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Creating Tomorrow

Ik Geef om de Jan Eef, Amsterdam

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Content

1. Introduction

This publication is the result of an Interreg research project to raise awareness regarding the opportunities for Area Based Collaborative Entrepreneurship in Cities (ABCEs) and to stimulate policy makers towards adapting policies to support ABCEs.

ABCEs are defined as 'geographically delimited, networked communities of entrepreneurs (and other stakeholders) that jointly enact their business environment to pursue economic goals as well as social and/or environmental goals'.
A consortium of 5 European regions - Manchester, Vilnius, Varaždin-Čakovec, Athens and Amsterdam[1] - has spent the last two years analysing policies with regard to area-based collectives in their regions. Moreover, in each region a number of ABCEs were studied in detail to identify their main opportunities and challenges. The research was conducted by partners from universities, in close cooperation with municipalities and local stakeholders by means of case studies. The combination of policy-centred and ABCEs-centred research provides directions for further policy experiment.

Area Based Collaborative Entrepreneurship (ABCEs) can have important advantages, both for the collaborating businesses themselves and for the local environments they operate in. Through activities such as shared investment or development costs (Casals, 2011) and by collectively developing a vision, strategy and marketing approach for their districts (Parker et al., 2017), local collaboration contributes to the creation, development and growth of SMEs (Small and Medium-sized Enterprises). Vice versa, the local environment can benefit significantly from the efforts of collaborating SMEs. ABCEs are often embedded in their surroundings and are committed to local social or environmental goals, such as strengthening neighbourhood livability or reinforcing social cohesion. These are exactly the types of complex challenges that increasingly require a contribution from a larger number of local stakeholders, including businesses and residents or resident organizations (Innes and Booher, 2010). A well-functioning ABCEs may turn out to address local issues more effectively and efficiently than state or market forces can (see example 1). Investing in collectives may therefore be viewed as a means to stimulate urban regeneration, inclusive growth, cooperation and cohesion.

However, initiating and sustaining a well-functioning collective can be challenging. Raising and maintaining awareness and enthusiasm for the ABCEs with local stakeholders; creating and fostering trusting relations between members; finding skills, time, and resources to realize collective activities and sharing the outcomes: all these can all form important hurdles for collaboration. Many national, regional and local governments in Europe are therefore designing new policy approaches and instruments to support ABCEs in these challenges.
The local governments involved in this project have all been experimenting with ways of initiating or supporting existing ABCEs. However, finding appropriate and effective measures turns out to be challenging.

In fact, ABCEs often feel frustrated with existing rules and regulations - even with regulation that have been designed to facilitate their activities. Moreover, ABCEs also

1 The institutes that contributed to this project are: the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, the Municipality of Amsterdam, Mykolas Romeris University, the Sunrise Valley Science and Technology Park, the Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester City Council, the Faculty of Organization and Informatics of the University of Zagreb, the City of Varaždin, the City of Čakovec, Harokopio University, and Athens Municipality.

encounter a large amount of rules and regulations that are not necessarily designed with the networked structures of ABCEs in mind. This invites struggle: in finding a suitable legal entity for their organization, or in negotiating the role of an ABCEs in relation to the local government, for instance.

An urban setting, where spaces tend to have multiple owners and users and where the activities targeted by ABCEs easily overlap with services also provided by the local government, exacerbates these challenges.

Research question

There is a need for more insights into how ABCEs function - both internally and in relation to local and regional governments – to arrive at better policies for ABCEs. This policy report contributes to this knowledge gap by capturing local learnings from different policy contexts. It identifies critical success conditions across regions in Europe. The variety of urban planning contexts, and of political, legal, and administrative cultures within the consortium partners allows for lessons to be drawn across national and cultural borders. The aim of this policy report is ultimately to inspire policy experiments to facilitate and support ABCEs in novel ways. This leads to the following research question:
How can we create a better understanding of the governance of Area Based Collective Enterprises in order to design innovative and effective policies and policy instruments that help them to jointly enact their business environment to pursue economic goals as well as social and/or environmental goals?

We address the research question in subsequent chapters by means of five different sub-questions, i.e.:

1. How are the legal, financial, social and governance aspects of area-based collaborative enterprises organized?
2. What are context-related factors that impact the functioning and organizational structures of ABCEs?
3. What are the relationships between formal governments and ABCEs initiatives and how do these relationships condition the development of ABCEs?
4. How do current regional policy instruments facilitate or hinder ABCEs and how can this be improved?
5. What new policy measures might local governments develop?

1.1 Approach

Two simultaneous approaches were taken to answer these research questions.

Evaluative analysis

Firstly, each consortium partner has evaluated national, regional and local policies designed to facilitate ABCEs. These include legislation and funds (including ERDF), regional and urban policy instruments and available legal organizational forms when establishing an ABCEs initiative. This yields valuable comparative insights into the way different European cities ***intend*** to support ABCEs. However, this approach also brings two important limitations. Firstly, the approach fails to identify policies that may have ***unintended*** effects on ABCEs. Policies that at first glance do not relate to local collaboration, may still have important positive or negative consequences for ABCEs. Secondly, taking existing policy interventions as a starting point may fail to identify ***new*** areas where ABCEs could be supported.

Case studies

The policy investigation is therefore complemented with case studies of ABCEs. The case studies aim to get a detailed understanding of factors that strengthen or erode collaboration within the case studies. Our research strategy was based on the Analysis and Development Model for Collaborative Governance Arrangements for the Urban Commons (see **Fig. 1**). The model, an alteration of Elinor Ostrom's Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) Framework (McGinnis, 2011; Ostrom, 2009), considers ABCEs as developing through a series of ***action situations***, which are represented at the centre of the model.

Example. The Zero-Waste Lab on Plein ’40-’45 in Amsterdam

The Zero-Waste Lab on Plein ’40-’45 in Amsterdam addresses the widely lamented issue of littering in a market square in the West of Amsterdam. A considerable share of the litter is caused by plastic bags used in market stalls. If market stalls stopped offering plastic bags - forcing their customers to bring their own - the square could be significantly cleaner. Individual entrepreneurs in pursuit of self-interest are not likely to address this problem; they might lose customers to competitors if they stopped offering plastic bags as a service.

Were local government to regulate the use of plastic bags, it would likely have to apply to the entire municipality: treating a particular square as an exceptional case raises a lot of questions. Regulation has to be uniform, which makes policy formulation time-consuming. Moreover, the use of plastic bags would then need to be monitored by local government, which generates extra costs - especially since market stall holders will not necessarily be intrinsically motivated to stop using plastic bags.

In sum, the plastic bag problem might be addressed much more effectively and efficiently if the stall holders would collectively decide to stop using plastic bags. The first actions undertaken by the collective show that, first of all, the exact rules that the stall holders create can be much more location-specific, as they do not have to apply anywhere else. Moreover, it seems like the collective sense of responsibility for the litter creates more intrinsic motivation to adhere to the rules. Once the collaboration matures, the intrinsic motivation would ideally also cause them to monitor and even reprimand each other. Finally, the collaboration might have add-on effects: a successful collaboration might motivate stall holders to address other issues as well.

This illustrates how local collaboration might effectively and efficiently address a problem where both market forces and state intervention lead to suboptimal outcomes.

How this ABCEs is addressing the issue: Plein 40-45 video impression

Action situations consist of people with different roles and positions who make decisions based on information and existing rules. These decisions and actions are shaped by the context in which they are undertaken (left side of the model). Three significant contextual factors are outlined:

> the characteristics of the area (Who uses it? In what way? To what effect?);
> the attributes of the community (Who is involved? With what skills and capabilities? What characterizes the relations between involved parties?); and
> the institutional and market context (What formal and informal rules does the organization have to adhere to?).

The right side of the model represents the results of the researched decision or action. This concerns:

> both physical results of the decision or action (was it effective and efficient?) and
> the perception of how the process played out (to what extent was the decision supported by the ABCEs members? To what extent was it perceived as fair?).

These results would subsequently feed into the context of the next situation the ABCEs is confronted with. For instance, if a decision is not perceived as fair by a part of the ABCEs members, this will affect the level of trust within the community. The decreased level of trust will impact the next situation in which a decision is made. ABCEs are therefore shaped through a cycle of actions that emerge in a particular context and that impact subsequent actions.

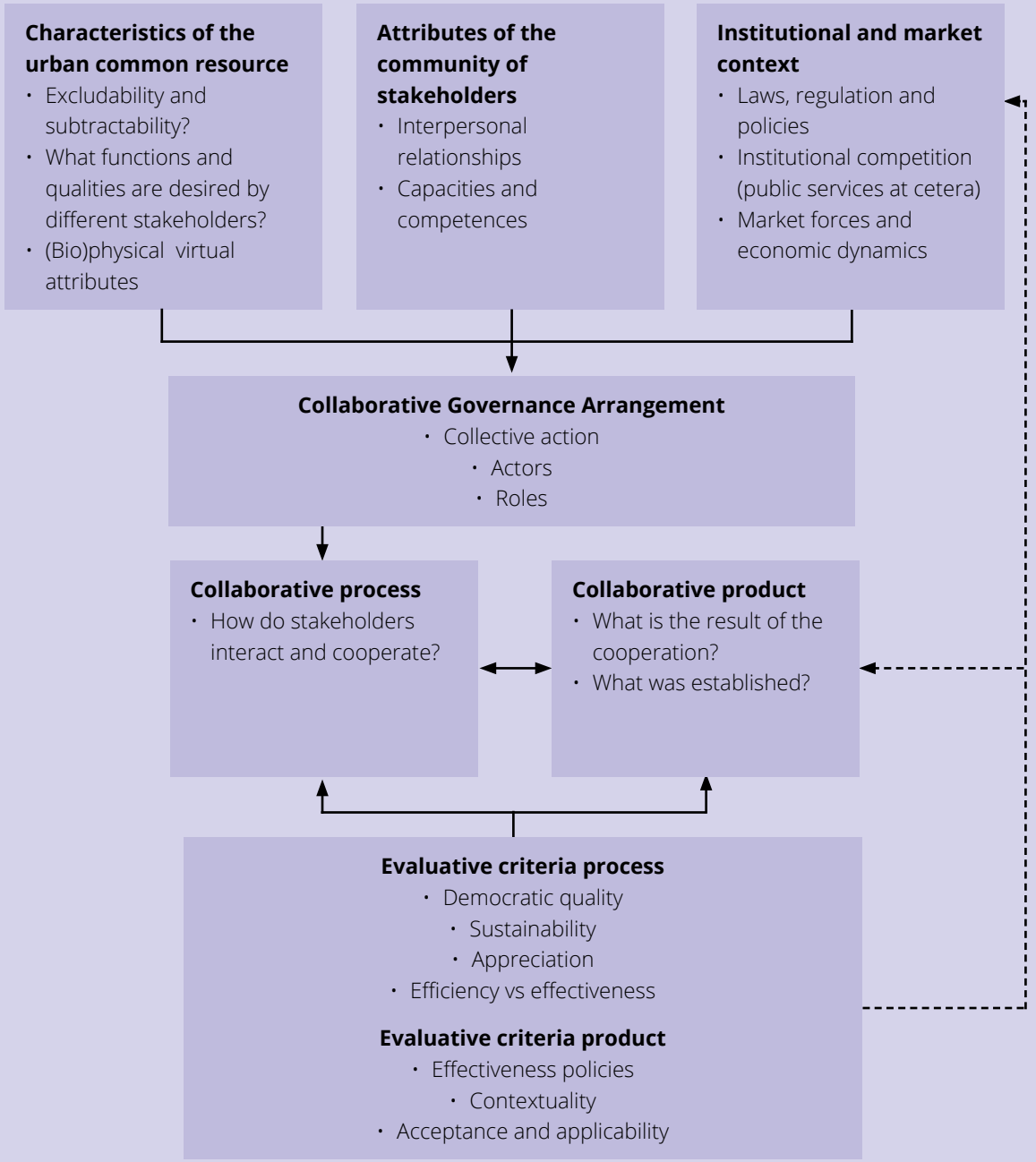


Figure 1. *Analysis and Development Model for Collaborative Governance Arrangements for the Urban Commons (Meerkerk, forthcoming 2022)*

Applying the framework

The framework above has now been applied to 16 ABCEs in the 5 partner cities. The common ground between these cases is that they are all networks of SMEs and other stakeholders within a certain geographical area that have an ambition to collaborate. Yet the types of SMEs and other stakeholders; their goals, motivation to collaborate, as well as the maturity and formal status of their collaboration, are all highly different. Chapter three will provide a more elaborate typology of the different cases. For now, **Table 1** provides a quick overview.

Varaždin/ Čakovec	Urban Research Factory	University-based interest group around research in Internet of Things (IOT) with potential to grow into a collective.
	City Market	Market area that will be vacated, demanding a collective strategy to preserve the space and its surrounding businesses.
	Centre for Creative Industries	Project to revive a network of SMEs in creative industries in a vacant former cinema.
	Varaždin House	Redevelopment project to create a shared space that brings together more traditional services (e.g. repair shop, tailor) and services based on new technologies and hospitality.
	City Room	Planned multifunctional/modular space for both residents and entrepreneurs.
	MTČ Complex	Former factory that will be redeveloped into a mixed-use space, potentially providing space to collaborating SMEs.
Vilnius	Vilnius Tech Park	ICT start-up hub uniting tech companies, VCs, accelerators, incubators and other ecosystem players.
	Užupis	Organization to foster collaborative entrepreneurship, social, cultural and economic development in the Užupis Artist district.
Athens	Kypseli Municipal Market (social enterprise hub)	Refurbished former market area that houses eight social enterprises, several services, and a municipal one-stop-shop for citizens to get assistance in bureaucratic issues.
	Aiolou street (pedestrian area under touristification pressure)	Collaboration of businesses within an area of pedestrianized shopping streets and squares.
Manchester	Withington Village	Public/private/community collaboration in a town centre shopping area.
	Gorton District Centre	Town centre shopping area with independent and market traders currently lacking networks of collaboration.
Amsterdam	Knowledge Mile	Business improvement zone initiated by the Amsterdam University of Applied Science, connecting SMEs with larger companies, as well as cultural and educational institutions.
	Geef om de Jan Eef	Resident-initiated collaboration in a local shopping street.
	Noorderpark onderneemt	Entrepreneur network as part of a community trust situated in a local park.
	Plein '40-'45	Market square in which vendors aim to self-organize a waste processing system.

