at the desire to improve society's quality of life by developing creative thought and creative use of talents.

Research and analysis show that the creative industries have become a key engine for the growth of cities and regions, as they support innovation necessary for the development of other areas of the economy. The creative sector is one of the fastest-growing sectors in the European economy, making significant contributions to GDP and employment growth. The City of Warsaw, by involving itself in the Creative Metropoles project and by its membership in organizations such as the *Eurocities*⁵ – Culture Forum and the Creative Industries Working Group,

1. <http://zpragadlapragi.artklaster.pl/>

2. <http://www.um.warszawa.pl/>

3. <http://www.creativemetropoles.eu/>

4. <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.culture.gov.uk/images/publications/part1-foreword2001.pdf>

5. <http://www.eurocities.eu/main.php>

is beginning a process of development and education concerning the creative sector in Warsaw. We believe that the goal and responsibility of the city's administration is to educate potential creative entrepreneurs and deliver them the tools to grow their own firms, whose activity will be based on the intellectual value that is the foundation of the creative industries.

1.2. Potential of Praga

In the second half of 2009, on assignment from the City of Warsaw and as a part of the Creative Metropoles project, an analysis of Warsaw's creative sector was conducted. The research was performed in two stages – the first a quantitative one, for which the shaping of the city's creative sector was analyzed, then a qualitative one in which interviews were conducted with representatives of Warsaw's creative sector. The interviews were designed to understand the particulars of the sector and individual sub-sectors, the current climate for the sector in the city, and areas in which support and change are needed.

The research conducted was the foundation for the report titled *The creative sector in Warsaw. The potential and development conditions.*⁶ This report showed that the local administration does not do enough to support the growth of the creative sector. It also uncovered a low level of awareness on the part of creative entrepreneurs concerning their membership in the "creative industry" category. Praga Północ, in the words of those interviewed, comes across as a district with great potential for creative growth. Based on this report, the administration of the City of Warsaw has undertaken further initiatives as part of the Creative Metropoles project, with a view to composing Guidelines for Development of an Action Plan for strengthening the activity of the creative sector in Praga, by exploiting its potential.

6. http://www.creativemetropoles.eu/uploads/files/creative_metropoles_raport_warszawski_sektor_kreatywny.pdf

1.3. How the Guidelines for Development of an Action Plan were developed

Work on the Guidelines for Development of an Action Plan began with a consultation meeting in which representatives from the *British Council*⁷ participated, including Tony O'Brien – the institution's director in Poland; Michael Pyner – a British businessman with enormous experience in the creative sector and the president of *Shoreditch Trust*⁸; Paweł Niziński – sociologist, graphic artist, designer, creative and managing director of *Good Brand*⁹; Peter Richards, project strategist, expert in sustainable development for municipalities; Bogna Świątkowska – president of the *Bęc Zmiana*¹⁰ foundation; Grzegorz Piątek – architecture critic and representative of the Mayor's Office, Culture Department and European Funds Department of the City of Warsaw. The brainstorm produced a sketch of the undertakings necessary and direction in which the city should head in order to construct a plan grounded in real needs and actual possibilities.

The basis for composing the Guidelines for Development of an Action Plan is a diagnosis of the current economic and social situation in Praga, and ideas for the future that were generated during cooperation with the residents of Praga, entrepreneurs, artists, civil servants, experts, local activists and NGOs all invited to participate in a series of workshops. The variety of stakeholders represented was to ensure a diagnosis of the current situation in Praga that takes into account the different points of view belonging to the interest groups with which the development of Praga as Warsaw's creative district will be linked. For this reason, invitations were extended to community leaders to participate in developing the Guidelines for the Plan, who undertook work with representatives of the aforementioned groups.

Four thematic blocks were selected, serving as frameworks in which workshop participants

7. <http://www.britishcouncil.org/pl/poland.htm>

8. <http://www.shoreditchtrust.org.uk/>

9. <http://www.godbrand.com/pl/>

10. <http://www.funbec.eu/>

analyzed Praga and considered the perspectives for its development. Those blocks consisted of: space, the local community, creative skills and the flow of information. They were selected in conjunction with the aforementioned report „*The creative sector in Warsaw. The potential and development conditions*“, as well as conversations conducted with leaders and representatives of the creative sector in Praga.

Four workshops were held, and participants were posed with the following questions:

What to do in order to support the growth of the creative sector in Praga? How to link it to balanced social and spatial growth? How to build good relations between creative entrepreneurs and representatives of the district and city? How to establish ties between the new and old residents of Praga? How to foster an atmosphere of openness towards visitors to the district from Warsaw and abroad?

During the workshops use was made of the “Future City Game” methodology developed as part of the *Creative Cities*¹¹ project by the British Council. The game consists of a meeting of a group of around 25 people who rarely have the chance to directly exchange opinions and work together to compose a new vision for their cities. The workshop is based on a game concept and creative thinking techniques. Interdisciplinary groups were the scenes of cooperation between residents, city officials, entrepreneurs and such experts as sociologists, designers, architects and urban planners, all with a variety of experiences and perspectives concerning the city. The purpose of the game is to draw out solutions for the problem which is the subject of the game. Participants first hold a discussion analyzing the conditions and challenges facing the city, then proceed to coming up with ideas, and at the end a discussion on the proposals is held.

During the “By Praga, for Praga” workshops, the

participant recruitment process was very important. People engaged on a daily basis with Praga were involved, which made it possible to reach the representatives of a variety of interest groups. The invitation process was successful – through its leaders we reached representatives of groups for which the issues raised were of special importance in the identified problem areas, and participation in the open discussions was widely advertised.

The work of leaders in selecting workshop participants ensured the participation of engaged, active individuals who were able to make new acquaintances during the workshops that have a chance to become closer owing to the city’s next related initiative – a Warsaw portal for creative entrepreneurs artklaster.pl. A sub-section of the portal contains a relation from the „By Praga, for Praga” workshops, as well as documents developed as part of the Creative Metropolises project including the Guidelines for the Development of an Action Plan for the creative district. In the future, the portal will be expanded both with a database and a platform for the exchange of knowledge and ideas from the creative societies located and working in Warsaw.

1.4. How the document will be used

The City of Warsaw – owner of the Guidelines for the Development of an Action Plan – will make use of the solutions contained in the document. The city will take into account the priorities of the Creative Metropolises project and initiatives undertaken in its framework, such as the development of an Action Plan for supporting the growth of the creative district as part of the city’s *Development Strategy of the City of Warsaw through 2020*¹² and *Warsaw Social Strategy for the years 2009 – 2010*¹³. The city will take into account the functioning of the project in operational programs and pilot programs resulting from these strategies, such as Program 5.4.4. of the *Development Strategy of the City of Warsaw “Strengthening the city values of Praga*

11. <http://creativecities.britishcouncil.org/>

12. http://www.um.warszawa.pl/v_syrenka/ratusz/strategia.pdf

13. http://strategia.um.warszawa.pl/img/stuff/file/dokumenty_ogolne/SSW_uchwalona_1427_uch_zal1.pdf

and enhancing its prestige”, the pilot program of the *Warsaw Social Strategy* “*Social revitalization*”, which recognizes cooperation with the *Micro-program for the Revitalization of Praga Północ*¹⁴, and the WSS *Family*¹⁵ operational program. The assumptions of the Guidelines for Development of Action Plan for the creative district indicate that it is an interdisciplinary initiative in line with the recommendations in the *Warsaw Social Strategy*. It is just such initiatives that can assist in realizing the goals of the *Warsaw Social Strategy*.

Furthermore, initiatives in the framework of the project will be taken into account by the city when realizing the *Educational policy for the City of Warsaw 2008 – 2012*¹⁶ in the framework of the strategic programs of the Policy, such as the programs „*Education for all – integration and combating segregation*” especially in the program module „*Programs for revitalization of education in Praga Północ*”; „*Warsaw vocational schools at the European level*” (activities directed at improving vocational education and career counseling in Praga Północ); “*Warsaw’s identity – multicultural heritage*” – including the “*Warsaw Cultural Education Program*”, the “*Diverse Warsaw*” program (strengthening the Warsaw identity, emotional bonds with the district, discovering the multicultural heritage of Praga Północ); and “*Creative schools – intelligent youth*” including the project “*A system for supporting educational innovations in schools – Warsaw Educational Initiatives*” (support for innovative educational undertakings in Praga Północ).

The city will also take into account the project’s assumptions in preparation and realization of the *Program for Cultural Development in Warsaw*, including in the following modules of the *Program – Art and cultural animation in the public space; Warsaw – a European cultural metropolis; Culture as a factor in the social and economic growth of the city (especially the pilot project Warsaw Creative Sector Cluster); Cultural diversity and intercultural dialog; the Warsaw Cultural Education Program; and The city for artists, artists for the city*.

Initiatives of the Creative Metropolises project will be taken into account when carrying out the assumptions of the *Monuments Protection Program of the City of Warsaw 2010-2013*¹⁷, including Priority 1 Inclusion of Warsaw’s residents in monuments protection project 1. – Cooperative care for monuments and Priority III Displaying and exploiting the values of monuments for building the identity and pride of residents project 4. – Adapting the ‘Koneser’ Vodka Factory building complex for new functions and 5. – Adapting the three tenements of the Jewish Prayer House for the Praga Museum.

The city will also take into account the project’s initiatives regarding implementation of the three thematic lines of the programs *Warsaw as a candidate for the title of European Capital of Culture 2016*¹⁸ – *Warsaw Under Construction*¹⁹, The Vistula – a River of Possibilities and A City of Talents, as well as of the indicated priorities – “the city and citizens” (activation of Praga Północ residents and NGOs working there in the creation of the program); “the European dimension” (cooperation with Barcelona, expanding knowledge on EU activities concerning support for the creative sector) and “integration of the cities on each side of the Vistula” (integration of Praga Północ with the city centre).

Additionally, the project’s priorities will be taken into account by the city in preparing and carrying out the city’s Strategy for entrepreneurship and innovation.

The assumptions of the document presented are also tied to the Program for cooperation between Warsaw, NGOs and entities listed in art. 3 of the *Act on Publicly Beneficial Activities and Volunteerism*²⁰.

The completed document will be presented to European partners in the Creative Metropolises project. The departments of the City of Warsaw cooperating on the project have taken the decision to join in the continuation of Creative Metropolises; work on that project’s priorities commence in January 2011. One of the assumptions of the

14. http://www.um.warszawa.pl/rewitalizacja/files/File/1348_zal_06_do_zal_Mikroprogram_Rewitalizacji_PRAGA_POLNOC.pdf

15. http://strategia.um.warszawa.pl/img/stuff/1%20link_%20ZALOZENIA_Rodzina.pdf

16. http://www.um.warszawa.pl/v_syrenka/new/pliki/pdf/15169Polityka-edukacyjna.pdf

17. http://www.um.warszawa.pl/konsultacjespoleczne/files/program_opieki_nad_zabytkami.pdf

18. <http://www.warszawa2016.pl/index.php/pol/Warszawa-ESK-2016/Aplikacja-Warszawa-ESK-2016>

19. <http://www.warszawawbudowie.pl/>

20. http://www.um.warszawa.pl/ngo/files/File/program_2011.doc

new project is to emphasize local initiatives and continuation of support for creative districts in partner cities.

2

Situational analysis of Praga Północ

2.1. Overview of the district

Warsaw is a city split by the Vistula River with distinct “left and right” sides. The left side hosts the city centre which is home to all major museums and cultural centres, the central railway station, airport and metro, together with the business and financial districts, the Old Town, Parliament and all major tourist destinations.

Praga Północ is located on the right bank of the river, the side of the river referred to as the “living quarters”, and apart from the embassy district in Praga Południe the right bank is viewed as the less affluent side of the river. Praga Północ does contain several attractions including the Zoo and a number of converted factory complexes that house cultural activities, restaurants and shops, the most widely known being *Fabryka Trzciny*²¹ and *‘Koneser’ Vodka Factory*.

Praga Północ is a district characterized by contradictions. The district has the oldest pre-war buildings in the city; it borders the river and has become the “artistic quarter” of Warsaw, while at the same time being one of the poorest districts of the city, with severe social issues stemming from unemployment, alcoholism and crime. It sits directly across the river from Warsaw’s famous Old Town and Royal Castle.

While viewed as an industrial district with abandoned tenement housing and derelict buildings, the district has several green areas including *Praski Park*, the Zoo, the park in *Szmulowizna* and the undeveloped riverside lands.

In November 2009, a report issued by the City of

21. <http://www.fabrykatrzcinny.pl/>

Warsaw entitled *The Creative Sector in Warsaw: Potential and Development Conditions* identified Praga Północ as a district with massive potential for attracting creative industries. Praga Północ is the focus of the Creative Metropolises Guidelines for Development of an Action Plan to better support the growth and enhancement of the district’s creative sector and to enable it to become a creative hub for all of Warsaw’s entrepreneurs, offering opportunities for interaction and services.

2.2. The social situation in Praga Północ

Praga Północ is one of Warsaw’s smallest districts encompassing only 1,142 hectares (2.2% of the city’s area) with a population of approximately 75,000 residents. It is a demographically young district with 50% of its population below the age of 40. The majority of its residents are women.

The local community of Praga Północ is characterised by a high long-term unemployment rate, and a large percentage of residents are beneficiaries of social assistance. The public sector is the largest employer in the district. Overall the population of Praga Północ is characterised by high rates of poverty and social exclusion.

The district is plagued by the legacy of World War II as more than 150 tenement buildings owned by the city are the subjects of court cases related to their pre-war ownership. The majority of these buildings are in extremely poor condition. Apartments were subdivided after the war due to housing shortages. Subsequently, more than sixty years later 10% of residents do not have bathrooms in

their apartments, requiring them to use communal facilities.

Due to several railway lines and major arterial roads, the district is divided into sub-sections with little continuity across the entire neighbourhood. The result is an enormous lack of ownership or pride in the district as a whole, its aesthetic and its development. The district is full of negative stereotypes.

Researchers studying creativity and development of cities emphasise that areas which draw on the creative sector are characterised by tolerance. Freelancers, artists, cultural entrepreneurs and designers willingly settle and work in districts where the local community is open to that which is different or outside the traditional models of social behaviour. This openness does not necessarily manifest itself by a wish to come into contact with the creative sector, as friendly indifference is what is typically sought for and valued.

In general, Praga Północ can be considered open to the creative sector even though its development causes conflicts and misunderstandings between newcomers and residents. Creative newcomers typically have greater financial means than local residents. Some residents view creative entrepreneurs as outsiders and can be defensive of their buildings, courtyards or streets. However, much work is being undertaken by NGOs and city institutions to bridge the gap and to stimulate cooperation between the creative sector and residents in the areas of social animation, education and art.

2.3. Business and entrepreneurship situation in Praga Północ

The entrepreneurship rate, based on the number of registered business entities per 1,000 residents, is lower in Praga Północ than in Warsaw as a whole. An analysis of statistics tracking business entities using

the *Polish Classification of Activities*²² (PKD) shows that the majority of businesses active in Praga are focused on trading, repair and maintenance of property, transport, warehouse management and communications. Interestingly the statistics show very few registered entities dealing in tourist services. Taking into account Praga Północ's very favourable location in terms of its distance from the city centre, its well-developed transport system, and the possibility of including its monuments and cultural heritage buildings in the tourist package for the City of Warsaw, the development of local tourist services should be accelerated.

Touristic services are included in the strategic goals for the district's development. "Improving the attractiveness of Warsaw for inhabitants and tourists" is goal 2.3 of the *Development Strategy of the City of Warsaw*. Tourist services can be found in Hotel Hetman, Hotel Praski and Hotel Nowa Praga; however, an opportunity exists to market the district's creative sector to tourists and other Warsawians.

The district has organically become a creative district primarily due to the availability of low cost premises (e.g. for studios, performances, work, leisure). The creative sector is generally comprised of people living outside Praga Północ who commute to the district for work. Since the majority of the creative sector's economic activity is conducted by small businesses and freelancers, and since many of these people are not registered in the district, their contribution to the district's economy is not recognised.

While many creative entrepreneurs have obtained their qualifications at Universities or High Schools, the creative sector would not be able to exist without the support of service providers to the creative sector (e.g. electricians, lighting technicians, carpenters, sound technicians, cooks, office service providers, security, etc.). The City currently does not track employment across the creative industries sector, thus making it difficult to ascertain its size and contribution to local economy. However, many new jobs have been created as a result of

22. http://www.stat.gov.pl/klasyfikacje/pkd_07/pkd_07.htm

the creative sector in Praga. Unfortunately, these positions are frequently not held by the district's residents due to the gap that exists between the skills required by the sector and the availability of local people holding the appropriate qualifications.

Due to the poor social situation in Praga Północ, its development could be aided by the growth of a social economy. **Social enterprises**²³ are "business activities driven mainly by social goals, the profits of which are reinvested in these goals or in the community, and not used to maximise the profit, or increase the revenue, of its stakeholders or owners." Representatives of Praga's creative sector and local entrepreneurs have expressed interest in participating in some form of socially-oriented activity in order to improve the quality of life in the district.

2.4. Educational situation in Praga Północ

As one of Warsaw's poorer districts, the school system struggles to maintain attendance at schools. Additionally, because of the lack of good parenting (due to unemployment and/or alcoholism) there are unusually large numbers of youth on the streets during the day. The local government offers a variety of after-school activities; however, attendance at these activities is lower than desired. Issues connected with supporting schools in Praga Północ have been included in the City's Education Policy: **Educational Policy for the City of Warsaw 2008-2012**.

The public school system in Praga Północ serves approximately 7,700 children. The district has five secondary schools and six middle schools with 1,600 and 1,500 pupils respectively. Each institution has its own profile (integrative, drama, fine arts, sports, mathematics, folklore), which is adapted to the potential of the premises and the professional training of the teaching staff. The district's five primary schools have more than 3,100 pupils. The

23. <http://www.ekonomiaspoleczna.pl/>

Ruy Bartosa secondary school organises a national poetry contest. The event was the recipient of an award at the 2010 Fair for Cultural Education.