Table 1. *The 16 ABCEs reviewed in ABCitiEs.*

Užupis, Vilnius

Understanding the stakeholders

Understanding the influence of context on important decisions regarding the ABCEs, as well as how ABCEs members perceive these decisions, requires a detailed understanding of how different stakeholders experience each ABCEs.

The cases have been investigated by means of semi-structured interviews with stakeholders. These interviews included:

> stakeholders of the organization of the ABCEs,
> stakeholders from local municipalities that have been involved in the case,
> and members of the respective ABCEs.

The stakeholders have been interviewed about the different elements of the IAD framework (See ***Approach***):

> characteristics of the shared resource,
> attributes of the community,
> formal and informal rules affecting the ABCEs,
> crucial situations,
> and their outcomes and effects.

Key stakeholders from each selected case have also been invited to join meetings and brainstorm sessions, both in the local setting and in three interregional events.

The remainder of this report presents and analyzes the findings that emerged from both the policy and case study research. Chapter 2 outlines the policy findings in the five partner cities. After that, chapter 3 describes the 16 case studies, using a typology that distinguishes different forms of ABCEs. Chapter 4 draws the cases and policy context together to find key questions, ambiguities, paradoxes and challenges. Finally, chapter 5 will outline the implications of these findings on local actions and policies.

2. ABCEs POLICY FRAMEWORKS

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the policy frameworks that shape the ABCEs initiatives in the 5 regions, as well as the legal, financial, social and governance aspects of ABCEs organisation. It summarises the current situation of Area Based Collaborative Entrepreneurship and discusses the national, regional (including ERDF) and local policies that affect ABCEs initiatives. We will start off by summarising the supporting legislation and funds (including ERDF) at the national levels. We then turn our focus to regional and urban policy instruments and funds (including ERDF). Lastly, we discuss (implicit) general perceptions on ABCEs in each of the five regions and review the main legal entity options for an ABCEs initiative.

2.2 National level: supporting legislation & regulation

2.2.1 Amsterdam: Dutch national government and orientation

Politically, the Dutch government can be characterized as 'liberal, centre-right'. Most economic policies of the Dutch government are aimed at individual firms and they focus on the fiscal stimulation of innovation and of a low-CO2 economy. The Dutch national policy rationale is 'local if we can, central if we must'. At the national level, partnerships are encouraged to stimulate innovation in business and technology, but this is mainly aimed at public-private collaboration. The adoption of cooperative organization structures is gaining momentum, especially on the energy market. The number of energy cooperatives in the Netherlands has risen sharply in 2018, by 85 to a total of 484.

Policies for ABCEs

There are two national laws that support ABCEs. First, in 2015 the Bedrijven-Investerings Zone (BIZ) law was introduced, which enables entrepreneurs and/or property owners to jointly invest in their business environment (a geographically demarcated area, such as a shopping street or a business park). The BIZ is the Dutch equivalent of the 'Business Improvement District (BID)'. In the period 2015-2019, the number of BIZ-organisations rose quickly, at an average of 17% annually. At the time of writing the Netherlands has 302 BIZ-organizations, and the yearly increase for the period 2015-2020 was an average 17% (Risselada et al., 2019). Second, municipalities may create an Entrepreneurship Fund, to be financed by a special levy, in which a municipality increases the property tax on commercial real estate (***Onroerende Zaken Belasting***). This type of fund is not area-specific like the BIZ but rather applies to all non-residential properties in a municipality. Leiden, Utrecht and a number of other municipalities have such a fund. Just like the BIZ, contribution is compulsory for this type of fund.

2.2.2 Athens: Greek national government and orientation

During the spring/summer of 2019 a major political shift took place in Greece: municipal, regional and national administrations all turned right-wing. What this will do to national policy remains to be seen at the time of writing. In general, the persistent deep recession (shrinkage of disposable income by 27,5%. (2007-15)) has led many Greek firms to exit the market and it has a great impact on the life of Greek citizens, the Greek economy and on politics and policy.

Policies for ABCEs

There is no known national policy specifically aimed at supporting ABCEs. However, some support can be found in 'cluster[2] policies'. To increase the participation of small businesses in clusters, public policies implemented at national level and funded by the Operational Programs of the Community Support Frameworks are foreseen. State assistance programmes have thus far been aimed at encouraging companies to set up and participate in clusters, notably by financing the activities of setting up and running a network. Most aid instruments for clusters in Greece have been focused on manufacturing, tourism and innovation/ technology, while the majority in services has been largely ignored.

During the current EU programming period the main instrument targeting clustering activities is the programme 'Competitiveness, Entrepreneurship & Innovation' (EPANEK), whose main strategic objective is 'to enhance the competitiveness and extroversion of enterprises, to facilitate transition to quality entrepreneurship with innovation and the growth of domestic added value'. EPANEK covers the entire country and is mainly - though not exclusively - focused on the national and regional smart specialization strategy sectors. In general, entrepreneurial collectives enter the OP vocabulary through the cluster vehicle.

The main instrument for EPANEK to support ABCEs is the funding of 'open malls' aiming to strengthen and stimulate economic activity in commercial areas, especially in areas with significant cultural resources and tourism flows. The first round of applications closed at November 2018. With a total budget of € 50 m. and a maximum budget of € 1,9 m. per proposal, a total of 68 proposals were submitted, none of which in the municipality of Athens.

The economic crisis also gave rise to a wave of small-scale collective social oriented initiatives, partly made possible by recent legislation. In terms of legal entities, L4430/2016, introduced a wide array of legal entity options (the most widely used being 'Social Collaborative Enterprises'), while some collectives prefer types which are not considered part of the social economy, such as private equity firms (known as IKE). Nonetheless it appears that a large share of collectives remains informal throughout their lifespan, either by choice or by default, both because they are ill-informed about the policies available and because it is difficult to establish eligibility.

2.2.3 Manchester: UK national government and orientation

National government in the UK made a distinct shift to centre-right in 2010, imposing a limit on public funding policies and introducing 'Big society' policy approach. Following its election in 2010, the Coalition Government has dismantled the existing support for area-based economic development. Most notable casualties of this restructuring have been the Regional Development Authorities, with much of their responsibilities passing to Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) (see below).

In addition, a Regional Growth Fund was introduced, and Enterprise Zones have been re-activated. These initiatives focus on providing finance, advice, and networking with an emphasis on regional infrastructure development.

Policies for ABCEs

There are three national policies that shape the conditions in which ABCEs-initiatives are formed. Firstly, announced in 2010, LEPS are private sector-led regional partnerships between businesses and local public sector bodies. There are 38 LEPs across England. LEPs provide a platform for businesses, local elected

2 The most widely accepted definition of clusters is that of Porter, M.E. (2000), "Location, Competition, and Economic Development: Local Clusters in a Global Economy", Economic Development Quarterly, Vol. 14 No. 1, pp. 15–34. Specifically, "Clusters are geographic concentrations of interconnected companies, specialized suppliers, service providers, firms in related industries, and associated institutions (e.g., universities, standards agencies, trade associations) in a particular field that compete but also cooperate" (p. 15)

leaders, universities, services providers as well as voluntary and community sector organisations to shape policies for their area, bringing in business expertise as well as forming new partnerships between the public and private sector.

In 2013, LEPs acquired powers to stimulate growth under a regional Growth Deals scheme worth over £9 billion. LEPs also provide oversight for EU Structural and Investment Funds. In 2017, LEPs were tasked with producing delivery plans for Local Industrial Strategies (LIS), Local Growth Fund, Enterprise Zones and Growth Hubs, and City Deals. LEPs focus mainly on strategic economic development rather than local interventions.

Secondly, Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) are business-led partnerships established in a defined area, which are created through a ballot process to deliver additional services to local businesses. They allow the business community and municipalities authorities to work together to improve the local trading environment e.g. through extra safety/security, hygiene and environmental measures. BIDs have largely replaced Town Centre Management as the main place management delivery-mechanism. At the end of 2018, there were 303 BIDs in operation across the UK. Most are Property-Occupier BIDs (98.7%). There are just three Property-Owner BIDs and two Property-Owner and Occupier BIDs in the UK. In terms of location, 79% are in England and 20% in London alone. Despite the growth in the number, almost two-thirds of English town and city centres do not have a BID. BIDs tend to form in larger centres with a critical mass of potential levy payers, and not at district or local level.

Third, legislation announced October 2018 includes new measures to support high streets and town centres set out in ***Our Plan for the High Street***[3]. Included are funds to support the establishment of a new High Streets taskforce. This will provide hands-on support to local areas to develop innovative strategies to help high streets evolve, connect local areas to relevant experts and share best practice. They apply only to England, with separate measures either in place or under-development in other parts of the UK.

3 www.gov.uk/government/publications/our-plan-for-the-high-street-budget-2018-brief

Cinema Dom, Varaždin

2.2.4 Varaždin-Čakovec : Croatian national government and orientation

At the time of writing Croatia has a right-centre coalition, and in 2020 there are parliamentary elections. In many areas there is a strong centralization of the state, capital Zagreb is the priority, and distinct regional centres are Rijeka, Split and Osijek.

In Croatia, there are 555 local self-government units (428 municipalities and 127 cities), and 20 regional self-government units, i.e. counties. The capital city of Zagreb has a special status of being a city as well as a county. Many analyses show that the number of cities and municipalities should be reduced by a third, and the number of counties reduced; however, the political will for such a reform is currently lacking.

In addition, the decentralization of administrative functions and finances has only been partially implemented. For example, the Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds is responsible for operational programs; regional and local government units have limited influence on the design of operational programs, mainly through political lobbying rather than through representative bodies. This is one of the limitations of this project in Croatia, but also an opportunity to propose some changes.

Policies for ABCEs

There is no comprehensive national policy aimed at supporting ABCEs: CE-related policies mainly refer to formal cooperative organization structures rather than ad-hoc collectives. Cooperatives and cooperative entrepreneurship in Croatia do have a long history; however, after World War II the Communist authorities, in their aim to overturn private property, saw the whole concept of co-operative and collective entrepreneurship as undesirable.

After the independence of the Republic of Croatia in 1991 a new legal framework for cooperatives was adopted, with the aim to revive cooperatives and co-operative entrepreneurship. A 'co-operative' is defined as a voluntary association of members where each member participates directly and which, by doing business together, enhances and protects the collective economic and other professional interest for the purpose of making their own and joint profit of members (Act on Cooperatives, NN 76/14).

Regarding state support measures, an overview of current tenders shows that co-operatives are often discriminated against relative to companies; co-operatives are often not mentioned as potential beneficiaries of the support measures. In addition, the conditions of tenders for state support measures are often tailored to companies or trades. Occasionally, there are support measures explicitly intended for co-operatives. An example of such rare measures is support for the start-up of manufacturing organizations. Exceptions are the extensive targeted measures for war veterans' co-operatives, operated by the Ministry of Croatian Veterans' Affairs.

The national Strategy for the Development of Social Entrepreneurship adopted by the Government in April 2015 provides some support for socially oriented collective enterprise. The strategy primarily gives a definition of 'social entrepreneurship' in the Croatian context and provides a list of nine criteria designed to help identify 'social entrepreneurs'. The government still appears to be the main provider of social welfare services and this has limited the outsourcing of welfare services to social enterprises. There are numerous government bodies and institutions that have been assigned the role of supporting social enterprises, but they are fragmented and lack horizontal and vertical integration.

During the communist regime much of the private property was confiscated or nationalized by the state; the possibility of private ownership was limited and apartments were built by the state as well. Most real estate ownership was so-called 'social ownership', a euphemism for state ownership in fact. Consequently, even today there is a lot of unresolved ownership and abandoned spaces remain. In many Croatian towns, especially in historic centres, these types of buildings have much potential for ABCEs-initiatives that locate within a co-working lab, an office space, a technology hub, start-up incubator or other form of collective temporary use. Some cities, like Varaždin, are now looking at how to support such initiatives by providing real estate.

2.2.5 Vilnius: Lithuanian national government and orientation

Lithuania has a multi-party government in which parties often work together to form a coalition. However, after the last elections in 2016, a large majority of Parliament seats went to a new centre-left Lithuanian Farmers and Greens Union party. Despite frequent turnover of political parties and coalitions, there is a political spectrum agreement about free-market and open economy development.

As a part of general economy policy, the existing business development policies in Lithuania are targeted at the promotion of innovation-based economy, foreign direct investment and export, development of start-up ecosystem, and digital transformation of government. At the national policy level there is some focus on cooperation: the Progress Strategy ***Lithuania 2030*** (2012) strongly emphasizes the development of a more co-operative, active, and creative Lithuanian society as well as an entrepreneurial economy**.** The Entrepreneurship Action Plan for 2014-2020 has introduced new public policy intervention instruments such as Art Incubators. These instruments aim to support collective entrepreneurship if it is of an artistic nature and if it concerns a single legal entity**.**

Policies for ABCEs

The Operational Programme for the European Union Funds' Investments in 2014-2020 (OP) applies to all the territory of Lithuania. Some support for ABCEs can be found in investment priorities with regard to SME innovation and urban development such as 'promote urban development by modernization of public spaces complemented by entrepreneurship promotion actions'. However, there is no elaboration of how collective entrepreneurship could be stimulated within specific measures.

In 2017, a new edition of the Law on Small and Medium-Size Enterprise Development came into force (Lithuanian Law, 2017) supporting small and medium-size businesses by providing services via area-based incubators and information centres. The following instruments are aimed at stimulating ABCEs:

> Business Incubators, which are public institutions aimed at reducing the risk of starting up a business and helping it establish itself in the market, as well as promoting small and medium-sized enterprises and development of their activities.
> The Science and Technology Parks, encouraging the creation of innovative start-ups, promoting the development of existing firms, promoting business-science innovation partnerships, technology transfer processes between science and business, and activities related to the provision of public innovation support services.

Despite their limitations, the above-mentioned Art Incubators also serve as important public policy intervention instruments to support and promote collaborative entrepreneurship activities. Art Incubators are among the largest contributors to the development of cultural and creative industries in the regions. To date, there are 10 Art Incubators operating in Lithuania (5 of them in Vilnius). The government has also a policy to promote collaboration between science and business by supporting the establishment and activities of Science and Technology Parks. The national government promotes activities of the Science and Technology Parks by providing funding to their projects; by monitoring their activities, and by participating as a co-founder in the governance of two of the Science and Technology Parks.

Lastly, Industry Parks also offer opportunities for ABCEs. Industry parks are special geographical areas for the implementation of more than one investment project. The organization of the industry park is the responsibility of the industrial park operator. Operators of industry parks provide infrastructure and services to companies which decide to locate their business activities in these territories. There are five industry parks in Lithuania and there are plans to establish two new industry parks in Vilnius city.

2.3 Municipal and regional level instruments

2.3.1 Amsterdam

Amsterdam is the capital of the Netherlands and is the largest Dutch city with a population of 862,965 within the city limits and 2,480,995 in the metropolitan area (OIS,2019). Amsterdam elected a slightly left-wing municipal government in which the Green Left party dominates. In the coalition agreement there is hence much focus on democratization, sustainability and equality and less on economic viability.

Policies for ABCEs

Most economic policy for stimulating entrepreneurship is in the ***Amsterdam Entrepreneurial Program*** (AOP). Stimulating Area Based Entrepreneurship via strengthening the cooperation of entrepreneurs in the neighbourhood is one of the pillars of this policy. This is done by stimulating the formation of Bedrijfs Investering Zone (BIZ) mentioned earlier, especially in retail agglomerations. To date, the Netherlands has 302 BIZ-organizations. Amsterdam is the BIZ-capital of the Netherlands with 65 BIZ-organizations. There are opportunities to use the BIZ to jointly invest as an energy cooperation or to implement other sustainability measures (e.g. solar and/or green rooftops) which are too costly to implement as an individual firm, but might be an interesting joint investment.

Budgets from European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF) were combined to strengthen sustainable urban development in the highly urbanised west of the Netherlands as incorporated in the Operational Program ***Kansen for West II*** (EFRO, 2015). Current policy rational of Amsterdam municipal government puts much focus on civic initiatives, ***commoning*** practices such as developing 'neighbourhood rights', and neighbourhood budgets, as well as experimenting with cooperative housing projects initiated by Amsterdam citizens.[4] At the regional level (via ERDF fund OP ***Kansen voor West*** II) and municipal level there have been some opportunities for ABCEs found in more social oriented policies around stimulating local business climate and entrepreneurship, especially in more deprived neighbourhood. Setting up Community Based Enterprises (CBE) can be an effective way to capitalize on this current policy rational.

2.3.2 Athens

The city of Athens is the urban core of Athens Metropolitan Area: an extensive area of 3,750,000 inhabitants contributing more than 1/3 to the national GDP (NSSG, 2011). Athens has been facing a a double crisis in recent years: on the one hand the rapid development of suburban shopping centres, and on the other hand, the abrupt reduction of purchasing power due to the prolonged economic crisis. This has led to a widespread restructuring of SMEs, combined with the abandonment of large parts of the urban high streets. Tens of thousands of small firms located in the city of Athens have exited the market during the last eight-year period. In the midst of economic recession, a diverse set of novel types of small-scale firms were mushrooming in Athens, mostly found in food retail-trade, in catering services and "creative" industries.

Policies for ABCEs

A potentially significant program, specifically focused on the city of Athens, is the concept of the Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) of Sustainable Urban Development. The program "PROJECT: ATHENS" was initiated during the previous programme period (2007-2013). In terms of entrepreneurial development, the main instrument has been the 'Entrepreneurship Network' of the city of Athens, which was created with the aim of supporting the entrepreneurship and economic development of the city through the participation and cooperation of public organizations, academic institutions, sectoral organizations, and the private sector.

Up until the end of the first phase of this 'Project: Athens' programme, 1,200 existing enterprises have seen support, and 10 business clusters have been created via the Entrepreneurship Network, consisting of support groups of 300 new entrepreneurs. In the field of Social Entrepreneurship, 40 groups with entrepreneurial ideas

4 See for example: https://www.nul20.nl/woonco%C3%B6peratie-nieuwe-meent-bouwt-33-betaalbare-huurwoningen-amsterdam-oost

and activity with positive social impact have been trained. The regional relevant Operational Program of the ERDF has been dubbed ATTICA, or 'Promotion of entrepreneurship through the creation of clusters of innovation in the Region of Attica' in short. It was just announced at the time of writing, and the first round of applications closed in January 2019. There is no mention of stimulating collaborative entrepreneurship in the new OP.

2.3.3 Manchester

Manchester is the second most vital urban centre outside of London, and acts as the regional core for the North West of England with 392,000 jobs located within the municipality boundary (which includes Gorton and ***Withington*** district centres). Since 2015 the number of active enterprises in the city has risen sharply by 40%. Population has increased incrementally since the mid-1980s. Manchester has a wide variation in household incomes across the municipality, with substantial poverty in pockets.

Reduced funding for local authorities has led to austerity measures and mechanisms needing to 'plug' funding gaps - hence introduction of 'Our Manchester' policy. One ambition of ***Our Manchester*** is to "create thriving neighbourhoods where people can have a sense of purpose and belonging" and to foster a sense of identity and heritage of local neighbourhoods. The development of ABCEs within Manchester's district centres is a part of this new policy approach.

Policies for ABCEs

In an age of government austerity and post-Brexit uncertainty, many municipalities find themselves starved of both public and private investment. They have had little choice, but to begin experimenting with alternative economic development strategies. Most notable is the Centre for Local Economic Strategy (CLES)' 'Preston Model'[5], which ties the municipality's procurement strategy to local companies and worker co-operatives to reduce leakages from the local economy. Hence, interest has been reignited in policies to support the strengthening of local business ownership, community ownership of land and property assets, social enterprise and cooperatives, and cross sector partnerships between place based anchors or other embedded local stakeholders (local government, health institutions, universities, civic organisations), and locally embedded SMEs committed to places. This is reflected by the growing number of municipalities and other agencies responsible for local economic development who are beginning to adopt "a place-based" approach.

The principal document in terms of regional development policy is the emerging Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF), which includes policies contributing to the delivery of the Operational Program (OP) for European Regional Funding. The plan is currently under review. Following devolution and the establishment of a City-Deal, the plan is produced by the Mayor of Greater Manchester and the ten municipalities of the region. The GMSF focuses on the main town centres within the city-region. The policy advocates appropriate large-scale retail and leisure development within the centres in the upper levels of the hierarchy and calls for new housing in main town centres. Mentions of District Centres and ABCEs are extremely limited. The plan supports the idea of vital and viable centres but does not mention any mechanism for achieving this.

Adopted in 2011, Manchester's Core Strategy 2012-27 is the key document in the Manchester Local Plan. It sets the out the long-term strategic policies for Manchester's future development and forms the framework for the assessment of planning applications. Other than partnerships with the private sector, Manchester's existing policy guidance remains firmly couched within planning discourse, and unclear regarding the delivery mechanisms required to provide the ongoing management of district centres. There is, however, potential for alignment of planning policy with other areas of place-intervention, e.g. markets management, cultural policy, housing, transport, and tourism.

5 https://cles.org.uk/tag/the-preston-model/

2.3.4 Varaždin-Čakovec

Varaždin is a town in north western Croatia located near the Drava River, the historical, cultural, educational, economic, sports and tourist centre of Varaždin County, the oldest county in Croatia. Today Varaždin has 47,000 inhabitants and covers a surface of 60km2. Čakovec is located on the other side of the Drava River. According to the last population census the city of Čakovec has an estimated population of 16,000 over a land area of about 11 km2.

Policies for ABCEs

At a local level there are no policy measures yet that stimulate ABCEs initiatives. However, both towns are looking at ways to bring cooperative entrepreneurship into their city centres. The City tourist board of Varaždin and other relevant local institutions invest energy in city centre revival. For example, in 2012, the City of Varaždin has established the brand "Centre lives" / "Centar živi" as an effort to bring life back to the city centre, but also to connect craftsmen and entrepreneurs working there.

The campaign combined initiatives and actions aimed at restoring tourism and commerce to the heart of Varaždin. A whole range of activities were planned to bring life back to the dilapidated and uniformed Varaždin centre. Due to the decline of crafts, small services and micro-entrepreneurship and the rise of large shopping complexes on the edge of the city, the old centre of Čakovec lost its vital economic role and became a transit zone, a place for drinking coffee or occasionally holding social events and fairs. Despite the prevalent trend to ignore cooperatives at the state level, local governments of Varaždin and Čakovec are looking at ways to promote cooperatives, to better use local common goods such as abandoned and neglected spaces by deploying in practice the concepts of 'Temporary use' and 'Shared infrastructure' (time sharing and simultaneous use).

The budgets of the cities of Varaždin and Čakovec (along with the annual budget are made with a three-year projection) include development programs and incentives for entrepreneurial activities, as well as communal infrastructure, which is of interest to ABCEs. For example, the City of Varaždin has budgeted Economic Growth Programs, including the Encouragement of the Economic and Touristic Event, Grants to Economic Entities, a special budget for the European Integration and Projects Program, and the purchase, renovation and maintenance of a real estate program.

Given that the preparation of operational programs for the next financial period is underway, we cannot estimate what instruments will feature at the regional level. In June 2019, the Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds issued a decision designating the City of Varaždin and the surrounding area, including Čakovec, as an area for the implementation of the Integrated Territorial Investment Mechanism (ITU) in the financial period 2021-2027.

2.3.5 Vilnius

Vilnius and Vilnius county together produce about 40% of Lithuania's GDP. Vilnius is the capital of Lithuania and its largest city, with a population of 580,020 as of 2020 (SECRL, 2020). Vilnius is the centre of Lithuania's knowledge economy, based on such industries as biotechnology, laser technology, telecommunications, electronics and precision mechanics, nanotechnology and medicine. Currently, the policy of Vilnius Municipality has strong emphasis on infrastructure development and housing renovation.

Policies for ABCEs

Like other municipalities in Lithuania, Vilnius has no specific operational program on regional or municipal level. However, the European Commission requires that no less than 5 % of the funds of the ERDF must be allocated for integrated sustainable urban development actions addressing different economic, social, demographic and environment problems (implemented through Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI), or integrated territory development programmes). The Vilnius City Integrated Territories Development Programme (ITDP) was drafted and approved by the Minister of the Interior on June 19, 2015. It is worth mentioning that the ITDP is

Wibautstraat, Amsterdam

heavily based on a top-down policy planning approach and tuned to absorption of EU funds. On the other hand, Vilnius city municipality has a certain degree of freedom to choose territories and define specific objectives.

The ITDP has set the following objectives:

> Objective 1. Increase the employment rate of Vilnius residents by creating new services, promoting active participation and recovering the abandoned areas.
> Objective 2. Increase the satisfaction of the residents by their living environment by managing the urban areas with a good urban development potential.
> Objective 3. Reduce the negative impact upon the environment by creating a safe and sustainable communication system safeguarding the urban economy infrastructure.

From the perspective of ABCEs, there are some funding opportunities to be found in Objective 1 (with tasks such as 'Provide the conditions conducive to creation of new jobs, increase in the employment rate by rehabilitating abandoned urban areas, natural and cultural heritage locations') and the Objective 2 (with tasks like 'Promote creation of high-quality urban regions by converting abandoned and former industrial areas in the central area of the city.)'. However, municipalities do not participate in the process of OP design. Based on the given OP, Vilnius Municipality ***ex post*** develops Integrated Territories Development Programme (ITDP). At the same time, the Municipality demonstrates its commitment to community-based approaches to city development. The emphasis is however on the conversion of formerly abandoned industrial territories into public spaces, such as gardens, embankments, and squares.

2.4 General perceptions of ABCEs

In Amsterdam, Athens and Manchester many collaborative entrepreneurship initiatives spring up in High Streets and Town Centres and other retail agglomerations. In Vilnius and Varaždin-Čakovec , ABCEs initiatives tend to be more focused in co-lab office spaces, (tech)incubators, start-ups making temporary use

of former abandoned buildings. On the other hand, in Lithuania one of the most successful and prominent local entrepreneurship initiative emerged in Vilnius Old Town. Below we list 7 types of ABCEs initiatives in the 5 regions that are mentioned, from large (regional) to small (premises) scale.

> Regional clusters (creative, bio sciences industrial clusters, food valleys, etc.);
> Retail clusters, business and office parks;
> Urban streets, neighbourhoods, parks and squares;
> Farmers cooperatives;
> Energy-cooperation's in which businesses and/or residents together own and operate sustainable energy sources;
> Co-lab office spaces, incubators, start-ups;
> Forms of temporary use in abandoned buildings.

Regional differences

With regards to national and regional rules and regulations stimulating ABCEs, the differences between the regions are considerable. In the Netherlands and the UK, the BID-regulation is specifically aimed at ABCEs. In the regions Varaždin–Čakovec, Vilnius and Athens, collective entrepreneurship is not new in terms of organizational form; however not much is organized yet on a policy level, both national and local. On the other hand, Croatia (Varaždin–Čakovec) has a long history of cooperatives, which is a form of collective entrepreneurship. Although co-operative and collective entrepreneurship was compromised under communism, a new legal framework for cooperatives was adopted after Croatia's independence in 1991 with the aim to revive cooperatives and co-operative entrepreneurship. Moreover, Latvia seems to have the most comprehensive national policy scheme in providing area-based support to SMEs support via Business Information Centers. (Art) Incubators and Science and Technology Parks.