Thirteen public nursery schools provide care for 1,480 children, and they actively participate in a number of cultural and artistic undertakings. Examples include the participation in the Chopin Year celebrations in 2010 and in environmental awareness programmes. Throughout the district, nursery schools have expressed the need to increase the number of working hours of specialist teachers (speech therapists, psychologists). Nursery schools also provide equal educational opportunities, especially for children whose families provide them with sub-standard care. The Education Department has developed a programme called "Praga 5-year-olds" whose aim is to provide free nursery education to five-year-old children. Parents with low incomes can apply to the programme.

In the 2009/2010 school year, Praga Północ had 1,532 pupils in vocational schools studying the following subjects:

- **economics and administration: economic technician, tourism management (412 pupils)**
- **geodetics, geologist, road technician (527 pupils)**
- **mechanical technician, automotive technician, automotive mechanic (288 pupils)**
- **mechanical technician and IT technician (159 pupils)**
- **electrical technician and electrician, automotive electromechanical engineer (146 pupils)**

Praga's **Vocational School of Geology, Geodesy and Roads Study**²⁴ is one of the best technical schools in Warsaw. Its students are often winners of national contests granting them entrance to institutions of higher education.

The District Centre for Integration, established within the framework of **Psychological and**

24. <http://www.zs14.pl/>

*Pedagogical Centre No. 5*²⁵, active in Praga Północ since 2008, has been highly rated by the parents of disabled children, teachers, and specialists working in similar institutions.

In addition to the public schools and support centres listed above, the district also has the following private educational institutions: two nursery schools, two middle schools, six secondary schools, three post-secondary schools, five vocational secondary schools and one basic vocational school.

Various non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are actively engaged in educational activities within the district. The classes and workshops conducted feature a wide range of activities, including cinema classes, fine arts workshops and drama classes. Frequently their activities occur in urban spaces – in courtyards, streets, parks or day care centres.

The problems faced by schools in the district (such as significantly worse examination results compared to other districts, low attendance and educational problems) call for joint action between the city administration, NGOs and social institutions. Various projects are being addressed to schools in Praga Północ (e.g. postgraduate studies for directors working in difficult districts financed by European funds). A new project will soon be started that focuses on helping teachers in their work with skilled pupils. Teachers will learn diagnostic methods and work with students skilled in various fields.

Children and young people are eager to take advantage of the opportunity to come into contact with students and cultural animators, from whom they can learn something new and spend time in unusual ways. These classes constitute alternatives to institutionalised forms of education. The format in which they are organised allows for the participation of those children and young people who often have problems with the school curriculum - not because they lack talent, but rather because they negate its ideology. They also lack perseverance and parents' support. Traditional education is insufficient to aid

the development of such children.

2.5. Spatial situation in Praga Północ

The architecture of Praga Północ, aside from its residents and culture, is a distinctive feature of the district when compared to other Warsaw districts. The district features the best-preserved pre-war urban tissue in all Warsaw.

In 1794 Praga was annexed by Warsaw, and its most intensive growth occurred at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. Traces of its role and participation in the industrial revolution are visible to this day. Numerous monuments of industrial culture constitute great value and development potential, but unfortunately they are not protected. For example, the steam engine depot on Wileńska street has been recently demolished.

After the war, Praga saw industrial development accompanied by the growth of high-rise pre-fabricated residential housing. During this period the district was divided into Północna (North) and Południowa (South). Buildings from this period also define the nature of the district, particularly housing estates as such as Praga II, with its *Haller's Square*.

Community organisations are struggling to preserve the original architectural form of the period's buildings while simultaneously navigating a national policy of energy efficiency (e.g. thermo-modernisation programmes with subsidies for insulation affixed to exterior walls of buildings), which alters the unique character of historic structures.

Numerous entities are doing their best to shape the spatial identity of Praga by giving a modern character to public spaces and existing objects, but without dominating the historical elements – the urban pattern and architecture. There is ample room for investments that could improve the quality of the urban space. The many empty plots are ripe for residential housing, shops, services and office buildings; however, land allocation remains a major

25. <http://ppp5.pl/>

issue for both the city and district administrations. Various bottom-up initiatives comprised of groups of residents, activists, planners and architects are working to educate residents via community engagement. **Konopacki Palace**, a dilapidated mid-19th century residence, is a notable example of a grass-roots movement of architects, urban planners, non-governmental organisations and artists who are working with the district administration to save the building from complete collapse. The most important component of these initiatives is the attention to reclaiming the architecture and space for the community – allowing the local populace to integrate. This is essential as many of the privately-owned modernised buildings and spaces are not very accessible to the local community, such as Fabryka Trzciny.

Praga's development into an artistic quarter grew organically, but the seeds were planted when the city leased, at significantly reduced rates, space in several former factories to artists. The red brick factories were converted into performance spaces, atelier spaces, boutiques, alternative theatres and cafés. These uniquely urban and industrial chic locations have become a part of Warsaw's night life and in some respects they can be considered the catalysts that attracted artists, creative entrepreneurs and tourists to the district.

According to the City's **Real Estate Management Office**²⁶ the average cost of renting premises in Praga from the City averages 15.00 PLN/net/M2, while the average cost of business premises for artists and small creative businesses averages 7.40 PLN/net/M2. The City rents 55 premises to artists out of a total of 1,230 units rented. Using these figures, the creative sector is renting 4.5% of the total premises, or 3.7% of total space let by the City. The premises require renovation and refurbishment for the business activity of their tenants.

Once the district gained greater appeal, many of the former factories were sold to the private sector. Fabryka Trzciny, The 'Koneser' Vodka Factory and the tenement house at **Inżynierska street** are some

of the places which have come alive thanks to the artists, animators, and private entrepreneurs who conduct their activities there. Praga's studios, galleries, offices, shops and restaurants are implementing an interesting programme of social and cultural events.

Many creative young people are drawn to Praga by the attractive prices of leases on business premises.

However, they stress that the procedure for leasing is not simple, and information about the possibilities for leasing space is not readily available. The City's Housing Policy Department states that the rental process is transparent through bid invitations and tenders. Thus a perception gap exists in terms of the accessibility and availability of information.

Educational institutions are also attracting people to the district (e.g. the **Higher School of Management**²⁷ at Kawęczyńska street). All of these newcomers to Praga create demands for services, which is helping to generate new employment opportunities.

Events such as concerts and festivals, which are becoming more and more numerous in the district, also work to positively change the perception of Praga as a vibrant neighbourhood which is attracting residents from other districts.

Praga Północ has a well-developed transport system transport (buses, trams) with routes over the bridge to the city centre and along the river. Currently there is no metro line on the right bank of the river, however a second metro line is under construction and a metro station should open in Praga by 2013. The district has two train stations which offer connections to both suburban and national destinations, as well to as international destinations. Road traffic is heavy and there is noise and pollution, but this is a city-wide issue as Warsaw has not yet constructed its outer and inner ring roads. Thus all transport traffic must pass through, and not around, Warsaw.

The construction of the second underground line, a section of the inner ring road and the future Kasiński Bridge will dramatically reduce traffic and congestion, exerting a positive influence on the

26. <http://www.zgn-praga-pn.waw.pl/>

27. <http://www.kaweczynska.pl/>

district's attractiveness for investments. Likewise, the district's proximity to the new **National Stadium**, currently under construction, along with the neighbouring Praga Południe district which hosts **Skaryszewski Park**, provide additional opportunities for development.

The major owners of land in the district are the Capital City of Warsaw and the State Treasury (over 50%). The remainder of the land belongs to legal and natural persons, with only 1.5% of the land owned by natural persons. Former owners (from before World War II) have made claims regarding their rights to a considerable number of properties. According to data from the end of 2003, 39.6% of flats in the district were owned by the municipality, 30.1% by natural persons, 21.1% belonged to housing cooperatives, and 7.9% owned by companies. Very few flats (0.6%) belonged to the public building society, which is a very low percentage taking into consideration the local needs. Sorted by usable area, the majority were small premises with an average area of 50 square metres and 3.24 rooms.

2.6. Regeneration in Praga Północ

Praga Północ was one of the first districts to join the Basic Local Revitalisation Programme in 2005, and in 2008 the district joined the **Local Revitalisation Programme of the City of Warsaw for the years 2005-2013**.²⁸

Regeneration works are planned for the residential area of Praga Północ, covering an area of 670 ha (58.6 % of the district's area). The shape of the regeneration zone is a triangle, bordered by the **Vistula River**, **Starzyńskiego street**, then along the railway line (which is also the administrative line dividing Praga Północ with its neighbouring Targówek and Praga Południe districts), and eventually back to the Vistula River. The intensification of the revitalisation programme primarily encompasses the area bordered by the following streets: **Białostocka**, **Trasa Tysiąclecia**,

Folwarczna, **Al. Tysiąclecia**, **Kijowska** and **Targowa**.

A large part of the land and premises covered by the regeneration programme is under preservation maintenance. The area planned for regeneration is inhabited by over 98% of the district's residents. The area is the focal point of the district's life, featuring public utility buildings (schools, hospitals, clinics), cultural, sports, and recreation facilities, commercial and service buildings, as well as a small number of industrial premises. This area also performs a significant transit function for the residents of all districts of Warsaw's right bank and its neighbouring communes. It is a heavily urbanised area.

The **Revitalization Micro-Programme for Praga Północ**²⁹ outlines the district's support for cultural development. The programme's motto is "Praga Północ is a good address to live, visit and invest in. Praga Północ is the artistic and cultural centre of the Capital." Ten projects are mentioned in the district's regeneration programme specifying sources of funding, including the European Regional Development Fund. The majority of regeneration projects are "exterior-focused" and consist of structural and aesthetical improvements to buildings and streets, including the continuation of regeneration work on **Ząbkowska street**, the regeneration of **Białostocka street**, the renovation of tenements on 2 **Radzywińska street**, 12, 14, 16 **Markowska street** and the complete modernisation of the multi-family tenement house of Juliusz Nagórski on 15 Targowa street within the framework of the Praga historic tenements regeneration programme.

Additionally there are several projects that focus on the development of new public space, including the **Museum of Warsaw Praga**³⁰, **The House of Father Ignacy**³¹ (a community day care centre) and the establishment of a Neighbourhood Integration Centre on Korsaka street.

The authors of the revitalization programme also stressed the need for "soft actions" to improve the quality of life for Praga's community. They involve educational activities, integrative activities with

28. http://www.um.warszawa.pl/rewitalizacja/files/File/1607_uch_zal_Lokalny_Program_Rewitalizacji1.pdf

29. http://www.um.warszawa.pl/rewitalizacja/files/File/1348_zal_06_do_zal_Mikroprogram_Rewitalizacji_PRAGA_POLNOC.pdf

30. <http://www.muzeumpragi.pl/>

31. http://www.katedra-floriana.wpraga.opoka.org.pl/dom_ignacego.php

local communities, improving professional skills and shaping the district's image.

The regeneration programme also encompasses the drafting and preparation of new tourist routes named "Strolls around Praga" and improvements to the neighbourhood around Praski Park.

2.7. Creative sector in Praga Północ

The district has insufficient cultural facilities, such as cinemas, theatres and galleries. The majority of cultural institutions operating in Praga Północ are private businesses. There is a noticeable shortage of facilities for Praga's elderly people.

Praga Północ's culture of everyday life constitutes its value. Residents boast "the Praga lifestyle" which determines the district's local colour, and cultivates traditions (e.g. taking care of religious shrines in the courtyards). The unique character of Praga's streets is shaped by the large number of craftsman's stores, which are more and more difficult to be found in other districts of Warsaw. If a metaphor were used to describe Praga, the district could be considered the "Brooklyn" of Warsaw.

Since joining the European Union in 2004, increasing numbers of artists and entrepreneurs from the creative sector have located their activities, ateliers and businesses in Praga, creating a new layer of culture in the everyday life of the district. Creators are a magnet for Warsaw's residents from other districts, encouraging them to get to know Praga Północ better, and to visit it more often.

Cultural activities are conducted by various private sector and community entities. Praga features galleries, cafés, clubs, concert and theatre stages which have already integrated into the district, and new localities are regularly being established. In February the **Creative Hub**³² opened on Targowa street providing office space for freelancers and entrepreneurs.

The **Praga Północ Culture Centre**³³ has approximately 1,500 users who regularly take

advantage of its offerings, which include concerts and festivals. The Centre was established to provide educational and cultural activities, artistic groups, interest groups and courses.

The promotion of culture also involves activities that enhance local identity and promote knowledge of the district's past, its buildings, spaces and people. This was the goal of the "Stroll around Praga" project that designed new tourist routes. The routes, however, have yet to be implemented. The district has supported 19 cultural and social projects carried out by other entities. The total amount of subsidies for the initiatives was over 300,000 zlotys (75,000 Euro).

The creative sector's influence on the atmosphere and character of the district has been growing, and district officials are making use of this fact to improve the district's reputation. However, for many people and institutions, the value and role of the creative industries is still unclear.

At the 2009 Creative Metropolies conference it was stated that "the creative sector is not merely a standard sector of the economy, but something entirely new and separate in sociological terms. For those involved in the creative sector, work and life are one. It is a lifestyle that needs an inspiring environment and space."³⁴

32. <http://www.creativehub.pl/>

33. <http://tupraga.pl/cms/>

34. <http://warszawa.naszemiasto.pl/artykul/55409,i-konferencja-kreatywnych-metropolii,id,t.html>

3

Perspectives of the stakeholder groups

3.1. Stakeholder Groups

When considering the most appropriate method for developing the Guidelines for an Action Plan for improving support to the creative industries in Praga, the City of Warsaw was conscious of the need to focus not only on the creative sector, but also on the sustainable development of the entire neighbourhood.

By employing a holistic, community-based perspective the city and its advisors decided to utilize a “bottom-up” approach for the development of these Guidelines. It was decided that a series of multi-stakeholder workshops would be conducted to allow the community to propose actions for consideration. Four stakeholder groups were identified: artists, youth, creative businesses and adults & elderly. It was felt that the workshops had to include local residents in order for the proposed solutions as well as the document to have long-term sustainability.

More than 175 people participated in four workshops that were held in September 2010. Below is a subjective overview of each of the stakeholder groups based on conversations and dialogue held throughout the workshop process.

3.2. Artists in the district

Most of the artists invited to workshops were people operating in Praga, but living somewhere else. Some of them had recently settled in Praga. While the majority declared a desire to move to the district, they emphasised specific problems connected with doing so, most frequently housing-

related. Repeatedly highlighted were the difficulties in finding a place for their atelier or workspace and the expensive repairs required to improve the extremely poor condition of available space.

While rents in Praga are amongst the lowest in Warsaw, preferential rents for certain industries are possible; such decisions must however be based on concrete research. For example, preferential rent for craftsmen was introduced that obliged district administrations to define the type of craft activities desired in the district, as well as the minimum rental fees for premises rented to entities providing such services. This tool helps to protect craftsmen who find it difficult to find affordable workspace in Warsaw’s highly competitive rental market.

Interestingly enough, artists do not fear the pathologies present in Praga and rarely did they mention any neighbourhood threats that could result from settling in Praga. Foreign artists are fond of the district. Praga has a good name abroad as it has a reputation as an art and culture-friendly place.

The majority of artists that participated in the workshops had graduated from art schools, however some had developed “home-grown” talents.

Due to the social issues present in the district, many artists are involved or interested in becoming involved in some social aspect of the neighbourhood. They are open to local initiatives and often animate local culture themselves. They present their works and way of life to others and willingly welcome children. It is a common sight in Praga to have workshops conducted by artists as volunteers (e.g. street art, drumming and painting).

The artists operating in Praga are dynamic, curious

and original people. They are open, aware of new trends in thinking, devoid of prejudices. Many have an interesting life story, enjoy challenges and have performed internationally. They are also activists. They do not hide their art and eagerly share it with others, inviting and teaching people. Artists tend to be open to an environmentally-friendly lifestyle, vegetarianism, etc.

Artists typically earn their living by working in various small businesses. Frequently this does not have any relation to their artistic activity. For example, it is not uncommon for an artist to work as a graphic designer in an advertising agency. Occasionally, they participate in projects funded by public money. Typically musicians are unable to earn a living from concerts and performances alone.

Many of the artists who participated in the workshops were having difficulties finding premises, however there were artists renting space from the city who had renovated the space by themselves. Artists claim there is difficulty in finding an atelier due to the extremely poor condition of premises offered by the district government. Since the district has become more popular for artists, nightclubs and cafés, it was felt that the city had raised rents. Premises are rather small for businesses, but they are sufficient for artists. It should be noted that the City is in the process of evaluating and promoting the availability of space in attics as ateliers for painters and artists.

There is an enormous need for large rehearsal space for performances. Musicians, dancers and actors have no place to rehearse their performances. There is a problem of availability and size, and in the case of musicians it is a problem of noise. Theatre and dance groups have no choice but to leave Warsaw to practice, forcing the artists not only to pay for rehearsal space, but also to rent rooms for sleeping. Likewise for recording studios, prices in Warsaw are extremely high and musicians tend to leave the city. Praga has the opportunity to take a leadership role in the provision of rehearsal space for the entire city, by introducing large spaces for rehearsals and recording studios, thus keeping artists in the city together with their families, spending money in

Warsaw's economy.

Artists made note of the enormous potential for the district to become the alternative arts and culture district in Warsaw. Practically all artists expressed willingness to cooperate with the community and the City, but stated there was no overall plan to actively support and integrate artists. Many emphasised the need to improve the attitude of the district towards cleanliness, safety, protection of the district's heritage and monuments and improvement of the overall environment.