In the Netherlands, Athens and in the UK, some policy instruments are interesting for collective social enterprises. In the Netherlands, social enterprises are on the rise, mostly civil initiatives in rural areas. In the UK, social enterprises have had a longer history and have been a result of stringent austerity measures, introducing the 'Big society' policy approach.

For Athens, Manchester and Vilnius, there are some opportunities with regard to funding for (regional) clusters. However, much of these policies are very top down, spatially oriented and focus on public private partnerships. There are some ERDF-funded projects regarding integrated territorial investment (ITI) for Athens, Amsterdam and Vilnius. ABCEs initiatives in the UK and the Netherlands may use the BID-law, which enables entrepreneurs and/or property owners to jointly invest in their business environment. This is an interesting instrument in stimulating ABCEs but it requires specific government action and regulations.

2.5 Conclusion

Different legal, financial, social, and governance structures are applied in the five participating countries that largely depend on existing historical, cultural, economic and governance settings At the national level, there are hardly any identifiable concrete instruments specifically aimed at promoting collective entrepreneurship, with the exception of BID-legislation in Netherlands and UK.

Often ABCEs is considered an effective means for regeneration of deprived neighbourhoods, both top-down or bottom-up organized. In Amsterdam there is a strong focus on stimulation of self-governance of neighbourhoods, while in Athens ABCEs is more a means to make a smooth shift from the old to the new economy. In countries like Croatia and Lithuania, on the other hand, ABCEs is regarded as an effective instrument for creating site specific collective ownership by converting abandoned buildings and former industrial areas, often without clear ownership.

Following our characterizations of the contexts of ABCEs in the different regions, in the next chapter we will turn to the specific cases in the 5 regions and their collaborative governance arrangements.

3. ABCEs: the case study analysis

3.1 Introduction

To stimulate interregional learning about collective entrepreneurship, it is not only important to summarize the current situation regarding ABCEs in terms of relevant policies, ambitions and barriers, but also to analyse actual collectives to better understand how actors collaborate and what their most important lessons learned are. In this chapter we thus look at the collaborative process (i.e. how stakeholders interact) and collaborative product (i.e. what was established) in the 16 case studies of the five partner regions. We argue that the city is a common good or a ***commons***, i.e. a shared resource that belongs to all of its inhabitants, and to the public more generally. In particular, we will have a closer look at the collaborative governance arrangements of ABCEs, and their relationship with public authorities.

3.2 Characteristics of the ABCEs cases

In total 16 cases in five regions, i.e. Athens, Vilnius, Manchester, Varazdin-Čakovec and Amsterdam, were studied by the ABCitiEs project. All regions have a distinct history, state of play, and policy approach with regards to entrepreneurs and in some cases to collectives. No region is the same, and no collective is the same as we understood from chapter 2; this makes regional comparison a considerable challenge. First, we will give an overview of the regions and their particular cases.

3.2.1 Varaždin - Čakovec

Varaždin and Čakovec, two connecting towns in Croatia, are altogether unfamiliar with entrepreneurship collaborations and collectives. Their 6 cases, (i.e. ***Centre for Creative Industries***, ***City Room***, ***Varaždin House***, and ***Urban Research Factory*** in Varaždin, and ***City Market*** and ***MTC Complex*** in Čakovec), are located at largely neglected locations and buildings which need to be reconstructed and revitalized by the city administration[6]. These spaces are often mentioned in the public and in media, and the local community is seeking to bring them to a useful purpose. Different ideas abound but the ultimate purpose of these spaces and locations remains undetermined. There are also reconstruction plans for some spaces, but there is no funding for renovation and putting this into operation. Given the above, it is understandable that there are no known collectives operating in these spaces at the time of writing.

3.2.2 Vilnius

Vilnius, capital of Lithuania, selected 2 cases for further analysis: ***Vilnius Tech Park***, and ***Užupis***. The first, Vilnius Tech park was established in 2016 and is used by the Antakalnis community for ***City Lab***activities called 'Miesto laboratorija or '***City Laboratory***'. Antakalnis is a Vilnius city district located northeast of the city centre. It was one of the first Vilnius suburbs established in the mid of 17th century.

Vilnius Tech Park

Two developments contributed to the Antakalnis development of collectives. The first signs of a commons were the urban garden project initiated by the small community of Antakalnis in 2013. Later, the same community has been a part of the on-going development phase when the local hospital transferred to new premises. This was a private investment in partnership with Vilnius City Municipality to refurbish the existing Sapieha park, the old hospital buildings and its buildings with spaces for small companies.

6 Exceptions are the Urban Research Factory, actually a virtual collective in Varaždin, and the City Market in Čakovec, which is now functioning, but should change location.

At present, the reconstructed area is managed by 'Vilnius Tech Park', which serves mainly as an IT start-up hub in Vilnius that unites tech companies, VCs, accelerators, incubators, and other ecosystem players. In 2018 alone the '***City Lab***' organized more than 200 events with at least 9,000 visitors.

Užupis Art Incubator

The second case is the ***Užupis Art Incubator*** (UAI), which is closely intertwined with the 'Republic of Užupis'. The UAI is a public institution physically located in Užupis. Užupis itself is one of the districts of Vilnius Old Town that has around 7,000 inhabitants. In Soviet times, Užupis was an abandoned territory. Presently it is known as an artist district, popular among tourists, having many cafés, shops, restaurants, and artistic workshops. The idea of the Republic of Užupis was born in 1997. It is mainly an idea rooted in the collective consciousness, resulting in a social network with large number of persons who do not necessarily live or work within the geographic borders of the Užupis area.

Vilnius city municipality supported the idea of UAI, in order to foster social, cultural, and economic development in the district. Currently, the main concern of Užupis is the rapid district gentrification. There is a need of new vision of how newly arrived residents and new businesses could contribute to Užupis development.

3.2.3 Athens

Athens, capital of Greece, also selected two case studies: ***Kypseli Municipal Market***, and ***Aiolou street***.

Kypseli Municipal Market

The first, ***Kypseli Municipal Market*** has been in operation as a traditional food market from the early 1930s until 2003 when it closed down due to competition by the supermarkets and construction problems of the building. After being threatened with demolition, saved by interventions and protests, and a period in which it operated as a meeting point for a squatting community, the municipality refurbished the building with EU funds.

Since September 2018, the market is in full operation with eight social enterprises, several services, and a municipal one-stop-shop for citizens to get assistance in bureaucratic issues. Main concern of the majority of users is the low number of daily users of the market, and the lack of coherence among the shops.

Aiolou street

The shared resource that is managed around the second case, ***Aiolou street***, is the local public space in the form of pedestrianized streets and squares. Such a shared resource, which is in dire absence in Athens, ought to be in good condition and allow different activities to flourish and different users to take advantage of it. Retail business and other economic activities, however, nowadays need to survive in a business environment that is by Greek standards both unknown and hostile. The symbiosis between the old (arts and crafts) and new (tourism) businesses is not easy.

3.2.4 Manchester

The case study for Manchester, one of the major cities in the UK, also focuses on two cases: ***Withington*** and ***Gorton District Centre***.

Withington Village Regeneration Partnership

Withington district centre is a product of life in a city centre: home to a transient student population, and existing around a major commuter thoroughfare. As such there is much to improve about its appearance. At the same time, there is a strong historical narrative in ***Withington***: the original home of Factory Records, the Manchester record label famous for producing bands such as Joy Division/New Order and the Happy Mondays.

The ***Withington*** Village Regeneration Partnership (WVRP) is a public/private/community collaboration set up in 2017, with a vision to progress the regeneration and environmental improvement of ***Withington*** Village. The group was formed in 2015 to save the local '***Withington*** baths' from closure. After a community campaign to take control of the building and the baths within, the Council ceded control and

Withington Baths, Manchester

scrapped plans to close the building, which was handed over and is now managed by and for the community. Due to the efforts of WVRP, *Withington* district centre is rapidly becoming one of the more desirable locales in the Manchester city region**.**

Gorton District Centre

The **Gorton** case study provides an overview of **Gorton** district centre. It presents **Gorton** as a place with multicultural vibrance, but also as a district that boasts the highest number of recorded crimes in Manchester (MCC, 4 2018), and is among the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country in terms of crime deprivation (IMD, 2019).

The centre is cut in half by Hyde Road, which is busy with traffic. As such there is no real central hub that tells visitors they have arrived in **Gorton**. There are independent traders along Hyde Road who appear to be working in isolation from one another, not offering a consistent place image. In terms of future developments, a pioneering multi-service health and community hub is planned for the heart of the centre, which will bring together a partnership of public sector organisations, including Manchester City Council, health and social care partners, and housing and community service providers. At present, there are some governance issues in **Gorton**, as there are no channels in place to bring stakeholders together and encourage collaborative working. For example, there is no Trader's Association in the centre bringing the retailers together around a shared vision or strategy.

3.2.5 Amsterdam

In Amsterdam, capital of the Netherlands, we selected four cases: *Plein '40-'45*, *Ik Geef om de Jan Eef*, *Noorderpark Onderneemt*, and *Knowledge Mile*.

Plein '40-'45

Plein '40-'45 is a square in the borough New West in the city of Amsterdam. Market vendors on **Plein '40-'45** in Amsterdam are taking the initiative to self-organise a waste processing system that is fit to the local context and aims to

minimise dissipation and maximise recycling and re-use (see **Example 1** on p. 4-5). Their ambition is to achieve this goal in collaboration with the municipality and other organisations. Important lessons may also be learned from the historic case of ***Ik Geef om de Jan Eef*** ('I Care about the Jan Eef') in the Jan Evertsenstraat in Amsterdam, which is a shopping street in the Baarsjes, a neighbourhood in the borough West in Amsterdam. This case study gives an impression of a group of residents initiating collective regeneration of a shopping street and analyses the proceedings in terms of collaborative governance for the urban commons. The collective fell apart after 7 years: although the involved parties did jointly develop a form of collaboration, they never really synchronized their workflow and formalised their mutual commitment for a strong form of collaborative governance.

Noorderpark Onderneemt

Noorderpark Onderneemt is a trust and entrepreneurship collective focusing on the redevelopment and revival of the Noorderpark area in the Northern part of Amsterdam. The Noorderpark trust consists of a small management team and a board of residents from the surrounding neighbourhoods and is completely funded by local, national and EU subsidies. Among other funds, structural funds were found in a European EFRO subsidy programme. The subsidy was awarded within the Business Climate pillar of the Dutch EFRO program. This resulted in a stronger focus on real estate development and on entrepreneurship development. The entrepreneurship collective was organized around entrepreneurial support activities for this network. Due to its structure, raising structural funding remains a constant challenge.

Knowledge Mile

The initiative to develop the ***Knowledge Mile*** in Amsterdam was taken in 2015 by the dean of the faculty of Digital Media & Creative Industry, located at the central Amstel Campus of the Amsterdam University of Applied Studies (AUAS). The faculty had received extra funding from a national programme to set up a "centre of expertise". Following discussions how to connect the universities' activities to urban challenges – in line with AUAS strategy – the idea was born to develop deeper and more long-term relations with agents in the direct vicinity of the campus. The vision behind this was, firstly, to turn the area into a living lab enabling AUAS students, teachers and researchers to engage with actors in the area for research or education projects; secondly, to collectively develop the area into a more attractive street.

The Weesperstraat and Wibautstraat, the two streets that underlay the ***Knowledge Mile***, play host to a wide variety of companies and organisations ranging from retail, hotels, restaurants, and car repair shops, to advanced service providers, and public institutions. This was also seen to fit the academic diversity of the AUAS faculties. A BIZ was set up in 2016, which widened the relations within the collective. So far, the collective has been successful in marketing the area, but important challenge is keeping all parties involved and creating co-ownership.

3.3 The collaborative governance arrangements

Although regions have come to different forms of collaboration for different purposes, all ABCEs examples have had specific reasons to come to some form of collective action in their neighbourhood. In the following section, their reasons and collaborative governance arrangements will be discussed in more detail in order to get a better understanding of the stakeholders and the collective action situations. By doing this, we hope to get a better understanding of the different forms of collaborations, and to what extent they require government involvement.

3.3.1 Bottom-up versus top-down

The case studies that have been analysed for the project will each give a detailed description of the collective action, collaborative process, and collaborative result achieved in different settings. Here, we focus in more detail on the collaborative government arrangements of the different cases under study.

In order to frame reasons for collective action of ABCEs in neighbourhoods, we make a distinction between ABCE collectives that started their collaboration bottom-up, often with defensive/reactive motives, and ABCEs that originated from top-down

Noorderpark, Amsterdam

intervention in neighbourhoods, generally with more offensive/opportunity driven motives. We are aware that collectives are never static, but rather shift positions from defence to opportunity and vice versa. In ideal situations, defensive/reactive ABCEs turn into offensive/opportunity driven ABCEs at some point, as in the case of ***Užupis Art Incubator*** for example, but sometimes ABCEs fail and the cooperation falls apart, like in the case of ***JanEef***, and are revived again in a later stage in another form. We nevertheless use this distinction, because it gives some additional insight into why and how stakeholders interact and cooperate and, in particular, the role of the government in these collaborations.

3.3.2 Defensive/reactive versus offensive/opportunity driven

Defensive/reactive collectives are created in reaction to a perceived problem in the area that negatively affects the businesses: revitalisation, repurpose empty buildings, fight gentrification, and/or tackle physical deterioration in a neighbourhood. This can be as a response to a sudden dramatic event that works as a catalyst to unite actors (examples: a murder in the 'Jan Evertsenstraat'; the closing of the baths in ***Withington***); but it can also be in response to a persistent perceived problem (for example, revitalising empty buildings in Varazdin; the creation of collective in ***Aiolou street*** in Athens to tackle touristification/gentrification. Užupis was also driven by defensive motivation at its start-up fase. Artists moved to abandoned buildings near Vilnius Academy of Arts, and it was the nucleus of Užupis art district. In the case of dramatic events, the initiative to mobilise a collective is usually taken by individuals who are concerned, angry, or most affected by the problem, and manage to mobilise a larger group of like-minded business owners to take action together.

An offensive/opportunity driven motivation is when a collective is initiated by participants who reach synergies by benefitting from each other's resources or share facilities often with the help of some form of government or private funding. This can be on the level of a single building (co-working space, living labs) or on a wider spatial scale such as streets, science parks, or the creation of free space for artists/creative firms (for example, Užupis, at the time when ***Užupis Art Incubator*** was established).

The initiative is taken by individuals or organisations who recognize the opportunity and manage to find a way to mobilise partners. The reason can be a joint social challenge, i.e. greening the neighbourhood or revitalization of a market, street of shopping centre, or a more economic challenge, i.e. setting up living labs (for example, ***City Lab***), seeing opportunities to use empty buildings (Varaždin-Čakovec), creating co-working spaces, or innovation network hubs where entrepreneurs are supported to exploit mutual synergies. Opportunity driven collectives can be subdivided into social/ public oriented initiatives, and more economically oriented cooperation.
In the next section, we will explain more about the collaborative government arrangements of our 16 case studies and we provide insight into their collaboration processes and sometimes products or results of their collaborations.

3.4 The collaborative process and product

Table 2 shows an overview of the 16 cases: how they interact and cooperate, and what was established as a result of the cooperation.

3.4.1 Bottom-up initiatives

In total 5 cases can be classified as bottom-up initiatives, often with defensive/ reactive motives, i.e. ***Withington, Ik geef om de Jan Eef, Užupis, City Lab*** and ***Plein '40-'45***.

Withington

In ***Withington***, in 2015, the local ***Withington*** baths were saved from closure. After a community campaign to take control of the building and the baths within, the Council ceded control and scrapped plans to close the building, which was handed over and is now managed by and for the community. Having saved the baths from closure, the group have transformed them into an important community hub, and now continues to make strides in the centre through other initiatives. They can now instigate real structural change in their centre, liaising with the City Council to effect planning decisions, securing funding for physical regeneration, and organising to submit bids for significant funding from national Government. As such, they are a model for organised, collective community action.

Management of stakeholders and balancing individual interests is their most important challenge, besides securing necessary funding, ensuring that the group stays together, and keeping people motivated to stay involved. In particular, the following features of the practice can be interesting for other regions: the mix of stakeholders, i.e. not only retail businesses, but a broad variety of players; the range of interventions enacted by group, from the small-scale to the strategic; the relationship with local authority, and communication lines between two parties.

Ik geef om de Jan Eef (JanEef)

Ik geef om de Jan Eef began with a tragedy: on Thursday 7 October 2010, a local jeweller was shot dead in his shop during a robbery in broad daylight. In that period the shopping street was a place 'where you wouldn't want to walk alone at night'. After that dark day in the history of the neighbourhood, four residents, having known each other for a couple of years through the school of their children, decided they need to take action. They forged a community that embraced the forgotten shopping street around the corner, favouring local shopping, and thereby creating the economic basis for positive change.

Essential for the success of ***Ik Geef om de Jan Eef*** was the way in which it was an open initiative that was shaped by the participants through their contributions. The possibility to bring in own ideas and thereby co-decide on the course of the initiative was a crucial element for a shared sense of ownership to emerge. This also proved to be a pitfall: when the initiative turned to further professionalization and institutionalization for qualitative improvement and sustainability, the openness was partly sacrificed and the shared ownership eroded.

The initiative of ***Ik Geef om de Jan Eef*** started in 2010 and lasted until 2017. In that time, it went through different phases of development and each period had its own challenges and opportunities. Although the involved parties jointly developed strong collaborations, they never really synchronised their workflow and formalised their mutual commitment for a strong form of collaborative governance to be able to

evolve. An important lesson to learn is the necessity to develop joint processes and rhythm according to the needs and desires of its community.

Užupis Art Incubator

The history of ***Užupis Art Incubator*** is closely related to revival and development of Užupis district. During the Soviet times, Užupis was dilapidated and dangerous place, full of hooligans, thieves and alcoholics. After the collapse of the Soviet regime in 1991, the students from the Art Academy began to squat the abandoned buildings in the neighbourhood. In 1994, Užupis was included in the UNESCO World Heritage List. Since then a lot of projects were initiated by the Užupis community to revitalize and promote the district. For example, in 1997 the informal Republic of Užupis was established. The *Užupis Art Incubator* is the first art incubator in the Baltic States, established in 2002.

Užupis Art Incubator provides open studios for artists and creative entrepreneurs, organizes different events, public display of creative processes. excursions, Užupis cinema, education of the Užupis community and its visitors, etc. Since 2016, ***Užupis Art Incubator*** receives annual municipal grants from the Vilnius City Municipality. Vilnius City Municipality is also responsible for the maintenance and development of public infrastructure and for the maintenance of public spaces. For example, projects have been carried out to renovate the buildings where ***Užupis Art Incubator*** is located. Leasing or transfer of premises is one of the municipal policy measures that can influence the management of common pool resources.

Antakalnis City Lab

The idea of ***City Lab*** came along with the 'Urban garden' initiative in Sapieha Park, in Antakalnis. After several years of growing vegetables together in the community greenhouse, locals realized that they share similar values and interests – community sense, a love for nature, for a more sustainable and environmentally friendly lifestyle. They started organizing various open and educational events for the local community: Neighbours Day, Harvest Festival, Restaurant Day, Christmas Wreath Workshop, finally Christmas Fair at Sapieha Park.

Today, the ***City Lab*** has a formal status as a non-profit public entity 'Miesto laboratorija'. The community-based ***City Lab*** café not only brings people together for lunch or coffee, but also keeps projects financially viable, reinvesting all of its profits in community service and environmental education. The biggest asset and support of the *City Lab* is its local people, the Antakalnis community. They haven't just helped to refurbish the City Lab locale with their own hands, but are still actively involved in its development. The City Lab is now an open space for many common initiatives: from open-mic concerts to lectures on co-city essentials, from literary evenings to gardening workshops. Unlike the other cases mentioned, this case is an example of an initiative that is bottom-up organized, and that isn't defensive/ reactive but rather offensive/ opportunity driven from the start.

Plein '40-'45

Plein '40-'45 is the central square of the areas Slotermeer and Geuzenveld in the western part of Amsterdam. The area is one of the city's poorest. The square itself is used five days a week for a street market. Litter and waste are two major problems. The use of plastic bags and packaging is exorbitant and a large share of it ends up on the street. Also, the market produces an enormous amount of waste each day. While the municipality appointed the quality of the square and the waste problem as a priority, also a group of entrepreneurs have stepped up to take responsibility and try to address this issue through organizing a collective approach. One of the ambitions of the collective is to organize an alternative waste processing system. In this ambition they are dependent on collaborating with the government, for example for permits, space, facilities and adjusting the levy system. One of the main obstacles, however, is the collaboration between stakeholders that hold different worldviews and speak their own (professional) language. Entrepreneurs, civil servants, residents, they all have their own particular way of understanding, going about and communicating. However, for the entrepreneurs, collaboration is impossible without key stakeholders such as the Market Bureau of the municipality of Amsterdam.

3.4.2 Top-down initiatives

In total 11 cases can be classified as more top-down initiated, opportunity-driven collectives from the start: ***Aiolou street, Kypseli Municipal Market, Knowledge Mile***, ***Noorderpark Onderneemt***, ***MTČ Complex***, ***City Market***, ***Gorton District***, ***Varaždin House***, ***City Room***, ***Centre for Creative Industries***, and ***Urban Research Factory***.

Aiolou street

Aiolou street and the FOTA collective is a spin-off that voluntarily came out of the most recent processes of 'revitalization' of Athens' downtown. Since 2016, there have been efforts by the Athens Trigono (Triangle), a non-for-profit organization funded by the Stavros Niarhos Foundation in collaboration with the Athens Municipality to create a better quality public space with more pedestrian streets and less cars.

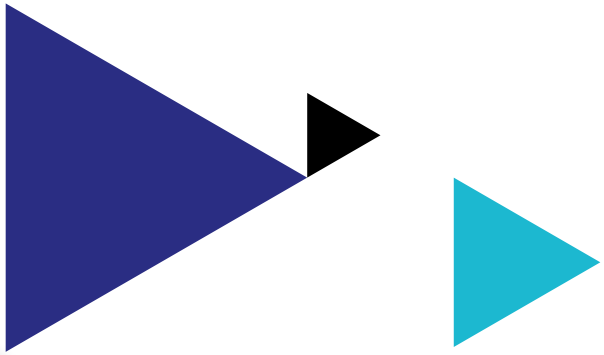
As the program ended in June 2019, the FOTA collective took over as an association (and since February 2020 a non-profit organization) of local businesses, entrepreneurs, residents and other stakeholders. In a city (Athens) where there initiatives to bring together local businesses are few, the FOTA collective is a welcome development. As argued, it is a collective mostly representing entrepreneurs and shop owners with a stake in the area's future. It is definitely good that local businesses come together to create a common agenda through dialogue and to find ways to efficiently communicate their demands to the municipal authorities. Most important challenges faced by the collective are a lack of cooperation with the (national, regional, local) authorities, absence of a legal and regulatory framework, and suspicion on behalf of the neighbourhood residents and businesses.

Kypseli Municipal Market

Kypseli Municipal Market was threatened with demolition that was prevented by interventions and protests. The municipality refurbished the building by EU funds. The owner, the municipality of Athens, handed over the management and responsibility to an NGO (Impact Hub) for a period of five years. The initial intention, both of the municipality but also of the managing team is to re-establish the Market as an open meeting point for the neighbourhood.

The Kypseli Market experiment can be seen as a unique case that could provide interesting outcomes regarding the ways a public building can be managed, regarding the operation of a small cluster of social entrepreneurs and regarding the dynamism that such forms of use create to the neighbourhood. The main concern for the majority of users is the low number of daily visitors of the market. Several users have mentioned that both the small number and the lack of coherence among the shops do not motivate the public to visit the market. The management team has organized a series of 45 events as a means to promote the re-opening. The events attract a diverse crowd that often comes from other areas of the city centre or the suburbs.

It has been noticed and commented by several stakeholders however that the majority of the immigrant population doesn't use the Market. Especially if the dynamics of Kypseli are taken into account, mitigating tensions could be seen as one of the key challenges of the collective. Entrepreneurs that act as brokers through their bridging role between cultures and economic backgrounds are probably the most important asset of a market or a shopping street. The key challenge is, therefore, to be able to support them.



Knowledge Mile

Knowledge Mile (KM) is situated in a wide, traffic-intense street going into the inner city of Amsterdam, and nominated 'the ugliest street in Amsterdam' on a number of occasions. There were a number of resident organizations that lobbied for a cleaner and greener street, but businesses operated relatively solitary. Despite these adverse circumstances, an active and growing collective has emerged that aims to transform and reframe, rebrand and rename Wibautstraat and Weesperstraat. After a pioneering stage, the KM team took the initiative to institutionalize the KM into a BIZ (business investment zone[7]), a concept similar to the BID (business improvement district) in the United Kingdom. This was mid-2016. As such, the KM has evolved from a local living lab into a hybrid between a BID, a city marketing concept, a living lab (a lot of smart-city like innovation projects are done by students and research teams in the street), and an organized business community.

One of the larger initiatives undertaken by the KM is the development of ***Knowledge Mile*** Park, a project aimed to provide more green space in the area. This has been a consistent desire with resident organizations even before the ***Knowledge Mile*** existed, and has led to a number of small interventions in the past. Since ***Knowledge Mile*** Park was initiated by resident organizations, it is often referred to as a bottom-up initiative. At some point, however, it became highly embedded within the local government. The project is government-led, but collectively shaped, which has created a risk of hold-out behaviour.

Noorderpark Onderneemt

The ***Noorderpark*** area is originally a development area, and its organization is completely funded by subsidies. Gaining and keeping access to funding has been a continuous struggle for the Noorderpark trust of ***Noorderpark Onderneemt***, but a struggle it has successfully overcome on different occasions. It has become something the trust's professional team has specialized in. A number of times, the trust had to adjust their goals and narrative considerably to match the current priorities at the municipal government. Moreover, being active on different policy domains, the organization needed to stay in touch with a large network of civil servants operating in different fields.

In 2017, Noorderpark trust was awarded a triennial umbrella subsidy of € 135,000 a year for the costs for the services and activities in the Noorderpark by the municipality of Amsterdam. When the experiment ended, new structural funds were found in a European EFRO subsidy. This resulted in a stronger focus on real estate development and on entrepreneurship development. The strength of the organization seems to lie in its strong, professional leadership and close ties to the local government.

Both the Noorderpark trust as well as the entrepreneur collective exist by the grace of professional intermediaries. However, both the trust team as well as the social managers were professionals from outside the neighbourhood, who have been specifically recruited to further develop the initiative. They have specialized in gaining access to funds and mediating between residents and policymakers. This has opened a lot of opportunities to organize local activities. For the entrepreneurs, however, it has not managed to create a sense of ownership or commitment to the park itself. The entrepreneur collective has definitely been a positive network that assisted local entrepreneurs, but it seems a collective in name rather than in practice.

7 Under Dutch law, a BIZ is a delineated urban area (a street, square or business park) in which entrepreneurs and/or real estate owners invest together in the quality of their business environment. All businesses in the BIZ contribute financially. To create a BIZ, companies need to present a plan, outlining the activities and required budgets. If the city agrees with the plan, and if there is enough support among the businesses and/or owners, the city council imposes (and collects) a levy for all companies and owners in the area (BIZ-fee), to prevent freeriding. The revenue is the made available to the BIZ organization as a subsidy.

MTČ Complex

MTČ Complex is a former industrial facility in the city Centre of Čakovec, Croatia. For various reasons, the former industry collapsed, and space and facilities changed owners. It is now private property. The space has been abandoned and partially destroyed. Various options are open, among other things some arrangement between the City and the private owner. Ideas for reconstruction range from a new shopping, business, and residential Centre with a market in the existing buildings, a mixed-use space that forms an extension of the city Centre, and a community Centre with associated facilities. This site will be considered and subject to implementation only if, in the foreseeable future, and certainly until the implementation of the ABCitiEs project, the ownership of the space is resolved so that it becomes a public space. Otherwise, the implementation of an ABCE will be attempted at another nearby location.