3.3. Creative industries in the district

Persons conducting creative business activities in Praga have diverse backgrounds, come from all over Poland and are of various ages. The majority are between 30-45 years old, but there are some older business persons between the ages 45-55. Only a few of Praga's creative entrepreneurs live in Praga, most live in nearby districts (Wawer, Białołęka); there are also people who live in more remote parts of Warsaw (Mokotów, Bielany). Entrepreneurs born outside Warsaw tend to keep remain domiciled in their hometowns, and thus taxes paid on business activity conducted in Praga are transferred outside Praga.

Creative entrepreneurs are people with degrees from institutions of higher education. Most of them have graduated from artistic universities having studied subjects such as graphic design, fashion, digital arts, photography, architecture, dance and film. They are also comprised of graduates from sociology, literature, ethnography, religion and history.

Most of the creative entrepreneurs who attended the workshops stated that they are not involved in the community's affairs, or at least they are not putting forward any initiatives. They reluctantly provide the local community with permanent employment, because the "indigenous" residents of Praga appear to be disloyal and undisciplined

workers. Yet many entrepreneurs attempt to help the poor residents of Praga, usually their closest neighbours, by supporting them materially (e.g. with clothes, school supplies and food) or hiring them for some day labour (e.g. cleaning). Unfortunately, the local community frequently does not respect entrepreneurs – shops and ateliers are robbed and damaged (e.g. broken window panes, etc.) and clubs are subject to vandalism (e.g. throwing stones, rubbish, etc.).

Representatives of the creative sector do not separate their professional lives from their private ones. Work is their passion and they devote the majority of their free time to it. The majority of creative entrepreneurs cannot afford to employ competent workers as they are small businesses. They are willing to take part in the district's life by attending the numerous cultural events taking place in Praga. They eagerly spend time in local clubs and cafes, read a lot, willingly participate in discussions, and seldom travel or practise sport. They tend to not work fixed hours.

Most entrepreneurs are sole traders, employing workers on a contract basis. Few companies can afford to employ workers on a full-time employment contract. Entrepreneurs are not satisfied with their personal financial situation. They complain about low earnings, the high costs of repairs, rent and maintenance of premises. Many of them are in debt.

Creative entrepreneurs tend to be operating their business in premises rented from the district. While there are privately owned spaces available, they tend to be too expensive for small start-up businesses. Premises at the street level are smaller spaces (between 25-70 square metres), while first and second floor premises are considerably larger (between 70-150 square metres).

Almost all premises are in extremely poor condition at the time when the city conducts the tendering process and therefore require significant expenditure (e.g. replacement of heating and electrical systems). In winter many premises are heated with electric heaters, significantly increasing operating costs. There is the possibility of rent

exemption for a three-month period linked to the time required to obtain renovation permits. According to the City's Housing Policy Department, it is possible to obtain some relief for expenditures up to an amount equal to six months' rent.

When renting from the city the lease period is for three years, which from the perspective of the tenant is too short to recuperate the renovation and investment costs. Contract renewals can be difficult, particularly for owners of nightclubs located close to residential premises (e.g. public housing). While bid procedures stipulate a rental period of three years, there is the possibility of extension without having to re-enter the bid process.

In general there is little direct support for the establishment of small businesses operating in the creative sector. It is difficult for the city to provide preferential treatment to one type of small business while not providing similar support to others, however if a particular business segment is proven to be missing in the district, it is possible to create preferential conditions to attract that "missing service" to the district.

Creative entrepreneurs stated the need for "incubation" services: communal office space, accounting and legal support. The European Funds Department is developing a **Creativity Centre on Targowa 56**. This centre could provide incubation-type services, however it is not yet functioning. The Housing Policy Department suggests that perhaps creative entrepreneurs could be allotted space at the Culture Centre or at the district's offices.

3.4. Youth in the district

Each of the youth representatives invited to the workshops were also young activists. Their individual needs are different and depend on the types of activities they are engaged in, as well as their personal interests.

Young people with the energy and drive to become an activist or "change agent" are rare individuals.

When considering creative schools in Praga, such as the **Król Władysław IV Middle and Secondary School**, there are only one or two activists per class. In schools not specialised in creativity, the presence of activist attitudes among young people declines significantly. It is a consequence of the lack of access to informal forms of education and also the lack of subjects at schools that encourage civic involvement among students. Youth who participated in the workshops expressed the need for establishing new youth clubs and modifying the school curriculum to meet the needs and interests of the young generation (e.g. to encourage experimentation and risk taking).

Youth between the ages of 17 and 19 who attended the workshop (apart from one person) had been living in Praga since they were born. All of them were students of secondary schools, and were attending their final classes. Their engagement in district affairs was strengthened by the fact that they attend Praga schools. Active youth devote a significant portion of their free time to social work. They work at the Young People's District Council, attend classes in youth clubs and centres (e.g. Światoteka) and are leaders in their social circles.

The majority of these active young people obtain their first job to generate their own income or to support their families financially. Very often they take temporary jobs in bars, cafés or as camp counsellors. In only one case was the work connected with social or cultural activities. Only a very small percentage of youth in Praga work. Many young people are deprived of attention by disinterested parents. They spend their free time in the courtyards of tenement buildings, in the street or in public sports facilities (e.g. playgrounds). Those with friends who attend youth clubs or centres or those who had been directly influenced by representatives of NGOs tend to be more open and interested in improving the district.

The socially active youngsters strongly identify with Praga, which manifests itself in their local patriotism. The area of Praga, as well as its needs and potential, are well known and very dear to them. Taking care of their neighborhood translates into taking steps

to improve their own living conditions. This includes neighborhood affairs such as the poor condition of housing, and the general low standard of living faced by the majority of Praga's residents.

The youth interviewed often expressed willingness to work for the benefit of their peers, many of whom are fated to live in bad conditions. They suggested campaigns to create a positive image of Praga, to counter the opinion that Praga is a dangerous district. Young activists consider social labeling as one of the elements that causes low self-esteem, helplessness and unwillingness to undertake any kind of activity. The young people of Praga are often limited in terms of geography, evidenced by the fact that the street or the district they live in constitutes their entire world. One possible solution to improving the situation would be to involve youth in designing identity projects focused on improving Praga's image.

All the young activists have their own vision of what Praga should be and what should be done in order to make use of its potential. The majority of their ideas related to stalled or ongoing district regeneration activities and how they could work to the benefit of residents, and result in an attractive tourist area for visitors. The primary issue for youth is use of their free time. Engaging youngsters in creative activities during their free time will allow them to develop skills not taught at school or home, while minimizing the unproductive "street" time spent by Praga youths. Youth discussed their interest in writing tourist guides on Praga and attending extra classes or workshops, but on subjects relevant and interesting to them. By all means the city should invest in the potential of the young local community that is attending vocational schools (40% of all the district's students attend vocational schools). After completion of their studies, many youth work in a small local business (e.g. mechanic's garage, construction, barber's shop, tanning salon, grocer's shop, off-licence, betting shop, beauty salon, etc.).

Young adults who took part in the workshops were between the ages of 19 and 25, however the majority in attendance were between the ages of

23 to 25. Many lived outside Praga, however they are strongly connected with the district due to various activities they are involved in. The majority worked in Praga for non-profit organisations (NGO) focused on Praga and its residents. Some of the youth invited had decided to establish their own organisation and some were in the process of founding their own companies.

The non-governmental sector conducts many activities and interventions focused on the local community. One of the biggest needs of active and creative young people, as well as young activists and NGO workers, is the organisation and moderation of effective dialogue between themselves and Praga residents, and also with the Praga Północ and Praga Południe District Offices. There is a lack of information concerning organisations, projects, and offers for schools and individuals. This is due to the absence of dedicated places for community dialogue and proactive communication.

3.5. Adults and the elderly in the district

Praga Północ is a demographically young district. People below the age of 40 constitute 50% of Praga's population. Adults invited to the workshops came from three general categories of inhabitants:

*Rooted residents – the majority of Praga “locals” have lived in the district for generations, or they moved to the district directly after the war. This group inhabits mainly old, urban tenements generally in very poor condition. These people feel particularly bound to the district, remember its history well and the changes that took place. They have good relations with their neighbours and keep those friendships alive. They often complain about the bad condition of the tenements that have not been renovated for a long time.
The elderly residents from this group spend*

their free time in Praga walking in parks or shopping. They tend shop in local stores and bazaars rather than visiting big retail chains. In general they lack the financial means to utilize cultural activities. They are primarily retirees collecting a pension from ZUS (the Social Insurance Institution) and some are also recipients of social assistance. Poor people and those that are excluded because of their poverty and age are often to be found in milk bars on Floriańska and Ząbkowska streets, where they may purchase inexpensive hot meals (often using food vouchers provided as social assistance). They also use these diners as places to meet people and exchange information.

Those who have problems with movement and mobility due to their age complain about the lack of benches (existing benches lack armrests that help the elderly to stand up), lack of public toilets or steep stairs in trams. Many elderly are not able to read bus timetables because of the small font size. However, the elderly's biggest problem is loneliness which contributes to the loss of motivation to take care of themselves and motivation to leave their homes.

The elderly (primarily women) often attend local seniors' clubs, run mostly by the KARAN association and Third Age Universities (e.g. at the Cultural Centre at Dąbrowszczaków street or at the Higher School of Management). Their participation is rather passive; they attend lectures and case studies, but themselves do not contribute actively.

Immigrant/non-native residents – this group of people came to Praga after 1989, after the period of change in Poland. These are people who consciously chose Praga for their place of living due to the atmosphere in this part of the town. They appreciate the distinctiveness of the district, the charm of old service centres, the small grocery stores and interior courtyards. Some of these people live in closed housing developments that are separated from the

urban tissue, some of them send their children to schools located in different Warsaw districts, and some also work in different districts.

Younger residents – this group consists of people who have lived in Praga for 2-4 years, among them young married couples who decided to buy their first flat in Praga primarily because of the prices, which are among the lowest of all Warsaw districts.

Many young couples living in the district are not from Warsaw. They came to the city to study and decided to stay after finding their first job in Warsaw. Some couples selected Praga due to the district's recent trendiness, which has been on the rise for several years. The couples are mobile people, rather independent and conscious of their influence on social life. It is very important for them to improve the quality of life in the district, which is why they often become involved in neighbourhood issues. The young newcomers willingly participate in the district's attractions, such as the social life in Praga's clubs, cafés and green spaces.

Unfortunately, few elderly residents attended the open discussions held at the end of each workshop. Additionally, many of the Praga "locals" who were invited to the workshops often refused to come, stating they lacked knowledge on the subject of support for the creative industries. At the same time, they emphasised that these types of meetings and conversations were very important, because Praga locals should make their own decisions about their neighbourhood.

When observing the interaction of various age groups in Praga, one notes the value of public space. Residents frequent the parks on Haller Square, where there is a fountain that serves as a place for integrating the young and old. Additionally the children's playground is a gathering point for

mothers to meet and discuss their children and daily matters.

Other informal public meeting points can be observed in the park at Dąbroszczaków street, Praga Park and the area near the statue of **Kapela Praska (Praga Band)** where both young and old residents of Praga gather. Unique to Praga are the numerous internal courtyards where neighbours regularly meet. The courtyard chapels are often cleaned by the elderly who bring flowers and light candles.

4

Summary of stakeholder workshops

4.1. Summary of results

In September, four full-day workshops were conducted with approximately 30 participants per workshop, representing the four stakeholder groups discussed in the previous section. In addition to the 120 workshop participants, the general public was invited to the summary discussions. Overall approximately 175 people were involved in developing the recommendations in this document. The final recommendations can be found in Section 5. Detailed information on the discussions which occurred during the workshops is presented below. The workshops were organised around four macro themes: community engagement, skills & education, space and information & communication.

4.2. Community engagement

4.1.1. Developing the community and a good neighborhood

The multi-stakeholder workshop was focused on the development of the local community and a good neighbourhood. It took place at **Sen Pszczoły**³⁵ which is a popular nightclub and arts performance space located in a former industrial building.

The workshop theme was selected as the district is not seen as “neighbourly” and welcoming of creative entrepreneurs and artists. Over the last ten years Praga has changed dynamically and while it has attracted participants in the creative sector, it could do much more to attract larger

35. <http://www.senpszczoly.pl/>

numbers of creative and enterprising people, young people seeking interesting entertainment and tourists looking for traces of pre-war Warsaw and the new “artsy” face of Praga. There are frequent misunderstandings connected to this process which impede the development of Praga’s potential.

The workshop participants discussed the following themes:

How to make the changes taking place in the district conducive to the development of the local community and the improvement of the quality of life in the district?

How to form local alliances that would allow such sustainable development?

How to develop ties between residents and the creative sector?

How to turn Praga into a friendlier place?

The workshop was introduced by the Deputy Mayor of the **Praga Północ District**³⁶, who stated that Praga has a tradition of various cultures living as close neighbours. He emphasised how much work has already been implemented in the field of social and neighbourly animation. He gave examples of artistic performances at Brzeska, and festivals such as Praga Night, which are organised by the Praga Północ District Office in cooperation with Praga’s cultural institutions and businesses active in the field of cultural animation.

The Deputy Mayor stated that Praga is tolerant, and this feature, along with its availability of space, attracts people to Praga who want to live and behave differently, alternatively. The subject of social revitalisation forms part of

36. <http://www.praga-pn.waw.pl/page/>

the district's Revitalization Micro-Programme; budget restrictions, however, mean that societal improvements are not always included in the Micro-Programme. For example, budget cuts impacted the Neighbours' Integration Centre on Korsaka Street, which was to be an element of the Revitalization Micro-Programme for the Praga Północ District. An official from the Praga Południe District Office noted that while Praga faces serious community and social problems, there are places in **Kamionek** and **Grochów** where the local community is very active. The district is doing its best to cooperate with non-governmental organizations in the implementation of programmes to activate the local society.

Peter Richards, a specialist in sustainable development, stressed the potential which lies in cooperation between the creative sector and local residents. Older residents have creative interests, and many residents could work as contractors for artists, designers, theatres, etc. All stakeholders in the community collectively create a social dimension to the space, and cooperation creates opportunities for all parties. Peter spoke about functional places in London that integrate creative crafts and residents, such as a neighbourhood sewing centre which allows women to meet and share experiences.

4.2.2. Participants' diagnosis of the district

When asked to provide opinions on the current state of the district, participants stated that native Praga residents face long-standing problems such as inter-generational poverty and exclusion which cannot be overcome by young people without external inspiration and support. These conditions are not conducive to creating the will to cooperate with "outsiders" such as the creative sector. As a consequence, two parallel worlds are emerging: the new Praga and the old Praga. Although we can often speak about friendly tolerance and conflict-free co-existence, there are occasional incidents of conflict between residents and newcomers/visitors

to Praga.

Workshop participants suggested that one way to avoid conflict is to include representatives of both "old" and "new" Praga when taking decisions in the district. Initiating dialogue with residents allows them to be aware of changes in advance, rather than feeling that changes are forced on them. Residents should be made aware that the city is a shared space, a sphere for negotiating the interests of various groups and a space that requires responsibility for the common good.

Many participants commented that fostering a good neighbourhood and community spirit is related to micro-level issues. The social issues that require attention from the city, but which have no allocated budget resources, are preventing the community from developing and growing. NGOs are important actors working on a variety of community issues, but one should remember that they are not able to implement long-term programmes due to their annual funding cycles. Therefore any communication between residents, city offices and organisations that can develop social animation should be supported. As an impoverished district, most residents can not take advantage of newly created spaces (as they can barely afford their own rent), and the district's lack of funding to renovate public tenements only reinforces the "us-them" mentality. It was felt that there is no clear strategy for the district to improve the quality of life for locals.

Additionally, participants stated the need for city officials, NGOs and residents to learn the skills and techniques required for solving conflicts. It was felt that the city needs to educate its staff, in addition to residents, on mediation, negotiation and community therapy. The city needs to cooperate better with NGOs in implementing community projects and to respect their role as a mediator between residents and the growing creative sector in Praga.

The need to develop social dialogue and mechanisms of resident participation was mentioned several times throughout the workshop.

It is important that activities supporting local communities be cyclical and long-term, as one-off activities bring very limited results.

Regarding city finances, the overriding problem mentioned was the lack of funds for social activities. This was stated as the primary reason that the district's revitalization activities focus primarily on the renovation of buildings. However, attention also needs to be paid to the people inside the buildings. Participants felt that the city needs to promote different types of community organisations (e.g. associations, foundations, cooperatives) to residents, as such entities may apply for co-financing. Cooperatives are an opportunity to unite residents with the creative sector. One problem reported by creative entrepreneurs is that as individuals they cannot apply for grants/financial support from the local government to fund activities in the field of social and cultural animation. Such civic initiatives can be supported by NGOs, who are able to acquire a donation for the performance of a public task concerning activities undertaken for the development of the community's administration.

Culture and the arts are forming the district's distinctive image; however, without involving residents, without monitoring the cultural and creative needs of the local community and without activities that inspire joint participation in the cultural life of the district, the district will continue to struggle with its identity.

Another problem mentioned was the unequal development of Praga's fragmented "archipelago" of space. As previously mentioned, railway lines and major roads divide Praga into a series of smaller pieces giving the feeling of an archipelago. NGO and institutional activity is focused on selected parts of Praga, while many areas are left without animation.

The participants in the workshop also identified some threats to the district's creative success. One threat mentioned was the sub-standard housing conditions found in the numerous public buildings in Praga. Many of these buildings are in danger of degradation and collapse. Another threat identified was the lack of a strategy to save

Praga's heritage. Issues such as noise resulting from the concentration of cultural activities and nightclubs on particular streets were mentioned as other causes of tension. The unused potential of Praga's space is also problematic. This concerns both the poor quality of public space and the many empty premises that could be used as day-care or community centres.

4.2.3. From diagnosis to ideas

The participants suggested various solutions for tackling the current problems in Praga and for developing its existing potential of being a creative district and a hub for the creative sector in Warsaw; one offering opportunities and space for interaction, cooperation and events, and providing services to individual creative entrepreneurs well-embedded in the social and economic fabric of the district. The ideas ranged from bottom-up neighbours' initiatives such as activities in the internal courtyards of tenement buildings, to institutional means of support, such as ensuring the legal viability of awarding so-called "small grants" to housing communities and networking initiatives within the creative sector.

Idea 1 – Praga Saturday (Praska Sobota)

Authors: M. Szeniewska, J. Piwko, F. Stanowski, J. Schmidt, J. Krupińska, A. Mamińska

The idea to organise a monthly community event responds to the need for social and cultural animation, providing a format for regular integration between the community and the creative sector. It was proposed that the event be held on the first Saturday of the month, where all galleries, cafés, clubs, handicraft studios and companies from the creative industry would be open. The event

could be held in the historic areas of Praga – **Wileńska, Inżynierska, Mała, 11 Listopada, Stalowa, Ząbkowska, and Brzeska streets.**

In the summer months, Ząbkowska street would be closed to car traffic (e.g. from 9am – 2pm) and made available as a pedestrian promenade. Public space would be brought to life allowing “old and new” residents of Praga and tourists to interact and to develop the community’s spirit. Courtyards are an important part of Praga to bring to life. They could host flea markets and exhibitions. Additionally, a contest for the prettiest courtyard could be organised. The local community would be involved in organizing the monthly event. A coordinator would need to be hired to supervise the schedule of events, facilitate communications and coordinate promotion.

Idea 2 – Forum for Initiatives Centre

Authors: A. Induska, I. Marczevska, R. Woźniak, N. Sówka, P. Wyszowski, A.M. Żurek

The idea for a new community centre responds to the need for supporting the local community and the creative sector in Praga, but also for initiatives coming from other entities in Praga. The establishment of an integrated community centre that would house a variety of organisations would allow for daily meetings and exchanges of experiences, ideas, needs and services in order to create a collective vision for the district.

The most important objective of the Forum would be the networking of people and initiatives, including umbrella activities requiring joint project implementation. The building would contain an incubator of initiatives, generated from the provision

of work space (e.g. desks for rental) for smaller associations, creative entrepreneurs and NGOs as well as a conference room for meetings and workshops.

The Forum would provide professional support services, including management and in-house consultations (e.g. legal, pedagogical, psychological, etc.). The workshops identified a noticeable need to settle disputes in Praga through mediation, negotiation and support. These services would be provided by trained mediators located within the Forum’s mediation unit. The unit would address disputes within the community and district administration.

It is important that the activities of the Forum be directed by an open-minded official. It was proposed that the Forum be open 7 days a week and until 9pm. The community has issues that can not always be resolved between the working hours of 9am-5pm.

The Forum’s objective would be predominantly to support communication. The Forum would improve information flow, for example by organising a “market of ideas” and open discussions based on a “proposals department”. In order for Praga’s community to feel that the facility belongs to them, the authors of the idea suggested that its name would be selected in an open contest.

Idea 3 – Praga Dance Centre

Authors: K. Pluta, D. Chomicki, K. Alboszta, S. Krawczyński, A. Kowalczyk

This idea responds to the need of providing a catalyst for positive change, building pride and engaging residents in cultural activities and skills development in Praga.

The Praga Dance Centre would be an institution acting on local, citywide, and international scales. The idea for a modern

Dance Centre is based on the popularity of dance in Poland and the lack of a professional institution for modern dance in Warsaw. The Centre could build on the current activities in Praga (e.g. those implemented by **Teatr Wytwórnia**³⁷ where the dance theatre Bretoncafe had its headquarters).

As the Centre for Modern Dance in Warsaw, it would gather experienced dancers, choreographers and directors to produce a regular calendar of dance events. It would invite guests from other regions of Poland and from all over the world. Additionally the Centre would provide badly-needed rehearsal space for dance groups throughout Warsaw.

An important feature of the Centre's activities would be the organisation of educational undertakings directed towards the local community of Praga. Educational activities would be of a long-lasting and multi-layered nature (e.g. the institution would cooperate with a particular group of residents for a few years and stimulate their development not only in the field of dance, but also in related fields including stage design, promotion, production, etc.). The Centre would support existing revitalization activities by locating a prominent city institution on the right bank of the Vistula rather than the city centre.

Idea 4 – Praga Barbecue

Authors: A. Synowiec, A. Matan, Ł. Piekarczyk, M. Sycik, W. Żydok, K. Łowicka

This idea is focused on the encouragement of neighbourly activities in the district and allows for the networking of bottom-up initiatives with the actions of NGOs, the district office and entrepreneurs. In order to function effectively a coordinating unit at

the district office is needed, one which would ensure the durability of its activities.

A neighbourhood barbecue with contests for children and young people would allow for regular, cyclical meetings of residents and the community. Meetings concerning Praga's future could be conducted as a subset of the barbecue. The event could include a competition for the most interesting courtyard.

The monthly event requires a coordinating unit within the district office. The barbecue could take place in locations designated by the city, in existing cafes or in public space. When engaging the neighbourhood in social activities, it should be kept in mind that working families might only be able to attend in the evenings.

Idea 5 – Różyckiego Market and the Vistula riverbank – spaces of social importance

Authors: M. Kowalewska, M. Garncarek, M. Zalesiński, C. Kamiński, M. Latuch

The idea is focused on a public space where large numbers of Praga's residents regularly gather and which plays a significant role in the community's identity. Różyckiego Market is a well-known outdoor street market that has no strategy for its revitalisation. The market is faced with issues of unclear land ownership and the lack of funds for its renovation. The revitalization of the marketplace is important for Praga's residents, and it also could become a tourist attraction.

A notable example would be London's Borough Market, which exists underneath the railway arches by London Bridge. Borough Market was slated to be torn down, but local

37. <http://www.teatrwytwornia.pl/index.php?grupa=0>

residents and NGOs fought for its existence and renovation. Today Borough Market is one of the most popular tourist destinations in London, attracting both residents and tourists to its various outdoor food stalls. Różyckiego Market could follow a similar path.

Another idea was focused on enlivening Praga's green areas, particularly those along the banks of the Vistula river which are still undeveloped. The group proposed playgrounds, a summer cinema and sport fields. Apart from contributing to the development of the community, investment in the reclamation of the Vistula has a touristic dimension, which would contribute to the economic development goals of the district.

4.2.4. Discussion of ideas regarding community engagement and neighbourhood

A very noticeable subject in the discussions was the issue of privatising publicly-owned flats which are in extremely poor condition, thus contributing to the overall feeling of decay in the district. Due to public ownership, residents tend not to create housing communities; bottom-up initiatives are difficult to implement because of general community apathy, and private investment can not be attracted. Publicly-owned buildings can qualify for EU funds for renovation from programmes such as the **Operational Programme for Infrastructure and Environment**³⁸ Clause 11.1 and 11.2 allow for the "protection, preservation and efficient use of trans-regional cultural heritage" and "improving the condition of cultural infrastructure of trans-regional significance".

Management of public premises is not just a problem faced by Praga, but a problem faced by

38. http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/country/prordn/details_new.cfm?gv_PAY=PL&gv_reg=ALL&gv_PGM=1212&gv_defL=7&LAN=7

all of Warsaw. Workshop participants who voiced their opinions stressed the district's numerous social problems, difficult living conditions and unsatisfied needs of residents make it difficult to support ideas that fail to make their lives better.

The lack of an overall creative policy for the district impedes the sector's development as it is not possible to determine which actions should be supported. Initiatives are frequently disconnected, and various parties are unaware of them. There is a distinct need to interlink and facilitate networking between the various initiatives being directed in the district. Participants suggested that lobbies should be created around thematic issues, and the lobbies would jointly define objectives and cooperate in achieving them by exerting pressure on the district authorities. Apparently the District Committee for Social Dialogue was supposed to be the body that united and supported dialogue between city officials and activists, but the Committee has been dominated by procedural issues, and has so far done little to contribute to the networking of entities active in Praga. It was felt that the Committee's work has not resulted in improved communication.

Participants reinforced the need for joint decision making and for the encouragement of involving stakeholders in the community. It was generally felt that representatives from the public sector are not and do not want to be change agents.

4.2.5. Conclusions from the workshop on community engagement

Accelerating positive changes in Praga requires external support. This was clearly visible in the cooperation observed between the participants of the workshop groups. District officials generally recognise the limitations arising from the district's current situation and admit their horizons are kept narrow by procedural and budgetary constraints. Activists, experts, entrepreneurs and residents tend to focus on everyday needs and they are keen to create conditions for better interactivity and to

improve living standards. Many statements from the participants were appeals to take quick and strategic actions to save Praga's heritage, with which the issues of a good neighbourhood and support for the creative sector are closely tied.

Tackling social and neighbourly issues in Praga requires an open and interdisciplinary approach. A good example would be the **KNOT**³⁹ workshops conducted in the garden of the empty Konopacki Palace in the summer of 2010. Continuing this type of cooperation between the creative sector, NGOs, city officials and residents allows for the support of a sustainable neighbourhood, one that is tolerant, respects its heritage and fosters coexistence.

It is very important to provide residents with a space for creative expression, education and community interaction, while simultaneously establishing a place that will become a significant destination on the map of Warsaw. The district needs a centrepiece on which to hang its pride. While the Museum of Warsaw Praga and the Creativity Centre are under construction, it was felt that the provision of space for a Centre for Dance could, according to the participants, be the institution that binds Praga.

Another conclusion was that the District Committee for Social Dialogue is not serving as a catalyst for new initiatives and processes. The district needs a more proactive coordinating unit for social initiatives. According to the Social Communication Centre, information collected within the scope of the Social Planning project developed by the European Funds Department and the Social Policies Department indicated that the district sees opportunity in the development of the cultural sector in Praga. In the opinion of the District Administration, culture has already changed social attitudes and the image of Praga Północ. The development of Praga must be conducted with the simultaneous support of families and the young.

Finally, the district should address the tension between Praga's old and new residents. The community would function much more cohesively and find it easier to be open to others if residents

39. http://www.knotland.net/index.php?id=111&L=2&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=244&cHash=0bda4dbd01835bfdc16a73eb46f9ecca

could feel connected with the improvements of a particular part of the district.

4.3. Education & skills

4.3.1. Creative skills. Passion and business

The multi-stakeholder workshop was focused on the skills required to support the creative industries and to become a creative entrepreneur. The workshop took place in **"Miotła"**, a bohemian restaurant and cultural activist centre located in the former 'Koneser' vodka factory.

This workshop theme was selected as the district is not seen as ensuring appropriate education and skills crucial to the development of the creative sector in Praga.

Participants in the workshop were asked to address the following questions:

- *What skills would Praga's young people like to learn?*
- *How to create favourable conditions for developing skills and passions in Praga?*
- *How to create an effective model of cooperation in the field of organising young people's free time?*
- *How to turn a creative passion into a way of life and an effective business?*
- *What about the knowledge and skills of the older generation? Is there a place in which people can interact with them and spend time?*
- *Can cooperation with institutions of higher education and incubators be improved?*

4.3.2. Skills and education in Praga – the current state

Participants felt that schooling and education in

the district were not well respected, and in general they are held in low esteem by most residents. Additionally, with respect to social and creative skills there is a lack of understanding of the role of NGOs, as they typically use different teaching methods than schools. Participants felt that communication between NGOs and schools should be improved. Another problem mentioned was the poor use of existing talent in the district that could teach practical skills and activate the community.

More time and attention should be allocated to motivate young people to show them that education is a chance for a better life. Participants stated that it was important to work with youth to prevent them from acquiring attitudes of helplessness, apathy and reliance on state support. Schools naturally must follow the state curriculum, but it was felt that alternative teaching practices, guest speakers and more relevant after-school activities should be embraced.

Teachers themselves have a sense of apathy and hopelessness regarding the difficult youth of Praga, however it was felt that civic education and shaping of responsibility could be achieved by teaching in situ through social activities and youth involvement. Involvement requires the development of communication skills which could be taught via performance activities. It is important to develop an attitude of openness to diversity, alternative lifestyles and different points of view. It was noted that, while these skills and attitudes could be taught at school, by NGOs or artistic intervention, these attitudes were not necessarily reinforced at home.

Educational programs are prepared according to Ministry of Education guidelines, however they often fail to keep up with the changing everyday reality. The offer for young people is thus frequently outdated. This is a particularly burning problem in vocational education, where teaching profiles are often far from what is required by a knowledge-based economy. Actions have been taken to test the Warsaw job market, such as the "Warsaw jobs barometer" programme financed by the European Social Fund. This serves as the basis for the introduction of instruction in new professions, such

as a digital graphics technician.

Participants supported the work by NGOs which actively operate in the field of education and social animation. However, their work is frequently piecemeal and scattershot. NGOs are not providing continuous activities and they tend to offer small-scale interventions. While NGOs were seen as active entities, participants suggested that their work should be monitored for quality.

A problem very distinctly felt was the lack of support programs for micro-entrepreneurs and especially for what are called the "dying" professions (e.g. tailors, shoemakers, watch repair, upholsterers, etc.) for whom survival on the market is becoming more and more difficult. Overall, in the craft sector (glass, pottery, print making, etc.) it was felt that there was a lack of programmes to network new entrepreneurs in the creative sector with those who had already been active in Praga in order to share know-how.

At institutions of higher education it was felt that the city administration could better leverage the social science curricula. Participants suggested that cooperation between the administration and such institutions would allow for the implementation of study programmes related to Praga and its community. Such a model of education is implemented in places like Great Britain, where University College of London promotes and facilitates community involvement for students. Students research matters connected with the district's community and its cooperation with local government.

Another challenge to developing skills for the creative industries is the business and marketing aspects of these industries. Participants in the workshop observed that passion alone is not enough to succeed in a creative business. Many people with talent cannot turn their passions into a prosperous business on their own without business management skills.

Since Praga's youth tend to have more "street interests" the activities of social activists are met with considerable interest by students. Community

educational activities run by NGOs and classes conducted by street workers are popular and are better attended than community centres, whose offerings are not adapted to the needs of selected groups and are not very attractive to young people.

Creative skills are an area where the local community and the creative sector could truly connect. Education could support skills relevant to the creative industries, such as music production, lighting, set-design and dance. While many creative entrepreneurs are university graduates of art, architecture, fashion and design, there is a large group of technicians who cooperate with them (e.g. electricians, carpenters, sound technicians, etc.), and participants felt that education and skills development in the district should support both direct creativity as well as the various support services required for the sector.

It was mentioned that Praga has a number of crafts studios, as well as talented people of various ages who should be supported by the city with respect to networking, apprenticeship and mentoring programmes.

Participants noted that the cultural offering in Praga does not necessarily inspire activity, nor the development of talents and passions among residents of different ages. Cultural activities could be redirected to activate residents, not only to attract residents from other Warsaw districts. Some cultural events should be targeted at civic education and the openness to multiculturalism which formed part of Praga's past.

4.3.3. From diagnosis to ideas

The ideas which arose from the workshops covered the creation of support mechanisms for local initiatives, activities in the field of social and cultural animation and education. It was stressed that the city should help the community understand that it does not have to wait passively and that it can initiate actions itself. The district should improve the quality of information available to residents. A great number of ideas concerned networking

and information flow, supporting the creation of partnerships and sharing good practices. Participants were convinced of the constant need for street workers and undertakings to activate the district's citizens.

It is extremely important to monitor the quality of activities taking place around the district. Since not all organizations are well-managed, if they are to be promoted the district administration should evaluate their capabilities.

Participants discussed the importance of ensuring continuity of various actions. Neighbourhood campaigns should not last for only one day or over the weekend, but they should become regular longer-term initiatives. Shaping a friendly urban space is also important because a physically inhospitable environment and ugliness demotivate. Actions supporting the creation of a positive image of Praga and its residents should be promoted and expanded.

Idea 1 – Praga International Arts Residency & Praga Film School

Authors: K. Grządkowska, D. Kunowski, J. Wojtkowski, D. Goraj, J. Kubicki, K. Łowicka, A. Mamińska

This idea focused on the need to provide after-school educational activities relevant to the creative industries.

The team proposed two initiatives: "International Arts Residency" and "The Praga Film School." The "International Arts Residency" project focuses on inviting foreign artists to spend several months in Praga working with children and young people (workshops organized with such goals as altering the local space and improving the aesthetics of the surroundings). The workshops would develop teamwork and the consensus building skills of youth, encourage creativity and present a range

of employment prospects. The workshops conducted by foreign artists would respond to the need for the promotion of artistic education to children and young people.

The other initiative proposed was “The Praga Film School”. The idea is to shoot a film over a period of six months that would involve Praga’s community as volunteers in every stage of its production (script writing, casting, set design, lighting, music, editing, etc.). Schools would be used to recruit volunteers and the community would create a documentary on itself while teaching a variety of skills relevant to the creative sector.

Idea 2 – The NGO and Business Partnership

Authors: A. Nyckowski, M. Domanowska, J. Delber, J. Kozik, P. Dawidowicz, A. M. Żurek

This idea focused on improving the business skills of NGOs (the „third sector”) while providing a channel for businesses active in the district to become more socially responsible. NGO activity is frequently restricted by a lack of funding, and thus the continuity of educational and social animation support is poor. Public tenders for receiving grants make long-term strategic planning virtually impossible. Developing partnerships between NGOs and businesses could be a response to this problem.

If the city could broker partnerships between corporations and the third sector, benefits would be achieved by all parties. Joint initiatives are a chance for NGOs to acquire know-how critical to their activities – marketing, professionalism and implementation of CSR (corporate social responsibility) initiatives. Overall the community benefits from joint actions as NGOs can apply for grants in numerous

programs in which the participation of a business is impossible. By working collaboratively, businesses can achieve objectives relevant to themselves, the community and the goals of an NGO.