Kypseli Market, Athens

City Market is a kind of informal collective where merchants, farmers, food producers and the city-owned market management company share some common goals and interests, undertake common activities and share common values. However, at the time of writing market activities are set to move to another location. The City Market space is partly owned by the city and the business premises are mostly privately owned. This is the moment when new ideas about how to use this space need to be articulated and implemented. The owners of small business premises make one potential collective. If this whole area is abandoned and collapses after the market is relocated, their business premises will lose value. Their natural interest is an entrepreneurial collective that could jointly and in collaboration with other stakeholders determine the new purpose of the area. The ABCitiEs project can help articulate ideas, gather stakeholders, and mediation as needed, clearly if key stakeholders recognize this opportunity. In any case, positive examples of collective entrepreneurship in Čakovec, such as the Međimurski štacun (healthy food from local farmers) or Humana Nova (social entrepreneurship), can be good interlocutors.

Gorton District

Gorton District was subject to mass redevelopment in the 1960s and 1970s, leading to mass clearances of housing and a loss of the traditional high street to make way for a road widening scheme. The area was particularly affected by deindustrialization and the closure of the nearby Belle Vue theme park. The local catchment population is amongst the most deprived in the UK, and the area has attracted little interest from private developers and investors, unlike other parts of the city. The centre has consequently shrunk – leaving a small concentration of shops, anchored by a large grocery store and market hall. The community is served well by third sector and voluntary organisations. Intervention in this area however has largely been focused on social outcomes, rather than business and entrepreneurial support. Although development is restricted by the highway, the centre does possess ample open space in public control, which offers the opportunity to reinvent the centre as a community hub. In addition, there are opportunities concerning the market hall, where more flexible and innovative uses

might encourage new entrepreneurs to diversify the centre offer. However, there are currently no place management structures in place, and little engagement with the business community.

Varaždin House

Varaždin House is a case in development, with the goal to explore the possibility and formulate ideas of collective enterprise in small services or production. The ABCE would be based on shared space and infrastructure where different SMEs in the arts and crafts share space, for example traditional services (e.g. repair shop for household appliances, tailoring, personal services, etc.), and services based on new technologies and hospitality.

The idea is to create a dynamic, open and attractive space for providing services, as well as a meeting and information point for tourists. The aim is also to draw local residents back to the city centre, to use these kinds of services. Many craftsman workshops in the city centre have closed down, rents are too high for individual entrepreneurs: maybe a community service centre would be a good solution. The individual entrepreneurs would work there part-time, sharing equipment and other infrastructure. Rights, conditions and responsibilities should be regulated by agreements.

City Room

Related to this case is the ***City Room***, an abandoned space in the lobby of Varaždin city's Gaj Cinema. After the renovation, this can become a multifunctional / modular space for social cohesion, various events and collaboration of citizens, entrepreneurs, students and visitors. As far as collective entrepreneurship is concerned, space and equipment should enable thematic groupings of people connected with the same goal of interest or activity, such as lectures, presentations, and workshops.

Centre for Creative Industries

Initiatives for a ***Centre for Creative Industries*** (CKI) were launched in in 2009, when the City of Varaždin reconstructed a building in an abandoned complex of military bakeries (about 500 m2), with the intention of developing the CKI. The task was entrusted to the Varaždin Technology Park (TPV) with the idea that the creative industries were brought together and organized on the model of TPV tenants. Although the project was poorly designed, with no funding sources, TPV has devised a process of incubating creative projects and supporting tenants. TPV has now taken over the activities of reconstruction and decorating space, branding and promotion, providing art mentors and supporting residents at fairs and other events. The CKI is currently planned to be situated in the former Kino Dom, which the City of Varaždin currently intends to reconstruct. It should be the place for collectives and SMEs in creative industries such as multimedia, sound design, design and web design - therefore the creative industries that are touching the ICT sector. The project has defined parameters, building permits and needs to be implemented after setting the financial construction. It can be expected that the new space could reconnect tenants from the former CKI, who moved to other offices in the city or found temporary accommodation at a Youth Center near Kino Dom, as well as some entrepreneurs from the Technology Park who are in the area of creative industries.

Urban Research Factory

The **Urban Research Factory** (URF) is a virtual factory, whose "workers" and users can operate in any physical space in the city centre. The Faculty of Organization and Informatics operates as the URF's headquarters. In current implementation, URF is based on the 'Internet of Things' discipline, attractive to both researchers, industry, as well as citizens due to great potential of penetration in various fields of living and environment.

A core component is a Coworking space that is equipped with basic equipment for software engineering and Internet of Things (IOT). The coworking space can be used by small and agile teams, visitors, tourists, students and high school students.

Rationale	Case	Spatial scale & context	Key narrative of the collective	Members of the collective	Legal form	Funding	Stage of development	Successes	Challenges
		Building, street, market, park, square, larger area		SMEs, municipalities, social institutions, residents, real estate agencies, etc.	Biz, Bid, foundation, cooperative, etc.	Member contributions, rent funded subsidy for intermediary, free space provision	Initiation, start-up, formalization, evaluation, maturity, finalization, re-start		
Defensive/ responsive									
..to a specific dramatic event	Withington District Centre	District centre in Manchester city region. South of city centre.	"Local people come together to save baths. Develop this into community hub that acts as a catalyst for further collaborative success"	Local authority, houding association, large hospital, community hub/ centre, civic society, local traders, residents		Private investment, crowd funding for specific activity	Formalisation/ evaluation	Saving Withington baths (now a successful business and community hub). Numerous successful events including evening markets. Buy-in and investment from local property associations and capacity to enact strategic development in this respect. Pilot town for national Govt High Street Task Force Programme	Continue progres to date, requirements for further funding, need to formalise to ensure longevity of partnerships

Rationale	Case	Spatial scale & context	Key narrative of the collective	Members of the collective	Legal form	Funding	Stage of development	Successes	Challenges
Defensive to a specific dramatic event and pro-active towards a communal spirit and positive change at the same time	Ik Geef om de Jan Eef, Jan Evertsenstraat, Amsterdam (murder of a jeweller)	Retail street in a distressed neighborhood with gentrification at later stage	"We broke the negative spiral of violence and degradation in this street"	SMEs, residents, municipality. Self-employed creatives	(shopping street) Association and Business Investment Zone (BIZ)	Municipal investments, subsidy, member contributions	Ended, restarted an entrepreneurship collective	Decrease of vacant shop premisses, joint enthusiasm and sense of community, upgrade of the available shop concepts, decrease of criminality, increase of experienced safety and liveability	Maintaining the openness and shared ownership of initiative while professionalising, managing a sense of community, aligning governmental processes, protocols and culture with that of social initiatives in the form of collaborative governance
..to a "slow threat"	Aiolou street, Athens (degradation, touristification)	Commercial street in a distressed central area under rapid touristification	TBD	[collective does not really exist]	None		Initiation		Conflicting goals of two (main) groups of stakeholders
	Kypseli Municipal Market (degradation)	Covered market in a disressed neighborhood	"We bring new life and activity in this deprived area"	Social enterprises, NGOs, municipality	None	Asset renovated by ERDF funds, rent subsidised by municipality	Initiation	Openness, Organisation of events	Low footfall, limited awareness of existence of the market

Rationale	Case	Spatial scale & context	Key narrative of the collective	Members of the collective	Legal form	Funding	Stage of development	Successes	Challenges
	Centre for creative industries, Varazdin	Dilapidated building in city centre – rebuilding of former cinema in city centre (1400 m2) with sales-exhibition space in lobby, polyvalent hall for public gatherings and film projections and co-working space	"We create a place for creative industries close to ICT sector and make new concepts with co-working spaces"	Policy executives: City of Varaždin, development agency DAN, technology park Entrepreneurs/ users: Entrepreneurs in Cis (SMEs, crafts, artists, digital nomads, project teams), clients, visitors, craftsmanship association, tenants of the technology park Other experts: Media, general public, catalysts (chamber of commerce, association of architects of Varaždin), cultural heritage office, managers of ongoing and future projects	Currently, informal cooperation within the former Centre in Technology Park, in the future this will be a legal entity		Planning – plan is to move an existing collective here that is currently located in another inadequate premise in the city, and management concept for the new legal entity (creating rules and procedures for the use of space, and find common goals for users of CKI)	Currently, building is redesigned for the creative industries centre. Project is developed by DIA d.o.o.1 and City of Varaždin. Building permit is issued in 2018/ 2019. Project needs to be implemented after setting the financial construction.	Funding for rebuilding.

Rationale	Case	Spatial scale & context	Key narrative of the collective	Members of the collective	Legal form	Funding	Stage of development	Successes	Challenges
Defensive to harming policies; responsive to failing institutions; responsive to a complaining neighborhood; pro-active improvement own environment and business opportunities	Plein 40-45, Amsterdam (degradation)	Market square in deprived neighborhood	"We will transform Plein 40-45 in one of the most attractive and plastic free and circular markets, and we do this with and for the consumers we have today"	Market vendors, restaurants, shops, residents, municipality	There is no legal form yet for the collective, but the market is subject to municipal regulation and formally has an adversory committee in this regard	Subsidy/ neighborhood budgetting, bussinesses	Nascent	Start of community, growing awareness of necessity of collaboration and shifting relations; political attention	Building a collective amongst market vendors; creating compatability between political and bureaucratic system of the municipality and the contextual solutions and pragmatic way of working of a 'self-organisation'; establishing collaborative governance through experimental learning environments
Opportunity driven									
Social/ public oriented	Užupis, Vilnius (an artistic 'republic')	Technically, Užupis is part of Vilnius Old city, and traditionally it is considered as a cosy hamlet inhabited by artists. In Soviet times, it was an abandoned territory	"This place should be for joy, hapiness and fun. We are Republic of Užupis, let's do it together"	Artists, permanent residents, business companies, entrepreneurs, Vilnius Municipality, Vilnius Academy of Arts, art galleries, church	Užupis republic is an informal institution with no legal form. However, the key actor Užupis Art Incubator is a public institution	Užupis Republic – donations and contributions; Užupis Art Incubator Vilnius Municipality and EU funding	Mature	Strong identity, old traditions, artistic spirit, creativity, international exposure	Gentrification, identity erosion, leadership succession

Rationale	Case	Spatial scale & context	Key narrative of the collective	Members of the collective	Legal form	Funding	Stage of development	Successes	Challenges
	Knowledge Mile, Amsterdam (Urban Living Lab)	Long, diverse main road with heavy traffic	"We dynamize and improve the most ugly street of Amsterdam"	Knowledge institutes, SMEs, large companies, municipality, social institutions, residents	Knowledge Mile community, BIZ	Stage 1: university funded team members Stage 2: BIZ funded	Formalization	Dedicated and professional team, strong marketing	Formalization process and in particular integrating goals of Living Lab and BIZ, ownership of local community, monitoring of results of BIZ
	Noorderpark Onderneemt, Amsterdam (ERDF subsidized project)	Park in distressed neigborhood	"We make this park into an attractive and empowering asset for the neighborhood"	Municipality, residents, social institutions, SMEs	Social enterprise (Noorderpark Trust)	ERDF subsidy Kansen voor West	Evaluation	Subsidy created momentum, professional organisation	Ownership local community, gaining access to new funding after ERDF funding stops

Rationale	Case	Spatial scale & context	Key narrative of the collective	Members of the collective	Legal form	Funding	Stage of development	Successes	Challenges
	City Market, Čakovec	Square in old part of town (after moving the old city market)	"We create a new and attractive square in the centre contact zone through a pilot project for collective economy in the pavilion surrounding the newly created square"	Town, municipality, residents, SMEs	Not yet existing	Local, national, EU funding after project is fully developed	Planning		To build trust between operating SMEs in the Pavilion around the new square; to find motivated team of people to implement new ideas. It is important to establish a connection with outdoor spaces (freed by the removal of city market), to revitalize the space of the roof terrace. Due to the size of the interior and exterior spaces, a combination of several different senarios is desirable and possible, which would further enliven the space. The public opinion must be examined before such decisions are made

Rationale	Case	Spatial scale & context	Key narrative of the collective	Members of the collective	Legal form	Funding	Stage of development	Successes	Challenges
	City room Varaždin	Former outer entrace hall of the ex cinema	"We create new multifunctional/ modular space for citizens, students, visitors, edicators with the possibility to work on laptops, hold presentations and lectures, organize workshops and thematic gatherings, read books, hang ou, talk about business and connect through different topics of interes with basic drinks and food service"	Policy executives: City of Varaždin Entrepreneurs/ users: open university, entrepreneurs in audiovisual industries, culture, tourism, education, organisation of social events, etc., Project teams, NGOs, clients, visitors (Other) experts: media, general public, cultural heritage office, executive managers, university, tourist board, association of architects, Varaždin	Not yet existing		Planning	Interested stakeholders – there is an aim of Varaždin City to reconstruct the space and put it in the proper function since it is abandoned and located in the city centre	The function of this space has not yet been defined so that the project could contribute to putting space into function. Financial construction/ source of founding is open.
	Gorton District Centre	District centre in Manchester city region. South-east of city centre	"Centre in need of improvement to improve vitality and viability. Developing local capacity and collaboration is key to this"	Low collaborative activity. Need to engage local stakeholders (including local authority, residents, business owners, property developers)	N/A	In-kind funding from local authority through neighborhood manager facilitation and coordination, and subscription to footfall data	Planning	Small-scale successes through limited collaboration need to be developed and built on	Collaboration is key, but capacity/ expertise and willingness to collaborate is a challenge. Capacity needs to be developed and nurtured

Rationale	Case	Spatial scale & context	Key narrative of the collective	Members of the collective	Legal form	Funding	Stage of development	Successes	Challenges
	City Lab (Miesto Laboratorija)	Sapiega Palace park is one of the oldest parks in Vilnius. North-east of the city centre in the district of Antakalnis	"We are an environmentally friendly educational community centre driven by love of nature and a healthy lifestyle"	Local residents of Antakalnis district, Vilnius TechPark residents	NGO	Vilnis Municipality, Kazickas Foundation, donations	Mature	City Lab has become the platform for numerous different community initiatives, from open-air concerts and exhibitions to gardening workshops	City Lab started as a private initiative by two young ladies, and is now expanding in terms of stakeholders and activities. Challenge to coordinate diverse projects
Economically oriented	Varaždin House, Varaždin (local products and services)	Old baroque house (cultural heritage) with the floor and courtyard in the city centre entitled Varaždin House by the Tourist Board	"Exploring the possibilities to formulate new ideas and ways of use of small/ traditional services or production and to create dynamic, open and attractive space for citizens and tourists"	Policy makers: Ministry of regional development and EU funds, Municipality of Varaždin, partner and advisory councils for the adoption of strategies Policy executives: City and county chambers of crafts, city of Varaždin, Tourist Board Entrepreneurs: crafts and services, cooperatives (Other experts): Media, general public, catalysts, heritage conservators, executive managers	Not yet existig		Planning	Recently, Brakus d.o.o. architects at the request of the city of Varaždin designed a project to reconstruct the building for multifunctional purpose. Building permit is issued in 2014. Project was started in 2014. Users and purpose if the single area project form have been revised	Project needs to be implemented after setting up financial construction

Rationale	Case	Spatial scale & context	Key narrative of the collective	Members of the collective	Legal form	Funding	Stage of development	Successes	Challenges
	MTČ COMPLEX, Čakovec	An area of 2.5 hectares in a significant location, the complex of the former MTČ factory has great potential for new spatial solutions for the city centre. The proposal deals with conversion of the MTČ hall into a business and recreation centre and the placement of content on a plug-in basis	"We create dynamic space of importance for young people, different artists and cultural organizations, interest associations, various thematically connected groups, volunteers and organizations involved in social entrepreneurship	Freelancers and start-ups from across the region, Public School of Animated Film, town, municipality, SMEs, artists, cultural organisations, interest associations, various thematically connected groups, volunteers and organisations involved in social entrepreneurship	In future – business complex, legal entity	National, EU funding	Planning		Being located in the heart of the city, with large exterior and interior areas, and significant in the memory of citizens as former factory. Further planning must be integral, transparent and careful. The decisions that will be made will have a significant impact on the quality of life in the centre as wel as throughout the city and county
	Urban Research Factory, Varaždin	Abandoned historical building near intersection of movement trajectories of students and citizens	"Science for general public" or "Make Science great again"	Scientific institution, SMEs, NGO, Municipality, citizens, students, high school students, digital nomads, project teams	Community cooperative	University funded, municipality funded, self-supporting (renting spaces)	Initiation	Brand, local and global recognition	Space ownership, location (needs to be close to key stakeholders)

Table 2. ABCEs case study overview

The Republic of Užupis, Vilnius

3.5 Conclusion

Overall, what the case studies show is that all ABCEs have some sort of relationship with local government, and sometimes even national or regional government. Governments are in many cases an important stakeholder, funding agent or bureaucracy that an ABCE needs to deal with. Relationship management with governments is therefore high on the agenda of almost all ABCEs. In this chapter, a subdivision was made between bottom-up versus top-down initiatives, often with either defensive/ reactive or opportunity driven motives. In this report, we regard them here as prototypical action situations.

We have made a distinction between top-down and bottom-up ABCEs because we believe that this aspect has an effect on their partnerships with the local government as well as on the collaborative process: bottom-up initiatives generally require more effort be made to convince local government of the benefits of the collective and their role in it. Top-down initiatives, on the other hand, tend to have more difficulties to involve the local community and to create a sense of ownership among stakeholders. We are aware though that, though we chose to distinguish prototypical action situations, it is important to consider that collectives are never static, but rather fluid and dynamic, shifting positions from defence to opportunity and vice versa.

This is also true for the relationship of ABCEs with their governments. ABCEs can be an effective means to achieve collective goals and ambitions, but it is important that all actors are actively involved. Ownership is essential, as well as a systemic view. Governments need to clearly indicate what they want to achieve and how they want to get there, but in order to get there, they also need to give room and support to bottom-up initiatives to accelerate and scale up. In the next chapter, we will dig deeper into this relationship between the local government and ABCEs and discuss the most important bottlenecks that we have come across, before we will propose policy actions in chapter 5.

4. Working with collectives: obstacles and policy themes

4.1 Introduction

In our cases we have seen collectives attempting to address different kinds of challenges through area-based collaborative entrepreneurship. In some cases, collectives aim to improve the economic vitality of the area they are situated in: by coordinating opening hours, for example, or by collectively investing in the quality of public space, by joint programming or by improving facilities through collaboration. In other cases, collectives are a strategy (or goal) for creating new economical spaces and networks. Some collectives come into existence as a reaction to a changing environment and socio-economic situation, such as gentrification or economic downfall. Others are the result of an intrinsic motivation to do things together or curiosity about new strategies to come to solutions. The origins and goals of collectives are various, and in many cases they are ambiguous as well: the above-mentioned aspects may overlap and coincide.

In all these different manifestations of collaborative entrepreneurship we do see similarities concerning the issues they encounter in their collaborative approach. In this chapter we want to elucidate these issues in the light of formulating supporting policies. More specifically, we try to find what the relationship is between the government and ABCEs, and how current regional policy instruments facilitate or hinder ABCEs, and how this can be improved.

4.2 Conceptualising ABCEs: urban commons and collaborative governance

Area-based collaborative entrepreneurship deviates in many ways from conventional mechanisms of local coordination – i.e. state control and the free market – in how it approaches societal challenge. The presence of an ABCE thus enriches the configuration of forces already present in the real-life situations we encountered: existing compositions of simultaneous different coordination mechanisms.

To illustrate: think of a shopping street, where supply is expected to follow demand through free market mechanisms. Governmental policies might simultaneously aim to stimulate specific lines of business, to protect vital social facilities or to regulate a recurring type of trade. Now, a shopkeepers' association might organise collective activities, such as in the form of joint marketing. Thus, although these factors and agents already communicate with each other and have come to their actions and measures in a certain degree of consultation and coordination, the principle of area-based collaborative entrepreneurship is that collaboration is emphasised and developed as a core strategy.

We have conceptualised this collaborative approach in terms of ***urban commons***, which is to say that we focus on the collaborative management of urban common resources by a community of stakeholders that organise this in a form of self-organisation (Bollier, 2014; Ostrom, 1990). We believe that an ABCE cannot thrive on SMEs alone: ideally it is a collaboration of a more diverse group of stakeholders that includes residents, real estate agencies, social institutions and municipalities.

In other words, we investigate if and how collaboration between different stakeholders can help in addressing the societal challenges that occur in their shared environment and that affect their individual businesses or activities. What is needed, for example, to revitalize a shopping street through collaboration between shopkeepers, residents, the municipality and other involved actors?

Knowledge Mile, Amsterdam

In academic discourse the concept of an ***urban commons*** is presented as a model for collaborative governance (Foster & Iaione, 2016). In collaborative governance, governmental organisations work together with societal stakeholders in a deliberative and consensus-oriented manner to approach problems of a public nature (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2012). The idea is that involving stakeholders leads to better-informed policies. Realising this involvement in a co-creative manner, in comparison to more traditional inquiry or participation for example, increases its effectiveness. Collaborative governance acknowledges the interdependency between the different actors and organisations to solve societal challenges, also through recognizing their autonomy.

Interdependency and autonomy coincide for a number of reasons particular to the urban context. Firstly, there is a high density of different kinds of usage of common resources in the city, by users that are all equally entitled to them. Secondly, ownership over adjacent resources that influence the quality and availability of the common resource is fragmented: shops, houses, public policy and even individual and group behaviour. Finally, politics and policy play a dominant role in how the public sphere is organised and therefore also have a high impact on how common resources are managed. Foster and Iaione (2016) argue for these reasons that the self-management of common resources by a group of stakeholders can only emerge through collaborative arrangements in which both private and public actors are involved.

We recognise this throughout the different cases that the ABCitiEs project is involved with. There is a widespread and continuous need to establish collaborative relationships. Entrepreneurs, social initiatives, residents, municipalities and civil

society organisations look out for each other and try to find ways to work together as they realize that they need other parties to realize their own goals. In some cases, this tendency is strongly present; in others it is emerging. Also, in some cases collaboration is realised in a successful manner while in others it appears to be difficult: full of challenges, or even failing. Factors of success and obstacles are context dependent, and too abundant to list, but we like to describe what we think are the key aspects that can be addressed through policy innovation.

4.3 Obstacles for collaboration: communal and systemic

There are many obstacles for collaboration. In general, we categorise these obstacles based on two different starting points.

4.3.1 Attributes of the community

The first type of obstacle takes the perspective of the attributes of the community. Collaboration is dependent on the interpersonal relationships within the community of stakeholders. In many of the cases in our project, relationships of trust are crucial for working together. A lack of trust has various reasons. In some cases - the not yet started collectives in Croatia are good examples - the involved stakeholders are hardly familiar with each other and have no shared history. Other cases are characterised by conflicts in the past and present however: a dominant factor in the Plein '40-'45 case in Amsterdam for example. In any case, investing in interpersonal relationships is a boon for successful collaboration. Not having them is an obstacle.

Another important aspect of the attributes of the community that determines the success or failure of collaboration, is the presence (or absence) of competences and capacities. Working together challenges actors to work in different ways and draws on talents they might not have had to use before. Stakeholders, for example, need to overcome possible conflicts of interests, or give up certain degrees of autonomy to make coordination a conceivable option. This is common for almost all our cases, but clearly recognized in the example of the Kypseli Market in Athens. Also, formulating shared goals and ambitions with a group of people requires different skills than doing this individually, and the same goes for co-designing solutions. This was and is again becoming a challenge for the Užupis case in Vilnius. When collaboration ***is*** realised, its sustainability is often dependent on the insight in the effects and results that contributors get. Appropriate managerial competences and instruments are thus crucial. The work in Manchester delivers important inspiration for this matter.

Moreover, collaborative activities are quite often complementary to the regular day-to-day activities of the individuals involved. Although effects are expected to yield a profit for individual stakeholders, the question remains how the collective activities are financed, who is to provide for the necessary means, and who has the operational capacity. So far, such questions are slowing down the developments in the Varaždin cases, for example. In Amsterdam, by contrast, institutional provision and support have proven to be effective in the start-up phase of initiatives. Moreover, collectives not seldomly serve the interests of people and organisations outside the group of direct involved participants. Many, for example, are concerned with the social, economic, and ecological quality of a neighbourhood and thereby also serve the public realm, such as for example in the ***Ik Geef om de Jan Eef*** case in Amsterdam. Likewise, the radiating effect of rising real estate values, in Užupis for example.

How the profits of collaborative efforts flow back into the community and thus strengthen its capacity is a recurring question. More generally, capacity building - both in terms of competences and means - is a challenge many collectives experience.

4.3.2 Systemic transformation

The other category of obstacles is related to the systemic transformation that is often needed for collaborative governance to function. Conventional roles and relations between involved actors and their organisations/ institutions are potential sources of frustration when attempting to create a more collaborative approach. In some of our cases we have seen examples of the conflict between creating local solutions and the centralistic logic to which institutional partners were bound, the Zero Waste Lab in Amsterdam a good example.

In other cases bottom-up ideas are annexed by municipal organisations in a well-intended attempt to facilitate, or societal stakeholders feel limited and not taken seriously when 'open calls' for ideas and plans by the government come accompanied with stringent conditions and provisions, such as happened with the ***Knowledge Mile*** in the same city. Likewise, collectives are often restricted when their funding is dependent on grants and subsidies, which can become problematic in terms of power relations when these funds are coming from closely involved partners such as local governments. Eventually this caused the ***Ik Geef om de Jan Eef*** initiative to stop.

These kinds of obstacles are of a systemic nature. They are deeply intertwined with both the culture in which they have emerged and the systems logic that is related to institutions, such as democratic institutionalisation. Addressing them thus requires a systemic approach in which not only case specific solutions are being developed, but in which these are also evaluated related to the functioning of the contextual system and, if desired and appropriate, positioned, elaborated and effectuated as a systemic transformation.

A different kind of systemic obstacle we have come across with is related to free market mechanisms. Many urban commons theorists relate commons problems to property law. It is often discussed what kind of resources are to be owned by whom – if by anyone at all, in fact – as well as how these resources are part of economic schemes (in terms of exploitation and speculation) and who has the right to claim access and usage (see also Harvey, 2012).

Questions like these had to be addressed in the ***Withington*** case in Manchester and are currently burning but sensitive questions in the Athens cases. Another discussion is about who is entitled to the profits of communal activities – and the effects thereof – and through which kinds of mechanisms.

In some of our cases we see collaborative activities leading to value production, for example in the rise of real estate value in Užupis, where external parties are capitalizing on the added value. In other cases, common resources are being transformed to serve the needs of new and intruding parties and lose their value for long-term stakeholders. This is ***enclosure of the commons***, a hot topic surrounding the Kypseli Market and also relating to situations where city centres become subject to touristification. In other cases however, common resources that are of value for a local community but are owned by others such as a municipality or investment companies, are threatened by deterioration or destruction through neglect or deviating financial interests. This was an important motivation for the ABCE in ***Withington***, and also played a prominent for the stallholders on Plein '40-'45 to start their initiative.

Collaborative efforts are often targeted at the prevention of the social wrongs that follow from this logic and the protection of these common resources, but are at the same time threatened by it, as the resources play an important role in the empowerment and capacities of local communities. These issues are deeply and paradigmatically connected with the organisation of the economy. Addressing these issues therefore also requires fundamental systemic reflection, before solutions can be considered or even implemented.