Idea 3 – District Arts Fund

Authors: B. Sawka, E. Fedorowicz, M. Zawadzka, Z. Biziuk-Kubicka, K. Pluta

The idea is to establish a fund generated from the implementation of an ‘arts tax’ paid by businesses operating in Praga. It was suggested that tax of 1% would be paid by local businesses, and the funds collected would be used to further support the creative sector in Praga. Funds would be earmarked for educational activities, in particular multi-year initiatives delivered by NGOs. This would alleviate the annual fundraising pressure for socially oriented educational and cultural projects that support community development within the district.

The “arts fund” would contribute to the district’s identity, as Praga would become known as an arts and culture district that is community oriented. Naturally the management and use of the funds would need to be transparent, however the authors envisioned the district authorities as the manager of the funds.

Idea 4 – The Centre for Dialogue – Competence, confidence and information for partnership

Authors: M. Drygulska, L. Domarackas, E. Winiarska, E. Pogońska, G. Agúscik, M. Latuch

This idea focused on the need for networking initiatives and skills development around the

work of the third sector. The team suggested that a “Centre for Dialogue” be created which would identify social needs and promote partnership activities between institutional, non-institutional, public, private and non-governmental entities. The Centre would be a permanent space available for the exchange of experiences and joint cooperation.

The principles of the Centre’s operation would be based on simple procedures and rapid action. It would map and monitor the activities of the various creative, social and community-oriented entities in Praga. It would offer support and legal counselling concerning possible sources of funds. The activities of the Centre would be financed by commercial activities – rental of rooms, running a café, restaurant, fees for training sessions, etc.

The Centre would focus on creating conditions for cyclical and long-term activities, involving the local community in the initiatives – the activation of a neighbours’ movement and local activities, the promotion of know-how in the field of coordinating the activities of foundations, organisations, local entities and umbrella activities.

4.3.4. Discussion about education and skills

Among reactions by the participants, there was an opinion that the ongoing changes in Praga were eroding the original “Praga atmosphere”. The opinion met with a heated response that this “atmosphere” stifles development and opportunities for children and young people. It was stressed that a more responsible attitude towards the overall development of the community should be shaped. Young people and their families often need help finding their place in the world and developing their self-confidence.

as very volatile, and it is very difficult to persevere on the path to change.

Everybody stressed that multi-stakeholder cooperation is a crucial element to the district’s success.

4.3.5. Conclusions from the workshop on education and skills

Praga already has numerous representatives of the creative sector who work in art, culture, crafts and creative entrepreneurship. There is a definite lack of networking between creative entrepreneurs, Praga’s locals, NGOs and the district administration. More attention needs to be paid to supporting the sector via strategic intervention.

The city should promote internship programs, preferential terms for employment of local residents and cooperation with schools. Institutional education should support creative thinking and foster creative skills. Inspiring young people to try something new, to work in teams and to experiment may allow them to be better engaged with school and after-school activities. It is important to clearly understand the contemporary artistic interests of children and youth and to design and support education that engages the local community.

It is also important to monitor the quality of educational activities provided by both institutional and non-institutional entities.

The potential for cooperation between NGOs and businesses is unrealized. Social consultations should be expanded to include community needs assessments regarding educational activities. If youth in the district is to be engaged in after school activities, the activities must support their current interests.

In order to facilitate change in the district, the city and district administration need to simplify their overly-bureaucratic procedures. It is difficult for small businesses and creative freelancers to conduct creative and entrepreneurial activities in Praga.

While the city is trying to improve methods for interacting with district offices, the communication style and attitudes of civil servants are not service-oriented. This is partly due to the fact that the district has not yet explicitly stated that it wants to support the creative sector. In general the attitude of clerks is focused on legal barriers (e.g. "this is not allowed") rather than on actively seeking ways to support the creative sector, to develop skills and foster community engagement.

4.4. Space

4.4.1. What space is needed in Praga to support the creative sector and the community?

The multi-stakeholder workshop was focused on the subject of space – public and private – required to support the creative industries and community integration. The space found in Warsaw's Praga district is the oldest in the city. Its post-industrial buildings, internal courtyards, old tenement houses and streets act as a magnet for participants in the creative sector. While Praga is viewed as a 'run-down' district, its authenticity and low rents attract the creative sector. The district boasts an exceptional location extremely close to the city centre. In recent years the district has become more attractive to all of Warsaw's residents, not only to the creative sector, due to the increased presence of nightclubs, galleries, cafés and studios.

The participants of the workshop were asked to answer the following questions:

- *How can the development of the creative sector be combined with developing a creative local space?*
- *How can different parties, i.e. residents, officials, activists, artists and entrepreneurs, contribute to this process?*
- *Which spots on the Praga map may act as an impulse-based incentive to foster district*

development?

- *Where should we establish common ground for local community cooperation?*
- *How can we fully exploit the potential of vacant commercial premises and make them available for rent for business, meetings, creation and activities?*
- *Which spots have the potential of becoming vibrant public spaces?*

Representatives of the local administration were invited to deliver presentations, which served as a starting point for the workshop. Marta Zawila – Piłat, the spokesperson for Praga Północ District, and Katarzyna Myk, Revitalisation Coordinator for **Praga Południe District**⁴⁰, discussed the status of the district's revitalization. Praga Północ has a Revitalisation Micro-Programme which is a subset of the Local Revitalisation Program for the City of Warsaw. The latter is a strategic document which governs the revitalisation process in Warsaw. The city-wide programme is implemented through District Revitalisation Micro-Programmes for which each individual district has diagnosed crisis areas and then developed specific activities targeted towards revitalizing those areas. In order to monitor and implement the Revitalisation Programme, the Mayor of Warsaw appointed the Monitoring Committee for the Local Revitalisation Programme of the City of Warsaw for the years 2005-2013.

The crisis areas identified in the district's Revitalisation Micro-Programme can only be modernised in a piecemeal fashion due to insufficient funds. Unfortunately, the efforts expended to date still seem inadequate, given the long-lasting and proliferating shabbiness. Although the revitalisation plans also included social aspects when the programme was designed, the actual revitalisation process boils down to the repair of tenement houses and roads. While renovation of buildings and streets definitely improves the image of the district, it is important to also focus on the residents and the district's social ailments. NGOs are currently trying to fill the gap in the district's social

40. <http://www.pragapld.waw.pl/>

agenda, and their activities are generally viewed as successful regarding socially-oriented revitalisation-related activities. Nonetheless, they are dwarfed by the enormous scale of demands.

Paulina Nowicka from the European Funds Department presented the project to establish a Creativity Centre at 56 Targowa street. The European Funds Department manages projects eligible for EU financing and conducts activities financed by the European Union. The Creativity Centre on Targowa will provide technological space targeted at supporting and developing creative entrepreneurship. The activities and programme for the Centre have not yet been determined, and workshop participants were asked for their expectations regarding the functioning of such an institution and the support it could provide.

Peter Richards described collective and multi-disciplinary space as a catalyst for positive social change. Space for work, fun and cooperation not only make it possible to shape personal creativity, but also fosters the creative development of both the district and its residents. Peter emphasized that every city is comprised of different neighbourhoods, each with its own character shaped by the residents, services available, meeting points and architectural aesthetic.

The city and district administrations should think more holistically about neighbourhood development. It is important to focus on creating a collective neighbourhood identity. Projects funded should be instrumental to that goal. Essentially, a comprehensive vision for the district needs to be developed, embraced and promoted.

The “neighbourhood” dimension is often neglected in the urban planning process. The district should identify the products and services required by residents and people who work in the district within a one-kilometre radius. By focusing on the “user friendliness” of the district, more businesses and more clients will be attracted to it. For example, when conducting urban analysis and planning, providing needed services within a one-kilometre radius allows people to walk and cycle.

This is beneficial not only ecologically but also economically, considering that people who walk around a locality do their shopping and purchase services there as well as enjoy the common public space.

The district can deliver enormous value to residents, other Warsawians and tourists by providing a development strategy which incorporates the needs of the district’s residents and businesses, and then fosters mixed-use functionality incorporating residential, commercial, educational and cultural elements.

4.4.2. Praga and its space – current situation

When asked to comment on the current status of spaces in Praga, participants stated that the district lacked a cohesive and positive identity. It was stated that residents felt no responsibility for public spaces. Social problems constituted a crucial area of concern during the workshop. Social exclusion, unemployment, poverty, alienation of the elderly and loose family bonds are reflected in the functioning of Praga’s spaces and its image. Participants commented on the shortage of integration areas, activity and recreation spots and resident-friendly public spaces. Therefore, improving the quality of public spaces is a major opportunity area for Praga.

It was felt that Praga Północ lacked safe and properly designed green spaces (e.g. squares, parks, courtyards, etc.). The backyards of buildings are unkempt and provide no real function to residents. Spaces are not user-friendly. High pavements, few benches, little greenery, poor lighting and no cycle paths makes Praga an extremely inconvenient area for certain resident groups, including disabled people, mothers with children, seniors and active people (cyclists).

Currently there are few enclosed premises acting as a venue for social activities involving the local community, nor is there any integration space

servicing the needs of the community.

Participants suggested that in order to foster responsibility for public spaces, the district should begin by improving the spaces closest to home (e.g. the numerous internal courtyards found throughout Praga's buildings). There is a perception that the residents' lack of attention and care for public spaces is in part a reflection of the district administration's poor care of public housing. Many occupants of flats have lived there for several generations and they are often dependent on social assistance. Their general attitude is often based on a sense of entitlement and trained helplessness. They are absolutely indifferent towards the surrounding space and their own sense of territoriality (e.g. defensiveness regarding space may only be prompted by newcomers or entrepreneurs). Any new forms of spatial development are often disapproved by residents, who are initially adverse to virtually any public space activities or artistic interference.

The attitude in question can only be changed by long-term educational activities that would inspire the use of public spaces, including courtyards. Public spaces should be included in development plans, in order to garner support that they are spaces to be cared for. Initiatives should be undertaken to ensure the aesthetic value and visual friendliness of these spaces. Such activities are indispensable in making residents aware of the historical value of the surroundings they live in.

Participants discussed the general lack of awareness of the creative industries on the part of city administration and residents. It was felt that the economic activity within this sector and its contribution to the district's development should be better supported. It was stated that the district authorities are predominantly focused on promoting the creative and cultural image of the district, rather than on conducting activities supportive of the creative sector. Participants mentioned that support should be provided not only to creative sector companies, but to all of Praga's micro-entrepreneurs - particularly the disappearing professions such as craftsmen, the

numbers of which are still quite high in Praga and are finding it more and more difficult to survive.

Participants stressed the importance of simplifying commercial premise lease procedures and establishing preferential rent conditions for entrepreneurs, artists and NGOs which render socially-oriented services. At first sight, low-cost commercial premises appear to be value for money, but their poor condition typically requires considerable financial outlays. However, according to the civil code all expenditures that increase the value of the premises can be deducted from rent (up to the equivalent of six months' rent) and following expiry of the rental contract.

For many years Praga has been neglected by private investors. Its potential still remains unexploited to a great extent. Local Spatial Development Plans, the lack of which has been considered the major investment barrier, will only solve part of the problem. The biggest issue is the immensity of financial resources required to make the hundreds of infrastructure investments required in the district. As a result of the financial crisis, district government funds are now considerably reduced. Some groups have begun promoting Public Private Partnerships (PPP). There are, however, issues with trust regarding the effectiveness of PPPs, and to date there are few examples of PPP in practice. The lack of financial resources poses a major challenge for the revitalisation of the district's architectural and urban heritage.

It was felt that Praga exploits culture in order to improve its image. Participants stated that culture is not addressed to Praga residents, many of whom have a poor understanding of culture and have never participated in public space-based activities involving residents. There is a significant absence of activities addressed primarily to residents, shaping their sense of spatial identity and responsibility. This may result from the lack of monitoring of residents' needs related to culture, and the lack of assessment of the current offer made available by such institutions as culture centres, libraries, etc.

There were opinions that the current cultural

offering is inadequate for the district's needs. Additionally, it was mentioned that in many cases the activities organised are too expensive for low-income family members, including teenagers, but also for other age groups. Another issue to overcome is the perception by residents that cultural activities are not a form of leisure activity. Reversing this attitude is a crucial educational concern. In many cases the residents feel excluded from, and at times hostile to, the activities undertaken by new institutions, entrepreneurs and artists appearing in the district.

Participants suggested more educational programs in the field of arts, which would help the creative sector locate talents among the youth of Praga. Investments in human capital will later yield significant returns for Praga's long term development.

Praga is seen as insufficiently promoting culture to tourists and visitors. There is no transparent information system concerning places worth seeing, nor any clear system of graphic identification combined with tourist information points and coherent high-quality graphic materials. Undertakings in this area (such as signage) could result in increased tourist attractiveness for Praga, especially considering the fact that currently only 2-5% of tourist groups visit Praga as part of their Warsaw tour.

Praga's rich history and 19th century aesthetic by no means make it an environmentally-friendly place to live. There is little greenery or green solutions supporting sustainable transport (city transport, bicycles, commercial and residential zones established to promote pedestrian traffic). However, Praga will be the future home to a metro station as part of the second metro line on which construction commenced in 2010. The reconstruction of the **Wileński square** intersection, seen as the gate leading to Praga, focuses on vehicle traffic whereas pedestrians will be forced to use underground passages. Investments in which final decisions are taken only by traffic engineers are not conducive to the development of Praga or Warsaw in general. It is extremely important to take into account a

more comprehensive socio-economic context when making infrastructure decisions. Another environmental challenge relates to the development of green areas which should encourage active recreation.

4.4.3. From diagnosis to ideas

The ideas presented by participants focused on the physical transformation of urban spaces, as well as "soft activities" that shape the relationship between residents, visitors and spaces. The administrative functional principles of public spaces, including squares, lawns and parks, as well as the principles of managing communal buildings and commercial premises also constituted an important part of the discussions.

Idea 1 – Praga Non-Stop: Cultural Movement in Praga

Authors: A. Reinhardt, K. Charewicz, B. Świętek K. Bocheńska A. Mamińska

The idea is focused on making it easier to navigate Praga's public spaces and to address the need for visual friendliness.

The group recommended that new routes be designed to traverse Praga which are focused on ensuring the convenience of various user groups; including seniors, mothers with children, tourists and cyclists. New walking and cycling routes should offer the opportunity to take a break (public toilets), to observe urban life (benches) and admire Praga's heritage (preservation of certain views/perspectives). Urban Praga should be connected with the wild greenery of the protected Vistula riverbank.

A system of unique visual and graphic identification along tourist routes, providing historical information, information on the local creative industries and highlighting

spots worth visiting should be developed.

This is a multi-level project aimed at increasing the value and functionality of district space, in order to make Praga an attractive place to work and live. The project addresses the need to join together the isolated islands of various forms of activity and to ensure well-marked walking routes that connect separate areas in Praga. The activities put forward as part of the proposal highlight the importance of involving the residents in restoring the right to, and responsibility for, public spaces. Certain city regulations are required for functional issues, such as public toilets or parking zones.

Idea 2 – Praga Rickshaws

Authors: K. Langie, K. Bąkała, D. Barańska, K. Rupiewicz, M. Dawidowicz, A. M. Żurek

This proposal aims at reviving Praga's public spaces and creatively supporting the various street sellers and service providers, while ensuring a consistent and unique aesthetic.

The idea is based on the establishment of a network of rickshaws, which would make it possible to transport, sell and present various services and goods. The rickshaws would replace existing forms of street selling (tables and stands found throughout Praga) and they would provide the district with a consistent and clear platform for promoting activities found throughout Praga.

Custom-designed rickshaws would each serve a particular function (e.g. a theatre rickshaw with a bill-post or a service rickshaw with a knife sharpening wheel) and they would also promote disappearing professions (e.g. shoe repair, seamstress). The rickshaws would be managed by the district administration that would provide the permits allowing their presence. The district

would also oversee their design to ensure consistency in branding and identity. The district would need to provide storage for the rickshaws when not in use. The rickshaws should be made available at a symbolic price, as their purpose is not to generate revenue for the city, but to promote creativity and district services.

The idea allows for the unique promotion of Praga to outsiders (as a rickshaw district). The rickshaws would help connect the fragmented archipelago of Praga, assist with social integration and promote local initiatives. The district could consider converting one street into a pedestrian street on the weekends as a promenade for bicycles and rickshaws.

Idea 3 – Educational Package for Schools

Authors: G. Sikora, A. Wąsik, M. Happach, I. Kwiatek, K. Pluta

The proposal is focused on educating children on the history of Praga and involving them in discussions on public space. The establishment of educational walks would contribute to development of social relations, the lack of which was noted by the group's members.

The idea is for the development of a package of well-organised walking tours around Praga, to be attended by students of Praga schools. The tours would be guided by trained guides, their aim being to teach about the history and cultural heritage of Praga. The tours could also be conducted by Praga activists and people who have opened a gallery or creative enterprise in the district.

The tours would allow students to look at their district through the eyes of an "outsider" who has chosen Praga as his/her

place of work. They could be organised as thematic tours, related to design, art, music, food or theatre. The tour could be combined with study visits to NGOs, ateliers or galleries, where the students would be given the chance to meet the people who act in their neighbourhood and to learn what inspires and fascinates them about Praga.

As part of the project, the tours could be followed by photographic workshops with young people entitled “My Space in Praga”. An open-air exhibition could be held to present their work and to build community pride.

The idea addresses the need for aesthetic education, for strengthening local identity, and for inspiring spatial responsibility, while at the same time integrating Praga residents with artists and NGOs operating in the district. Proper implementation of the activities described would require establishment of a proper base of NGOs and Praga-based institutions that deal with space-related issues.

Idea 4 – Praga Old Town

Authors: P. Jabłoński, L. Domarackas, J. Kasprzycka – Rosikori, I. Rutkowska, M. Zalesiński, K. Łowicka

The idea is focused on the social and economic revival of Praga’s historic area by supporting creative industries and NGOs with work space.

The district would conduct tenders for the development of vacant units in Praga’s Old Town. These properties would be made available on concessional terms to creative entrepreneurs and artists who present a vision for using the space to support community goals, to promote the district and to conduct creative educational activities. The goal would be to attract more creative

entrepreneurs, artists, studios, galleries, bookstores, etc.

Favourable conditions would include rent relief and a lease period longer than 3 years, as the premises typically require significant investment, upgrading and conversion. The district could allocate a certain portion available units held by the Real Estate Management Office to creative entrepreneurs. The district should conduct an analysis of the industries already active in the district and a diagnosis of the demand for specific industries. This would allow for the profiling of tenants for receipt of preferential rental terms. A portion of the premises should have high visibility (e.g. premises that have street frontages).

The city would also take steps to mobilise usable area for the creative sector in facilities that are in very poor condition, as they are vacant and falling into disrepair. It is recommended that the city promote Public Private Partnerships, on the principle that the city provides an antique building worth preserving to a private investor in exchange for which the investor provides all of the resources required for renovation of the premises. The lease period could be for 30 years and the investor would have the right to use 70% of usable space. The remaining 30% of the usable space would be available to the city for allocation to the creative sector (e.g. business incubators for creative enterprises).

Essentially the district would be utilising the vacant space available in Praga to its benefit as buildings would be renovated and converted into creative enterprises rather than remaining empty. By openly fostering the creative industries, the district would ultimately contribute to local economic development and enhance the badly-needed cohesion between the creative sector and local residents.

Idea 5 – Praga – The Centre is Here

Authors: K. Sędzicka, K. Brun-Sternicki, I. Tarwacka, M. Happach, J. Podlaska-Butyniec, M. Latuch

The project aims at improving the attractiveness of the district by using its artistic potential. Initiatives within the framework of the project should lead to increased activity in Praga's public spaces by residents and tourists.

The team proposed that the city allocate a spot for a weekly flea market. The market would become a city destination (like Koło market on Sundays in Wola) and in order to promote the market a communications programme would be developed for the entire district, so that all of Praga's cultural and creative destinations could be promoted.

The project begins with the development of a visitor information system, including marking tourist routes, new and creative signage, visual identification for the various attractions, updated maps, and district information presented on outdoor advertising columns.

4.4.4. Discussion about Praga's space and ideas

Discussions about spaces in Praga ended up focusing on the old, dilapidated 19th century buildings. Should they be protected? Should they be privatised and risk destruction? How to manage modernisation of the buildings in order to protect the heritage of the district?

Representatives of heritage protection stressed that restorers are opposed to privatization of the old urban tissue, as their priority is to keep the building

from being destroyed. There are various restoration doctrines which are visible in decisions made for specific buildings.

Janusz Owsiany (**Warsaw Monopol Association**⁴¹) sees an opportunity to preserve monumental buildings and to avoid situations similar to the one with Parowozownia (a monumental building on Wileńska street) which was demolished by the new owner of the land due to poor protection and supervision by the restorer.

It was felt that the local authorities need to be more open to people with good intentions and who would like to preserve buildings for social and cultural purposes. There are numerous examples, for instance from Berlin, of buildings restored with the help of social partners. Another opportunity can be the initiative associated with Konopacki Palace, where a group of architects, sociologists and activists connected with Praga wish to create a socio-cultural centre. Such initiatives require cooperation and preparation of special financing models, such as the Public Private Partnership model.

The urban planner Maciej Czeredys emphasized that local spatial development plans will not solve Praga's problems. A new quality of space can be achieved by experiments associated with spaces and provisional forms of providing access and managing buildings and spaces. Focusing on functions that support the local community and the development of culture would allow spaces to be "user-driven".

There is also a necessity to modify the language concerning space and to discuss it with people. Social consultations currently taking place very rarely enable people actual participation in decisions concerning spaces. The language of maps and urban development plans speaks to few. It is worthwhile to talk about space and to raise awareness among people that architecture, the city and its monumental composition is a value which should be preserved, but in a way which will provide spaces suitable for living, cooperation and

41. <http://strona.totu.nazwa.pl/>

entertainment.

The representatives of the district office present during the discussion claimed that the openness of the office for dialogue towards residents was improving, however it is still imperfect. The flow of information concerning actions which are closely connected with space is not sufficient. There were proposals to create information boards, where people could become familiar with the current investment plans and find out what is going to be the subject of consultations. Communication strategies must take account of the fact that the Internet, despite its increasing availability, is not a generally accessible medium in Praga. The opinions of residents must be solicited on various levels, using more grassroots methods.

Janusz Owsiany emphasised that the city has mechanisms for shaping spaces. The simplest of such is the preferential rent which is used in Europe's cities with success. For example, libraries do not need to compete with banks in tender procedures as they are supported as a form of promoting culture and education. According to the city's Housing Policy Department, in Warsaw libraries do not have to compete with banks. Warsaw has mechanisms for supporting non-profit organisations, as well as the ability to assign business premises for targeted activities in order to create social spaces for its residents (e.g. cultural institutions and galleries).

Still, it is felt that such mechanisms are lacking in Praga, which makes it difficult to shape the functioning of urban spaces socially and culturally in a purposeful way. A problem in the city's policy is that services which are important socially are not given priority, in spite of being crucial to the functioning of the city and its residents. They cannot, however, compete on the free market.

An interesting subject was the issue of giving more prominence to housing associations – there was an opinion that meetings of housing associations are not constructive enough. The managers of housing associations often have difficulties conducting meetings. Educational programs should be provided

to housing associations, as they actually can influence the shaping of urban spaces.

One Praga resident observed that often the district is unable to inform its residents about available spaces. She said that information should not only be useful but also stimulating, so that it motivates residents to take action. Participation was a notion that recurred during workshops. The architect and urban planner Maciej Czeredys said that it is worth trying various tools to involve people. One such suggestion is the "participation budget", by which residents can influence the decisions on where to allocate a portion of the public budget. Promotional campaigns and social consultations should take place at the pre-design stage. Participation is also shaped by the education of residents and making them aware of what is valuable, particularly in a historic district like Praga. Preserving the identity of the place and its symbolic value to the city often requires much larger expenditures (for restoration) than for demolition and reconstruction.

4.4.5. Conclusions from workshop on space

Participants in the workshops believed that the number of the so-called "regular inhabitants" was too small in the workshop, and they stressed how difficult it is to break the barrier between old residents and new ones. In order to develop ideas, people need expertise. The participants did not have this expertise, so they emphasised that their suggestions were only outlines of ideas and imagined activities, which must be developed further. In the discussions about Praga there were divergent ideas. Some people believe that change in Praga is crucial, that investment is needed and that capital should be attracted to enable people to save the district's heritage and to support its development. Others see this group as enemies of Praga's authenticity, as enemies of people living in public housing.

One must remember, though, that a city is a

structure where the interests of different groups constantly clash, so not every group perceives supporting creativity in Praga as a good thing and opinions on how to do it vary. Creativity brings to mind various connotations, and many people do not associate this notion with what is locally rooted, but with something that is alien and imposed. A space that would really be favourable to the local community and the creative sector may be described, as it was by one of the participants, in the following way:

“Open, integrating, original, unique – emphasizing the local colour; communicated well and in a balanced way, well-described, allowing for the implementation of one’s own ideas, supporting local initiatives, safe, clean, teeming with life both at daytime and night time, “proud of itself.”

There is a need for attractive spaces for residents and tourists set in the perspective of the historic Praga, but also open to new elements. They should be spaces adapted both to the needs of residents and to investors, as well as to users from the outside. It is very important that Praga’s development be a well-understood and clear element of a strategy for development that will always feature social consultations, urban planning and architectural contests so that the new portions of the district are of a high quality.

4.5. Information and communication

4.5.1. The flow of information about Praga and in Praga

The multi-stakeholder workshop focused on improving the flow of information between the city/district administration and the creative sector. It took place in “Miotła” club.

There were several introductory presentations by the members of the district administration. Praga Północ District Office spokesperson, Marta

Zawiła – Piłat, stated that the office is working hard to improve the quality of communication between the district administration and residents. She gave the example of “Praga night” – a cultural festival that was organized in June, during which galleries, studios and restaurants stayed open late and organised a wide array of activities. The event required cooperation with many organisations in Praga. While events are a good mechanism for working together as a community, the city also needs to focus on day-to-day communications, as they are crucial for the successful long-term development of the district.

Dariusz Brzósiewicz from the Praga Południe District noted that communication with the non-governmental sector was not functioning correctly. Organisations which receive support from the district often do not provide feedback on their actions, which makes cooperation more difficult. The District’s Social Dialogue Commission has improved the situation, but the improvement is not satisfactory. A database of all working organizations and platforms of cooperation does not exist. Communication is poor within the district administration and most information is directed towards residents and businesses.

While the workshop was focused on communications, the discussions quickly digressed to the issue of safety. It was felt that too little was being done to change the vision of Praga and to make it a safe and friendly district. Entrepreneurs from Praga have difficulties attracting customers and clients due to the negative stereotype of the district. Participants appreciated the increased support of cultural initiatives, however they felt there was a need for safety improvements.

4.5.2. Information flow in the district – current situation

When asked to express their opinions on the current situation regarding communication in

Praga, participants stated that in addition to the poor communications between the creative sector and district authorities, the various representatives of the creative sector needed to become aware of each other, to meet and to communicate amongst themselves.

It was mentioned that dialogue with the city administration tends to be one-on-one. The fragmented creative industries sector makes it difficult to communicate the sector's common needs to the district administration and to the local community.

A problem discussed that relates to social issues and the presence of the creative sector in the district was Praga's image of a dangerous district. It was felt that there is not enough action taken to make the district safer, however participants did state that the creative sector is not working together to communicate this to the city.

The importance of the creative sector to the economy of Warsaw is underestimated. This was one of the primary reasons for joining the EU's Creative Metropolises initiative. Participants suggested promoting the sector's value within the city administration. Tracking the sector is problematic since many creative entrepreneurs often register several commercial enterprises, which makes it impossible to classify them as members of the creative sector. There are no databases of the entities that could be classified as representative of the creative sector. It is worth considering that the creative sector consists not only of companies but primarily of freelancers and contractors who are mainly sole traders. These freelancers usually do not register commercial enterprises.

The problem most emphasised by the workshop participants was the lack of communication between the offices and departments of the different city organs (e.g. Real Estate Management Office, Social Policy Department, Promotions Department). Better communication between these units could improve the management of business premises. The participants emphasised that clerks were often uninterested, unformed and unfriendly

and that it is extremely difficult to obtain current and correct information. Aligning the city to the needs of the creative sector requires leadership and the desire for the district to become more "service oriented".

The issue of information flow in Praga is often connected with the ineffectiveness of city councillors who should play the role of intermediaries between district dwellers and the office. The information flow in Praga is often hindered by the variety of channels and methods of distributing messages to the public. The fact that the various entities operating in Praga's creative, social, educational and community sectors are not well mapped hinders cooperation.

The companies and the creative entrepreneurs in this sector often start their companies as micro-businesses, and their knowledge and know-how of the methods used to identify support from the city is limited. If the city wants to foster a creative district it must work with small enterprises to determine their needs. Supporting micro-businesses in Praga and networking requires the city to make a concerted effort to share know-how and learning.

It was mentioned that activation programmes for the unemployed and support programmes for entrepreneurs are still active in Praga, but potential beneficiaries are rarely informed about them.

Understanding of the term "creative sector" is often limited to those in the culture sphere. The challenge is to expand knowledge and understanding of this term to city officials and residents. As far as the flow of information on cultural initiatives is concerned, participants felt that the district uses culture as a tool to attract outsiders. While this is understandable, the district also needs to use cultural activities as a form of internal communication between district residents and the creative sector.

Regarding visual communication and signage, the district appears to be full of chaotic advertising on various placards, signs and billboards. It was felt that this was a major area for opportunity. District administration should use outdoor advertising

and communication as a channel to reach the community and the creative sector, as well as tourists. Communication strategies regarding the promotion of good social behaviour (e.g. cleanliness) are also an area noted for improvement.

4.5.3. From diagnosis to ideas

The discussions primarily revolved around the need for the district to create a strategic plan for supporting the creative industries. A dedicated long-term plan for the sector would allow for the creative sector to develop frameworks for cooperation and for defining mutual expectations. Other suggestions discussed included the creation of a media lab for the district's young residents, urban vegetable gardens and roof gardens. One interesting idea was to create a manifesto for the district's creative industry. The manifesto would contain the expectations of this industry towards the city.

Idea 1 – Online Praga Maps

Authors: J. Adamczuk, T. Kaliński, M. Pokój, M. Kazulo-Kleyff, J. Wasiuk, W. Łasicki, D. Goraj, K. Łowicka, A. Mamińska

The idea focused on the need to collect and catalogue information on the creative businesses, entrepreneurs, NGOs and activities found throughout the district.

The group proposed a comprehensive mapping project of all actors and initiatives present in Praga, and the findings would be available on a Creative Praga website. The website would have spatial tools such as Google maps which would allow users to easily find creative services, products and happenings. The website would allow the district administration to communicate directly with the creative industries sector, including announcements regarding available space, tenders, funding and

revitalization plans.

In addition to mapping the sector and its macro and micro actors, the website would be a vehicle to collect ideas and expectations regarding the future Creativity Centre to be opened on Targowa Street. The Centre's function is still being determined.

Information flow could also be improved by the use of non-standard tools such as urban games with the participation of district office clerks. Clerks would spend one day per month outside their office to improve their knowledge of the creative sector's activities in the district. Likewise, residents and creative entrepreneurs could attend regular thematic meetings held by the district office. Instituting an exchange programme would allow both sides to better understand the daily realities each side faces. The goal of the games would be the promotion of openness and information sharing, particularly if the meetings were held within the premises of different social groups.

Once the district is fully mapped and the online tool is complete, it was suggested that the district develop a unique outdoor signage campaign. The district would place advertising pillars in strategic points of the district. The pillars would be dedicated information points regarding social consultations and creative happenings, particularly targeted to those without internet at home (e.g. the elderly, the poor, etc.).

Idea 2 – Creative Map of Praga

Authors: A. Tabaka, K. Woźniak, M. Gajewicz, M. Zabłocka, B. Dżugaj, A. M. Żurek

This idea responds to the need to improve existing communication channels within the creative industries sector.

A comprehensive mapping of all creative enterprises in Praga would allow for the creation of a coherent system of visual identification of the creative services available in the district. The places would be marked in custom-designed Creative Praga maps, leaflets and on information pillars. The visual identification could also include signposts. A legend would cover not only social and cultural places, but creative entrepreneurs as well. The maps and information points should be placed in strategic points across the district.

Idea 3 – Artklaster.pl reloaded

Authors: A. Owsiany, M. Bątkiewicz, B. Mioduszewski, Ł. Truściński, K. Pluta

This idea focused on the improvement of an under-utilized existing communications channel, the city's www.artklaster.pl website, a portal that was created with the financial support of Warsaw and dedicated to the creative sector.

The group proposed a full revamping of the Artklaster website. The website has low traffic and is generally viewed as uninteresting. In order to improve the attractiveness of the website, initiatives and services of the creative sector need to be regularly added to make it dynamic.

The portal could become the definitive database of all the participants in the creative industries sector, whether companies, entrepreneurs or freelancers. It would also focus on capturing the support services, public support programmes and instruments provided to the creative sector (e.g. sound and lighting engineers, catering, etc). Editorial staff would be required to keep the portal up to date. The website and brand should develop a "human face" through

the organisation of Artklaster discussions and meetings covering the actions taken by the creative sector and its development in Warsaw.

Idea 4 – Creative Communication Centre

Authors: E. Nowakowska, P. Łęczuk, M. Piotrowski, D. Brzósiewicz, M. Latuch

This idea focused on the need for integration space within the district (note: there are plans for two centres in the district: the Creativity Centre and the Social Economy Centre on [Ratuszowa 6](#) street). Essentially, workshop participants confirmed the need for such centres to become operational as quickly as possible and for alternative space to be provided in the interim.

The group proposed the establishment of a cooperation centre for different social partners. The Centre's task would be, among other things, to support social dialogue. The Centre would foster study visits to other cities and countries to observe different working models, and would organise interdisciplinary consultations by local activists. The actions of the Centre would be addressed to:

- creative businesses: galleries, small companies, freelancers;
- local community: building associations, educational institutions;
- socially-oriented enterprises: NGOs, local activists and government administration;
- Warsaw and tourists: information agencies, tourist board.

The Centre would administer a central portal where the entities operating in Praga could report on their activities. The information flow would be the basis for creating partnerships and cooperation. The Centre would organise informational campaigns

across the district: advertising pillars, stalls and digital displays. The information campaign would be made available to a variety of localities, including: Różyckiego Market, shopping centres, schools, creative sector offices. The Centre would also publish its own informational brochure.

4.5.4. Summary discussion on communication in Praga

The Praga Północ district deputy mayor took part in the workshop summary debate. As a representative of the district, he was asked many questions about special treatment of the creative sector in the local government policies, and whether there are any strategies that could help this sector to develop better. According to the deputy mayor, the availability of business premises, a theme present throughout the workshops, cannot be solved quickly due to legal claims concerning many tenement houses. Participants in the workshop believe that it is necessary to simplify the tender procedures for obtaining premises in the district and also the procedures for renting business premises. The deputy mayor emphasised that a number of the initiatives suggested by the workshop participants are currently being implemented. As far as the participant's recommendations for the creation of new centres to support community integration and the creative sector, the deputy mayor stated that the Creative Centre on 56 Targowa street is already in the district's revitalisation plans and will be managed by the European Funds Department. Additionally, he mentioned the district's support to save Konopacki Palace by creating the Centre for Social Revitalisation.

4.5.5. Conclusions from workshop on information and communication

A major conclusion from the workshop is the necessity to launch different forms of information exchange and networking initiatives. Physical spaces and online resources are needed. It is also necessary to develop a monitoring system to oversee the various activities in Praga. The participants stated that the Creative Metropolises workshop was very useful for improving communications, however many were sceptical that the city would actually implement any of the recommendations proposed.

The improvement of information flow requires strategic, long-term actions taken at different levels. Bartosz Mioduszewski **Ortus Foundation**⁴² pointed to the lack of a coherent policy towards the creative sector, starting at the ministerial level, which is one of the reasons why the creative sector in Warsaw has not developed as it has in Berlin. He gave Berlin as an example of city with a well-structured policy towards the creative sector. In Berlin the development of the creative sector was accelerated by legal regulations. He stated that the creative sector community would not create itself, and when it does, the process is extremely time consuming so it is better to stimulate it by creating a coherent policy.

Establishing clear and regularly updated information databases within the district and city administrations is critical to the sector's development. Likewise, knowledge and analysis of the activities conducted by entrepreneurs and NGOs will allow the sector to develop in a structured manner. The quality of information and the clarity of the message are very important. Enormous amounts of information are available to the public through the websites of various city offices, however, this information is frequently incomprehensible due to its very unclear, bureaucratic language that makes little sense to an ordinary person. What is needed is to organize places and meetings that facilitate the exchange of knowledge and understanding between the creative sector and the city.

42. <http://www.ortus.org.pl/>

5

Guidelines for an Action Plan to Support the Development of the Creative District in Praga Północ

Four workshops entitled “By Praga, For Praga” were conducted to generate ideas for consideration by the city in the field of supporting the growth of the creative sector and developing the creative district in Praga Północ. Since currently no strategy exists for supporting the development of Praga Północ as a creative district, the workshops were intended to provide input into the city’s decision making

processes. While the workshops were focused on the district of Praga, they were conducted with an understanding that many elements would be “for Warsaw” (as a whole).

The workshops identified many of the district’s needs, which are summarised in the chart below:

Space (public space and work space)

- *resident “ownership” of public space*
- *visual “friendliness”*
- *respect for heritage*
- *use of empty space/buildings*
- *subsidised space for SME creative enterprises*
- *encouragement of “outdoor” time*

Community / Good Neighbour

- *integration space for social groups*
- *social mediation support for conflict resolution*
- *comprehensive knowledge of all NGOs and their activities in the district*
- *inclusiveness of Praga locals in event and urban planning*

Skills and Knowledge

- *business skills for creative enterprises*
- *city employee training on role of arts, creative industry and NGOs*
- *development of know-how within the creative sector*
- *collaboration space for learning*
- *engaging free time of youth*
- *school curriculum enhancement*

Information and Communication

- *monitoring the creative industries sector – researching its needs and development*
- *research and development of new financial models (e.g. PPP) in support of the creative sector*
- *information on availability of space*
- *information on availability of funding*
- *information regarding projects and partnerships*
- *information on city planning, regeneration and public decision*

5.1. Recommendations for supporting the creative industries

Many ideas were considered by participants of the workshops. Using the selection methodology described by the British Council's 'Future City Game', as well as discussions that followed the workshops, the following recommendations were determined.

The recommendations below are primarily focused on supporting the creative industries in Praga Północ, however they also benefit the entire city of Warsaw. In order to support the creative sector one must also support the development of Praga, as one can not occur without the other. The four workshop themes were selected to better understand the needs of the creative sector. Praga's creative sector is influencing the district and its reputation, but the sector itself is also influenced by the current conditions in Praga. The development of the creative industries can not occur without establishing a strong relationship between the creative sector, the district administration and the community.

1) *Develop an integrated policy for supporting the creative industries*

The biggest problem identified by the workshop participants was the lack of any overall policy or strategy for the development of a creative district in Praga Północ. The development of a city-wide strategy for supporting the creative industries, and the rationale for selecting Praga as a creative hub for Warsaw, would provide a framework for cooperation to residents, government officials, artists, creative entrepreneurs and NGOs.

Almost all participants expressed interest in being involved in the development of a district policy, together with both the district and city administrations.

Establishing Praga Północ as a hub for Warsaw's artistic and creative industries would also allow for an international context, potentially attracting corporate partnerships for financing initiatives. The development of the creative sector would positively influence entrepreneurship and skills development, while ultimately lowering crime and social welfare payments through improvements to the standard of living for Praga's residents.

RECOMMENDATION:

Warsaw Social Strategy, Tourism Strategy, Innovation and Employment Strategies in addition to the **CITY'S PROGRAM FOR CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT.**

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS

Implement the **FORUM FOR INITIATIVES** – a new space for meetings and exchanges of experiences, ideas, needs and services in order to create a new creative economy vision and activities for Praga Północ. It could be a Forum without proprietary physical space, holding regular meetings and exchanges of ideas within preexisting and available space.

It could also be a “right bank” version of the Cultural Info Point on Constitution Square which will support Warsaw’s European Capital of Culture (ESK 2016) bid. The Forum would support the development of the creative industries and a creative economy in Praga Północ, acting as a subset of Warsaw’s program of activities for the European Capital of Culture.

2) **Establish clear responsibilities within city government at the district and city level**

Warsaw’s participation in the Creative Metropolises programme is managed by the Mayor’s Office together with the city’s Department of Culture and European Funds Department. However, the majority of decisions and approvals impacting Praga Północ’s creative sector are made by the district government of Praga Północ. Daily interaction between the creative industries and the city appears to be more with the district administration and less with the city administration.

For two years the city has been investigating the relevance and the possibilities to support the development of a creative district in Warsaw. To date it has not yet been determined if the city would endorse a dedicated initiative to further strengthen Praga Północ’s function as a creative district. Therefore, to date no specific responsibilities have been assigned to support a creative district in Praga Północ.

Within the local council, there is no mandate to actively foster and support the creative sector. In order for the creative industries to flourish, teamwork and cross-departmental support is required within the city and district administrations. Participants stated there was poor inter-departmental communication within the Praga Północ District Office. It was felt that the local authority does not really care enough about fostering creativity and the creative industries are not well-known and/or understood. A creative district could influence the creativity of the local authorities and the attitudes towards projects throughout Warsaw.

RECOMMENDATION:

2) Assign responsibility and budget for an **INTER-DEPARTMENTAL TEAM** (or task force) within the city’s development strategy for the creative sector.

The first task would entail conducting a detailed mapping of the creative industries active in the district in order to identify which sub-sectors are thriving in the district and which sub-sectors need to be attracted to the district.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS

URBAN GAMES – activate officials in the district by creating a series of games within the offices of the district and city administration, to collect specific information on the status of the creative sector. The games would be cyclical and encourage local government officials to participate and learn about the creative industries sector.

3) *Support community building initiatives, engagement and inclusion that build pride and ownership*

As a poor district, Praga is faced with identity issues and in general neither residents, the creative industry nor city officials feel complete ownership of the district. Praga is viewed by many as a “sick” district full of deep and institutionalised social problems. While the district’s exterior aesthetic is slowly being improved by the revitalisation of several streets and buildings, the “soul” of Praga - its citizens - needs attention. The social aspects of revitalisation must be supported.

Supporting the development of solidarity, tolerance and mutual understanding in order to create a community-wide sense of pride and respect for the district would be immensely beneficial to the long-term improvement of the district and to attract more creative businesses. Several of the planned actions in the district’s regeneration scheme are targeted at community integration.

RECOMMENDATION:

3) Support actions that allow the neighbourhood to integrate and which foster **COMMUNITY BUILDING**. Focus on promoting active citizenship and improving the quality of support systems for youth.

Modify or introduce new City Ordinances to allow as much public community activity as possible. Allow NGOs to organize regular events and activities in public spaces. Work with housing associations to institute cyclical creative events in courtyards.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS

PRASKA SOBOTA (PRAGA SATURDAY) – hold a monthly event in Praga, organized on the first Saturday of each month, combining the activities of the creative industry together with animation of the local community. This could involve closing a street for 5 hours.

PRASKI GRILL (PRAGA BARBECUE) – conduct regular meetings, organized around food, that would allow the community to gather and discuss community issues. Embedded in the Barbecue would be various cultural activities (e.g. photo exhibitions) and a cross-section of the community would be invited (e.g. residents, police, artists, NGOs, local administration, etc.)

Praga Saturday and Praga Barbecue are probably the easiest initiatives to implement out of the ideas proposed by the workshop participants. Allowing the community to meet, either by closing streets or providing space for outdoor cooking, are new forms of utilising public spaces. By giving the streets, courtyard or square to residents on a monthly basis, the district administration would allow the neighbourhood to define itself from the ground up over a period of time. By allowing for regular events, the community will have the opportunity to regularly meet and evolve. Events and activities in Praga would serve to destroy the stereotype of a dangerous Praga.

4) Openness for establishing partnerships between the creative sector, business, academia, government and NGOs

There exists a specific need to target direct cooperation between NGOs and the creative sector, in addition to the creative sector working as sub-contractors to NGOs when applying for grants. Praga Północ has one of the highest densities of NGOs of any Warsaw district. This is in part due to the need for NGOs in the district and also due to the low rent provided to NGOs as a local government policy.

However, the NGO community in Praga Północ is fragmented and dispersed across the district. This results in misunderstandings and a lack of cohesiveness for the “third sector” to address issues faced by the district. Additionally, NGOs will not solve all of the district’s problems, and at times social activities could be undertaken by small entrepreneurs.

The city needs to improve grant system enabling to award grants to small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Considering that the city is implementing new programmes to promote entrepreneurship and the social economy, for-profit socially oriented small businesses should be eligible for grant programmes.

Representatives of NGOs, as well as representatives of the creative industries SME sector who attended the workshops expressed the desire to work in a more integrated manner with the city. Currently there is no space allocated for NGOs, businesses and artists to meet regularly and exchange information and ideas. The city’s Social Dialogue Committee consisting mostly of NGOs is working on a development strategy for Praga Północ, however if the city would like to improve support for the creative industries it will be important to involve representatives of this sector.

A project by the European Funds Department to establish a Social Economy Centre at Ratuszowa 6 is currently in process. The 700m2 space is still in planning, however the City intends to hold a tender for NGOs to operate the space. This is a good opportunity for NGOs to collaborate with creative entrepreneurs, either physically through cohabitation in the space or through projects.

It was recommended that a database or catalogue of all NGOs operating in Praga Północ be created, listing the types of non-profit work being performed and tracking NGO interaction with local government. If the city were to implement a policy for supporting the creative industries, NGOs would be able to identify their role within the policy targets, thus working in a more integrated manner. The process of supporting the creative industries would also benefit from cooperation with academic research units. On one hand, academia could conduct research on needs and areas for cooperation, and on the other hand they could act as a cooperation partner (e.g. helping to identify models for cooperation, providing advice on the social economy, social consultations, etc.). There have been some initial discussions in Praga Północ regarding the establishment of an incubation centre for NGOs. In Warsaw's city centre there is a well-known NGO incubator called **Stocznia**⁴³ run by a respected activist, Kuba Wygnański. The district administration has been contemplating support for a similar incubator on the right bank of the Vistula in collaboration with Stocznia. However, representatives of the creative sector stressed that the incubator should be more inclusive, to provide incubation services to Praga's local craftsmen and the creative industries as well as to NGOs.

RECOMMENDATION:

4) Foster the development of the 'social enterprise' sector. A social enterprise is a for-profit business that provides socially-oriented products and services. **PROVIDE SUFFICIENT SPACE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A JOINT NGO – CREATIVE INDUSTRY – SOCIAL ENTERPRISE BUSINESS CENTRE.** Since the Social Economy Centre is already under development at Ratuszowa 6, in 2011 it will be important to provide space for meetings so that partnerships could be formed prior to the completion of the Centre.

Modify procedures to **ALLOW FOR THE DISBURSEMENT OF GRANTS TO SMALL CREATIVE ENTERPRISES** that conduct socially-oriented and community-building projects. Grants could also be made available for multi-partner actions that involve academia. It is important to overcome the city administration's attitude that partnerships are typically formed with the 3rd sector.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS

JOINT BUSINESS/NGO CENTRE – establish office and incubation space for NGOs and entrepreneurs. The institution would focus on the exchange of ideas and the provision of services. NGOs want to learn how to become more business-oriented and businesses could learn how to support social and community building activities.

CREATIVE COMMUNICATION CENTRE – establish a multi-functional centre supporting creative businesses, NGOs, the local community and the district government.

It is important to keep in mind the two mentioned centres in Praga: the Creativity Centre on Targowa 56 and the Social Economy Centre on Ratuszowa 6. The Creativity Centre is part of the district's Revitalization Micro-Programme and it will be one of three new centres supporting entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity that operate or will operate in Warsaw. The lack of knowledge by workshop participants of the new centres highlights the lack of engagement between city planners and district inhabitants, creative businesses and NGOs. During the government consultation workshop it was

43. <http://stocznia.org.pl/www/>

recommended that additional public consultation workshops could be conducted focused on social value creation and establishing partnerships for the new centres.

It was also noted that the district government is in talks regarding the restoration of Konopacki Palace, however this project is at much earlier stages than the Creativity Centre and it is unlikely that the Palace would become active in the next three years.

5) Develop Praga's attractiveness for residents, tourists and visitors. Improve cohesiveness of the district and public space.

Due to the physical divisions of Praga Północ into a series of "sub-districts" by railway lines and major roads, the district is not easy to navigate. The division of Praga into a series of small islands by physical infrastructure was seen as a major restriction of the district's ability to act and feel like one 'whole' district.

Many felt that the district needed both initiatives and physical infrastructure to integrate and link the various sub-districts. The district is not very "user-friendly" to outsiders. Attention needs to be given to safety and convenience for both locals and visitors. Additionally, the heritage of the district must be protected, particularly initiatives to preserve buildings for social and cultural purposes.

While the district's Revitalisation Micro-Programme includes the creation of new walking routes throughout Praga, the initiative should be augmented by a district-wide branding campaign to include: cleaning courtyards, greening public sites, new signage, improved public information and development of a consistent visual identity.

The development of a Master Plan for Haller Square is ongoing. It is recommended that the city continue to encourage the participation of residents in urban planning decisions, particularly at the pre-design stage. Workshop participants stressed the importance of the need to be consulted over decisions concerning the district, but at a point where they had the possibility to influence the decision.

RECOMMENDATION:

5) PROTECT THE HERITAGE OF THE DISTRICT while developing modern services that allow residents, tourists and visitors from other Warsaw districts to better navigate and learn about the creative and cultural services available throughout the district. Welcome the temporary use of spaces to revitalize public spaces. Ensure public consultation and community engagement in all decisions regarding public spaces in the district.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS

PRAGA NON-STOP: develop new routes to traverse Praga that are focused on ensuring the convenience and safety of various user groups including seniors, mothers with children, tourists and cyclists.

PRAGA – THE CENTRE IS HERE: implement a graphical visitor information system, including new signage, to promote the district's cultural destinations. Once the signage is complete, establish a location for a weekly flea market.

6) **Allow culture to cross the river: promote cultural development outside the city centre**

Culture is not seen as a leisure activity by the majority of Praga's residents. While residents attend free events such as concerts and exhibitions, the workshops revealed that the current cultural offering is often inadequate for the district's needs. In general there is a feeling by locals that culture is exclusive, as it is not well-understood and perceived as expensive for low-income families, teenagers and the elderly.

In recent years there has been a steady increase in funding for cultural institutions in Praga (e.g. local Culture Centres). The workshops identified that while Culture Centres have been quite effective in their outreach (e.g. public events), they have not been too successful in developing and attracting people to the Centres themselves.

Many of Praga's residents felt that artists and creative entrepreneurs were not interested in involving locals in decisions regarding culture. While creative entrepreneurs stated that they had tried to involve locals, they found them to be generally unreliable (e.g. tardiness, drunkenness and theft). This contradiction should be addressed by specifically targeting culture at the district's residents, old and new.

Workshop participants felt that the numerous public concerts and street festivals were "designed for outsiders" of the district, as such events are targeting residents from Warsaw's other districts to visit Praga for attendance of the event. It was suggested that some events should be designed specifically for the needs of the residents and community of Praga.

In order to remove the tension between residents and "newcomers" it was recommended that the city and the artistic community develop a unique cultural institution for Praga. However, city officials felt that investing in new cultural centres had significant risk for two reasons: lack of funding to support centres and general apathy by the local community in attending cultural events due to a lack of appreciation of culture. Safety was another issue expressed as inhibiting the district's development. Culture Centres have changed their policies, and instead of bringing children from school to the Centres they send artists and creative entrepreneurs to the schools.

RECOMMENDATION:

6) Locate a major city cultural institution on the right bank of the Vistula, rather than in the city centre. Workshop participants recommended that a **NATIONAL DANCE CENTRE** be located in Praga Północ. The Centre would have a vibrant community engagement program teaching skills, in addition to holding performances. The Centre would also provide space dedicated for rehearsals.

Examples of Actions

PRAGA SCHOOL OF FILM – implement a year-long initiative to shoot a film involving the community of Praga, as volunteers, in all stages of its production. Workshops and on-the-job training would develop skills in the areas of scriptwriting, cinematography, stage design, lighting, make-up, costumes, soundtracks, editing, etc.

7) Create a program to provide subsidised workspace for the creative industries

The creative industries are defined as aforementioned 13 categories of business: advertising, arts and antique markets, crafts, design, fashion, film, video and photography, software, computer games and electronic publishing, music, visual and performing arts, publishing, television and radio.

The creative industries are largely comprised of freelancers and small businesses. In order for Praga Północ to attract creative entrepreneurs, the district must make it easier to find and secure premises. The district has a variety of empty buildings and available spaces, however it can be difficult to find available premises as they are listed on multiple websites.

In order for the city to justify profiling a specific subsector, detailed research needs to be conducted to determine which of the 13 creative industry categories are under-represented in the district. Preferential treatment of a particular subsector must be based on facts. Currently there are few facts about the creative industries (e.g. number and type of businesses, employment and requirements for growth). The **City Employment Office**⁴⁴ can prepare a special program by which grants are distributed, in support of a particular subsector based on research findings.

The management of vacant space by the Real Estate Management Office was not seen as efficient. It was felt that the institution is neither proactive nor customer oriented. Interaction with the institution was seen as difficult and frustrating. Poor communications between the Real Estate Management Office, Social Policy Department and the Promotions Department was seen as a barrier to proper management of business premises.

Workshop participants repeatedly stated that in order for Praga Północ to truly foster a creative district and to attract creative industries, the district had to resolve the long-standing issue faced by more than 150 city-owned buildings that were falling apart and which had court cases ongoing regarding their ownership.

The city should simplify procedures for leasing commercial premises and establish preferential rent conditions for creative entrepreneurs, artists and NGOs who render socially-oriented services as part of their overall activities.

It was suggested that following areas be considered as having potential for the creative industries: Różyckiego Market, the former military premises on 11 Listopada, PKP railway lands, Haller Square, Praga Park and the area near the swimming pool on Namysłowska.

While the privately owned complexes (e.g. the 'Koneser' Vodka Factory) are being developed into loft apartments, the city needs to determine a policy for use of public buildings that fosters creativity, social inclusion and neighborhood development.

44 <http://www.up.warszawa.pl/>

RECOMMENDATION:

7) IMPROVE THE MANAGEMENT OF EMPTY SPACES (buildings, apartments and retail spaces) owned by the city, but managed by the Real Estate Management Office. Ensure space is available at reasonable rates to creative industries and artists, by conducting research to identify and justify the creative subsectors that should be privileged. Support creative ideas for using public spaces in a unique manner that bring life to the district.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS

RICKSHAWs – launch a collection of rickshaws that would promote goods and services, replacing the existing forms of street vending in Praga. The rickshaws would also promote the dying crafts in the district (e.g. shoe repair, knife sharpening, etc.).

PRAGA OLD TOWN – allocate a portion of the vacant buildings in Praga managed by ZGN to the creative industries. Conduct tenders to provide premises with long leases (more than 3 years) to creative industries that conduct socially-oriented programs.

8) *Map and monitor the creative sector and improve access to information*

The district and city administrations need to catalogue and map the creative sector and its representatives. There is currently no comprehensive information on companies and people active in the sector. Therefore its size and needs remain unknown. As previously mentioned the creative industries are defined as 13 categories, and it was not possible to determine which business categories are represented in Praga and which are not. The lack of information on the various creative businesses, particularly knowledge of small businesses and their needs, creates a lack of respect for the sector. If the city wants to foster the creative industries, it will be important to ensure that all of the information relevant to the sector is easily available. Communication channels should be adjusted to the needs of particular social groups.

The workshop participants recommended that a “hub” for communications be created and it was suggested that regular meetings be held between the local government, the creative sector, residents and NGOs. The creative industries sector needs to be nurtured and managed. Participants would be interested in having a desk within the city’s culture department and they also suggested that city clerks could work one day a month in the offices of a creative enterprise, cultural institution or NGO.

The exchange of information and improved understanding of the challenges faced by the city and by the creative sector would allow for better decisions regarding support to the sector. It would also help the sector to define its role in community development.

While there were several recommendations for the creation of an online portal, the city needs to determine whether a new portal should be created explicitly for the promotion of Praga Północ, or whether the city’s www.artklaster.pl portal should be upgraded and re-launched. During the government consultation workshop it was agreed that a database of creative sector actors needs to be

RECOMMENDATION:

8) MAP AND CATALOGUE THE ENTIRE CREATIVE SECTOR in Praga Północ by physically identifying all creative industries, freelancers and artists active in the district. It is not possible to use statistics from PKN, and therefore the exercise must be manually conducted. The development of a database for the creative industries sector would allow the Employment Office to direct specific offers to every company/person in the database.

Likewise, the city administration needs to **IMPROVE INTERNAL COMMUNICATION BETWEEN DEPARTMENTS** and external communication to residents. While information is available on the Housing Policy Department, Employment Office and European Funds Department websites, users (citizens) do not know where or for what they should be looking.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS

ONLINE PORTAL FOR THE CREATIVE SECTOR – develop an online portal for Praga that includes a complete mapping of all actors in the creative industries sector including entrepreneurs, artists, makers, support services (lighting engineers and set designers), NGOs and city officials.

CREATIVE MAP OF PRAGA – develop a printed map and flyer listing all of the actors and activists in Praga's creative industries sector.

While there were several recommendations for the creation of an online portal, the city needs to determine whether a new portal should be created explicitly for the promotion of Praga Północ, or whether the city's www.artklaster.pl portal should be upgraded and re-launched. During the government consultation workshop it was agreed that a database of creative sector actors needs to be produced in order for the city administration's various departments to send information to this target group.

9) *Provide training in business and creative skills*

The district is struggling to engage youth at school and after school. One reason identified was that the subjects taught are not interesting for students. Keeping in mind that 40% of Praga's youth attend vocational schools, the district administration should conduct research to identify the current interests and needs of youth.

Additionally, the district should work with NGOs to find ways to align the educational and skills development services provided by the district's educational institutions and the work conducted by NGOs. Both sides have a lot to learn from each other.

The district should support alternative methods of teaching, particularly methods that foster creative thinking and risk taking.

The creative sector itself is in need of support regarding business management, marketing and finance. The district should consider establishing business incubation services to support creative entrepreneurs with economic sustainability.

RECOMMENDATION:

9) Develop a package of **BUSINESS MANAGEMENT SKILLS** training for creative entrepreneurs to support the economic viability of creative enterprises. Ensure ongoing business support services are available in the district.

Disseminate information among residents on the institutions that offer free or EU-subsidized training (e.g. e-learning), counseling, post-graduate studies for those running small businesses and entrepreneurs.

Provide creative skills training in Praga's schools in order to offer alternative forms of education for Praga's youth. Identify subjects relevant to today's youth and actively work to engage them within institutional and non-institutional environments. Implement a program that will examine the current and future needs of the creative sector and the market for specific occupations.

PROVIDE TRAINING AND SUPPORT IN SOCIAL MEDIATION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION to the creative sector and NGOs, as changes in the district will result in misunderstandings and resistance.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS

EDUCATIONAL PACKAGE FOR SCHOOLS – implement a series of walking tours around Praga for students to visit artists and creative entrepreneurs. Conduct photographic workshops with students to capture the essence of Praga's creative sector.

INTERNATIONAL ARTS RESIDENCY – provide studio space for foreign artists who would be invited for three-month residencies to work with Praga's schools, Praga's "locals" and district administration clerks.

10) Identify financial models for supporting the arts and the creative industries

Financing is a key constraint to the district's development.

Budget cuts have impacted the district's Revitalization Micro-Program, and many social improvement initiatives have subsequently been put on hold. While NGOs are important actors who work on a variety of community issues, they are not able to implement long-term programs due to their funding cycles. There is a need to identify new procedures for the provision of grants for funding long-term initiatives focused on the development of community. Grants should be made available to small businesses and NGOs.

Protecting the district's heritage, specifically the 19th century buildings that are in decay, requires significantly more financing than constructing a completely new building. However, the district's

heritage is a core part of its charm and attraction to the creative sector. The city needs to support heritage and embrace new financing models, including PPP, which will allow the district to protect buildings while delivering artistic and community services to residents.

Praga is a unique community that could express its support for improvement of the district's social conditions and the creative sector through actions of solidarity. The district could consider funding social and community development work through reinvestment of a portion of the profits generated by businesses in the district. The idea being that the district reinvests a small piece of the business profits in district improvements, thereby attracting more clients to the district and increasing sales.

RECOMMENDATION:

10) Conduct research and study tours on **ALTERNATIVE FINANCING MODELS** used to finance regeneration and the creative industries. Develop and deploy new funding models, treating Praga as a district for experimentation. Ensure grants are available for multi-year programs.

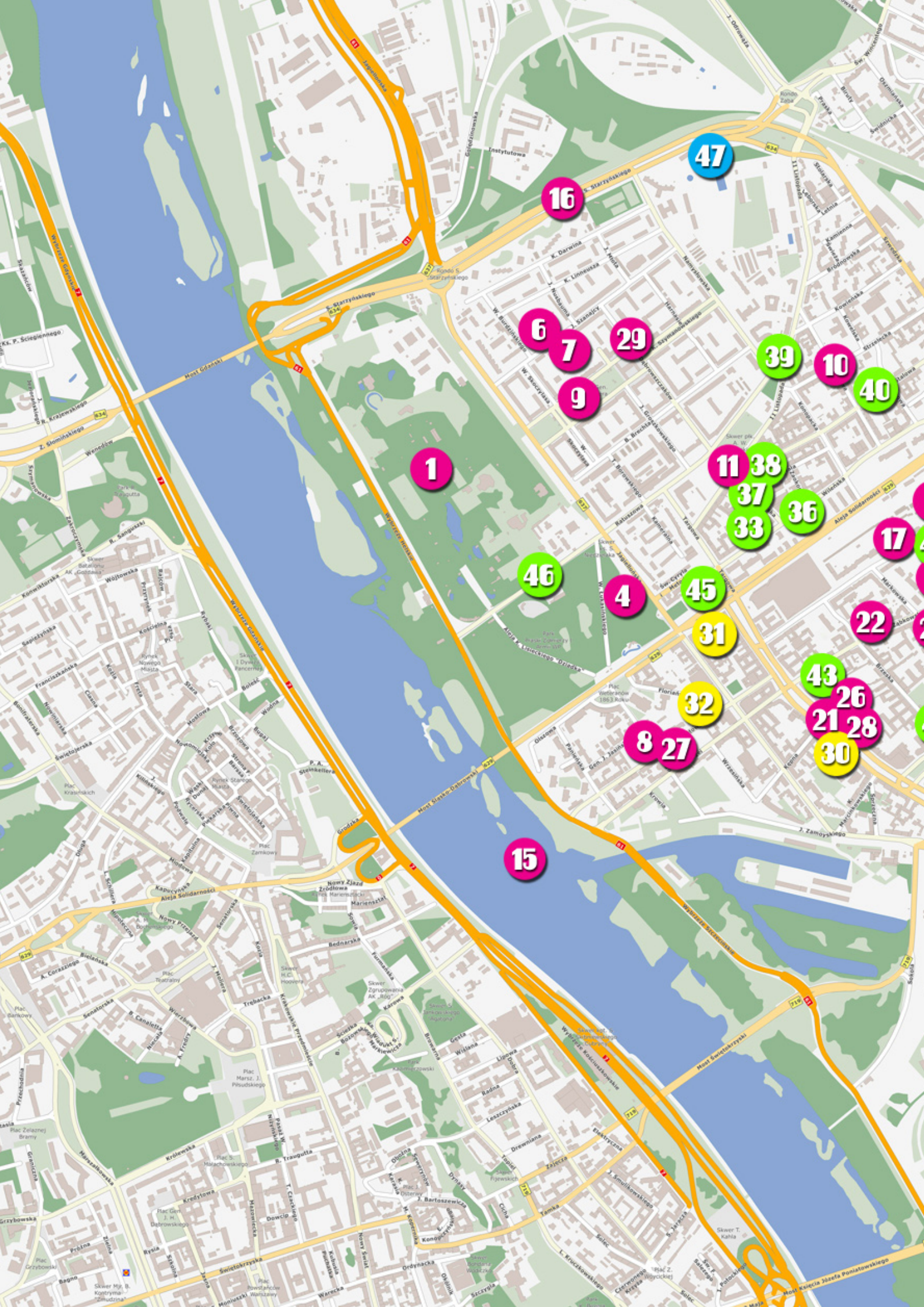
EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS (PPP) – Research successful PPP models used to finance the district's regeneration, particularly those used for heritage projects, while supporting cultural and social activities.

PRAGA ARTS FUND – consider a 1% arts tax on businesses in Praga. While the idea came from workshop participants, it will need to be verified if it is possible for the City to reinvest the income collected to benefit the creative sector. The Act on Public Finances determines the use of funds. Also, upon analysis of the idea, the risk exists that an art tax potentially implemented in order to obtain additional funds will be ultimately paid by Praga's residents, since the entrepreneurs are mostly local stores, bars, laundromats, etc..

Map

1. ZOO
2. Fabryka Trzciny
3. "Koneser" Vodka Factory
4. Praski Park
5. Szmulowizna
6. Ruy Barbosy secondary school
7. Vocational School of Geology, Geodesy and Roads Study
8. Psychological and Pedagogical Centre No. 5
9. Haller's Square
10. Konopacki Palace
11. Inżynierska street
12. Higher School of Management
13. National Stadium
14. Skaryszewski Park
15. Vistula River
16. Starzyńskiego street
17. Białostocka street
18. Folwarczna street
19. Al. Tysiąclecia
20. Kijowska street
21. Targowa street
22. Ząbkowska street
23. Białostocka street
24. Radzymińska street, 12, 14, 16
25. Markowska street
26. Museum of Warsaw Praga
27. The House of Father Ignacy
28. Creative Hub
29. Praga Północ Culture Centre
30. Creativity Centre on Targowa 56
31. Król Władysław IV Middle and Secondary School
32. Kapela Praska (Praga Band)
33. Sen Pszczoły
34. Kamionek
35. Grochów
36. Wileńska street
37. Inżynierska street
38. Mała street
39. 11 Listopada street
40. Stalowa street
41. Brzeska street
42. Teatr Wytwórnia
43. Różyckiego Market
44. Miotła
45. Wileński square
46. Ratuszowa 6 street
47. The swimming pool on Namysłowska



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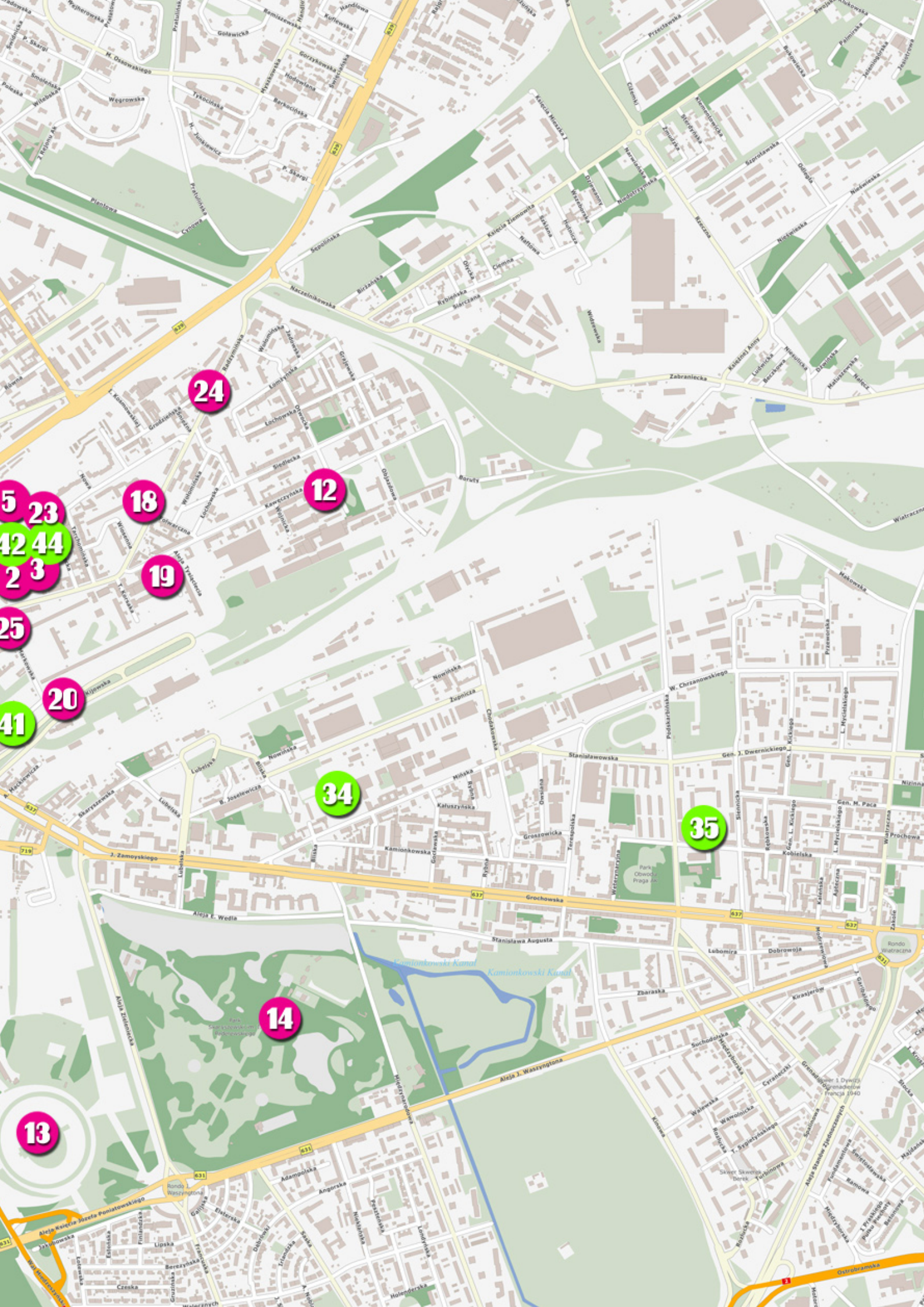
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“By Praga, For Praga” workshops participants and persons engaged in developing the document

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Małgorzata Gajewicz, Fabriqa - design
Małgorzata Garncarek
Dominika Goraj, Association Young Praga
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