Four themes for solutions

Below we describe four different themes for solutions that have come to the surface in our project. We believe that investing and offering support through policy is a crucial and indispensable step in further developing and maturing collaborative approaches. Within each theme we hold on to the above described distinction between communal and systemic obstacles. This will not only help to design more effective policies, but also to better address the fundamental and political questions that they are related with.

4.4 Support and intermediaries

Working in collaboration and forming a collective is not the daily business of most of the actors involved. It requires specific competences that are then not always

present in the community of stakeholders. Often also additional resources are needed, both in terms of time and budget. In many of our cases we have seen that support and intermediaries have played a crucial role in the establishment or evolvement of a collective. In general, for a collective to thrive we see at least three different roles that need to be fulfilled, besides of course the practice-specific knowledge and expertise of area branding, shopping street management, cultural events or waste management that are generally required for new enterprises.

Firstly, there must be an actor to ***initiate and rally the collective*** and ignite the collaborative spirit among them. In the case of the FOTA collective in ***Aiolou street*** in Athens, for example, the first steps of the collective are directly attributable to the management of the "Trigono" project who were in search of a successor organization that would undertake the medium and long term maintenance of their interventions. Secondly, someone needs to take care of the ***organisational realisation of plans*** and ideas, for which the availability of means is clearly crucial. The ***Knowledge Mile*** shows the added value of a professional organization that takes care of these matters, and this kind of support is also a key aspect of the Amsterdam BIZ strategy. Thirdly, a connector is crucial: someone who can ***mobilize various stakeholders*** and bridge their different worlds and languages. This is because urban commons involve different types of stakeholders.

What kind of support is needed is of course dependent on the competences and capacity that are present or absent in each community. A first step then is to make an inventory of the capabilities of the community itself. In some cases, we find that involved stakeholders pro-actively take up new roles that are connected to becoming a collective. In others, the required expertise is latently present but needs to be brought to surface and mobilized. And in some cases, it is wholly absent and support from outside is required. In the Ik Geef om de Jan Eef case, the required competences were actually second nature to the initiators, while in the Kypseli Market case, activist collectives that were initially alienated by the initiative came to offer their expertise in later phases, and showed to be a contribution to this respect.

Within the ABCitiEs project, knowledge institutions have contributed to inventorying which competences and capacity are present in a specific community. It appeared helpful to have researchers making an informed and profound analysis, not only to create a solid strategic inventory and plan and tap into the (hidden) potential of a community, but also because it often lacks the resources that knowledge institutions do have to make these inventories, and because knowledge institutions bring along their own networks and resources that prove to be useful when solutions are being developed.

We have also seen some instruments that enable collectives to build capacity. Business improvement districts (BIDs) or business investment zones (BIZs), for example, are aimed at pooling funds among stakeholders in an area and present an answer to the problem of free riders. These funds are often used to finance specialist support, such as shopping street managers. The subsidiary start-up support by the municipality of Amsterdam has demonstrated to be very stimulating, for example. In other cases, support was arranged as the starting point of the collective, for example through development/start-up funds or because the project was initiated as an attempt to build new networks by institutional parties. ***Noorderpark Onderneemt*** in Amsterdam is a good example. The Croatian cases are still struggling with this.

An important lesson to be learned from the ***Ik Geef om de Jan Eef*** case, is to safeguard relations and ownership within the community and throughout the collective. Equipping specific parties with the means to take leading roles is a fruitful impulse, but also contains the risk of dominance and might be daunting and alienating to others. Working towards shared ownership over how means are being deployed, as well as securing sustainable and secure funding are important steps in building a collaborative collective.

Intermediaries play an important role in the success of collectives. We have seen, predominantly, how two forms of intermediaries are especially useful. The first

relates to the attributes of the community and is helpful in case of 'conflict'. In many cases, building a collaborative collective is not the first interaction within a community. In fact, it might well be part of searching new strategies because others failed. Histories contain a wealthy library of conflicts, especially those connected to failure. In some cases, conflicts are minor misunderstandings that an involved actor might not even be aware of; in other cases there is a widespread and deep distrust. 'Conflict' might also be the result of speaking different languages, having different experiences or holding different perspectives/world views.

Becoming aware of such conflicts and resolving them is crucial if you want to build collaborative relationships, but how to do this is commonly underestimated. Working with public or conflict mediation specialists is advisable. Again, knowledge institutions in particular can bring in expertise and experience. The Zero Waste Lab case demonstrates that efforts pay off - though with ups and downs. At the same time, the Kypseli Market gives a rich illustration of how different kinds of conflict emerge, consciously and unconsciously.

An important aspect of the systemic transformation that we described above is a more encompassing and integrated way of working for ABCEs. The issues they work on often involve different domains and organisations: the ***Withington*** Baths are a nice example of how these initiatives combine different functions within one project. They require a cross-disciplinary approach and integrated processes. Typically many actors, especially those working within institutionalised organisations, are unfamiliar with such an integral way of working. In fact, as compartmentalization has long been the standard way of organising, conventions and processes have evolved such that compatibility is problematic. Part of developing area-based collaborative entrepreneurship thus is aimed at building bridges to overcome these differences and start new forms of alignment, interaction and co-creation.

This concerns, for example, methods for formulating a joint vision, ambitions and goals; for developing integrated financial plans and business models (multiple value

Plein 40-45, Amsterdam

creation), methods to work on a shared language and a mutual understanding, and approaches to co-design and co-creation. In several cases we have seen that bringing this into practice is dependent on connectors who are able to understand and operate in the different worlds and have the talent (and strategic knowledge) to bring them together. In some cases we have found examples of this in the existing practice; as referred to above, so-called City Makers or social entrepreneurs who initiate many of the ABCEs type of projects seem to have adopted this expertise as a second nature. In other cases this intermediary function needs to be brought in through external support, clearly a role of the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences on Plein '40-'45. We will elaborate on this in the paragraph about experimental learning environments.

4.5 Access to funding

As mentioned, finding ways and methods for financing the activities of ABCEs is a challenging endeavour. Often, and we see this reflected in our cases, ABCEs make use of subsidies and grants. Especially in the initial phase this source appears to be an accessible and adequate form to start up activities. ABCEs are particularly well served, the Amsterdam cases show, by municipalities or other local governmental organisations that offer easy possibilities for budgets for innovative ideas and initiatives that address societal challenges. A downside of this way of financing ABCEs is its temporary and project related character. Some of the ABCEs we study, Noorderpark Onderneemt for example, have become specialists in finding appropriate calls and schemes over and over again and de facto became 'subsidy nomads', but for others being financed through subsidies eventually threatens continuation and sustainability. In the ***Ik Geef om de Jan Eef*** case budgets were cut over time, as they were expected to become independent. These dynamics cause difficulties for financing the basic organisation as subsidies are often particularly meant for projects and specific activities.

Obviously this is surrounded with political considerations - what kinds of support governments should give, whether ABCEs ought to be performing tasks that should perhaps be publicly financed or whether they are serving private interests and ought to be self-supporting, et cetera. But looking at the dynamics within ABCEs we see problems arising on the mid and especially long-term, if they are financed through a subsidy logic that is directed at financing activities or projects. Taking into consideration that building a sustainable network and an enduring collaborative collective is often an important aspect of ABCEs – and also one of the aspects why there is an increased governmental commitment to stimulating and supporting them – we argue that developing new methods of financing that are more structural and aimed at their basic organisation is advised.

How these methods can be developed is very much dependent on the local situation. Particularly challenging are ABCEs who are part of a systemic transformation in which public tasks are becoming part of collaborative governance arrangements, such as the self-organisation of a waste management system on Plein '40'45. We see that financing ABCEs through subsidies or project budgets creates uncertainty and dependency within the collective on the long-term, which in turn are a fertile grounds for conflicts and discontinuity. In the case of the Kypseli Market for example, it is questionable whether the current users will be able to afford the use of the building without public support, which poses a challenge for the 'post-aid' period.

It is good to note that evolution plays a substantial role here. ABCEs tend to start as small ideas, with initiatives expanding their activities over time. In these types of cases it seems wise not to upscale subsidies correlating with the growth of the ABCEs, but to work on alternative ways of financing that follow the integral and integrated logic of collaborative governance. Part of this development is aligning and synchronising the rhythms and cycles of the involved actors and organisations. Especially the differences between societal and institutional organisations seem challenging. We also come back to this point in the paragraph on experimental learning environments.

4.6 Monitoring

When collectives are working on resolving shared or societal problems, they also need information on the effects of their efforts. This information helps them develop and improve their activities and is necessary for reporting to the broader community of stakeholder and legitimising their contributions. What these effects are though, and how they can be measured and valued, is not always very clear and gaining clarity can be challenging. In cases where collectives are aimed at improving economic vitality for example, we have seen in the Gorton case in Manchester that collecting basic economic data such as footfall, real estate vacancy or rent pricing is a good starting point for opening discussions and working on creative ideas and solutions such as adjusting opening hours or reserving space for pop-up shops. The causal effects of measures are often hard to prove, but their occurrence is logical to most of the direct involved parties. In cases where the work of ABCEs is of a more social or ecological nature, the use of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals[8] to give concrete substance to what a collective is achieving is becoming increasingly adopted.

More contextualised attempts at formulating and capturing social impact are seen, though mostly in an embryonic state as yet. A type of context-based monitoring systems, that help ABCEs acquire data and information on their surrounding area and issues and measuring and reporting the effects of their activities might help a lot in their operations and legitimacy. We see the development of such adaptive, dashboard-like instruments as a valuable investment with which municipalities, for example, can support collectives.

4.7 Experimental learning environments

Above we mentioned that the effectiveness of most measures to support ABCEs depends on the degree to which they take local context into account. We see that ABCEs are supported best when instruments and policies are not only tailor-made, but, more importantly, incrementally developed with the practice itself.

Community building, conflict mediation, developing new financial structures or monitory systems are interventions that require an interactive, incremental process. The facilitation of such processes often exceeds the possibilities and capacity of ABCEs, both in terms of expertise and of means. We therefore suggest that support to ABCEs is best offered by means of facilitating an experimental learning environment where analysis and interventions are performed in a co-creative manner, following an incremental approach. In such experimental learning environments methods, instruments and other types of interventions can be introduced as an experiment. We argue that this experimental character should not be a matter of mere semantics, as we encountered often, but should follow a genuinely cyclical logic of analysis, prototyping, testing, and improvement. In this way support for ABCEs can be developed effectively and efficiently.

Particularly in cases where ABCEs are part of a systemic transformation towards collaborative governance arrangements, such experimental learning environments are of great importance. In these cases the obstacles are highly complex: it is the cultures, conventions, protocols and processes within partnering organisations that stand in the way of fruitful collaboration. Alignment is time consuming, intensive and also delicate. Budgetary cycles or a proper democratic mandate might be obstacles for collaborative governance, but these are institutionalised principles that have been designed for good reasons and with great care and consideration. Adjustment requires fundamental reflection on how the system functions and whether alteration is possible and desired.

If systemic transformations are the case, there is no blueprint for a new form of institutionalisation. Rather, it should be the subject of a collaborative and collective design process. In the Zero Waste Lab case we have seen for example that attempts to situate more power of choice within the community of stakeholders concerning the management of public space and public facilities was frustrated by central municipal organisations that hold that centralising policies are both necessary to

8 For more information about the SDGs, go to: https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/

protect equal rights and opportunities within the city, and are the concretisations of democratic decisions by the council. If the ambition is to create more space for ABCEs as self-organising solutions to societal challenges, these mechanisms need also to be questioned as they may produce contradictory forces. But they cannot simply be swept from the table to make way for innovation. Redesign requires the same good reasoning, care and consideration as they were created with. We therefore think that especially in these types of cases ABCEs should form part of an experimental learning environment in which new processes and protocols can be developed together with institutional actors. This is learning by doing, but also by reflecting.

4.8 Conclusion

Existing policy instruments, where present, often fail to pay attention to the complexity and life cycles of collective action. ABCEs can be used as experimental learning environments to better understand such life cycles and the complex interaction of the various stakeholders that work together. Local knowledge institutes can play an important role in the professionalization and monitoring of such collaborations, as the ***Knowledge Mile*** and ***Withington*** case clearly show. Knowledge institutions can also take on an intermediary role in the ABCE, although not uncommonly intermediaries are self-employed social entrepreneurs affiliated to social organizations like the City Makers Center in Amsterdam.

Intermediaries have proven added value for ABCEs because of their knowledge of existing local funding possibilities, large networks and especially their ability to connect different types of stakeholders. Existing local, national and regional funding schemes are often highly complex, ill-matched, and application for them requires time and effort. Their redesign can be an important step in securing effective support for ABCEs. Better coordination between different municipal authorities, more transparent subsidy schemes, as well as ABCEs subsidy offices, and specific websites with information will save ABCEs a lot of time and effort.

Table 3. below provides an overview of the obstacles and the policy options we observed for ABCEs.

Miesto Laboratorija, Vilnius

Obstacle		Policy measure			
Attributes of the community	**Systemic**	**Support and intermediaries**	**Access to funding**	**Monitoring**	**Experimental learning environment**
Lack of mutual trust amongst stakeholders (e.g. unfamiliarity, differences in language and conventions, or conflicts)		> Support with community and/or network building > Support by connecting intermediaries > Public of conflict mediation			> Analysis of attributes of community, joint identification of obstacles and participative/co-creative design of interventions
Lack of competences (e.g. leadership, communication and co-creation skills)		> Training and coaching > Support with practice specific knowledge and expertise > Support by co-creation specialists > Support by connecting intermediaries			> Analysis of attributes of community, joint identification of obstacles and participative/co-creative design of interventions

Obstacle		Policy measure			
Attributes of the community	**Systemic**	**Support and intermediaries**	**Access to funding**	**Monitoring**	**Experimental learning environment**
Lack of capacity (e.g. organisational and operational power, investment budget)		> Support with organisational power	> Policy instruments such as BID > Start-up funding through subsidies or innovation budgets > Structural and independent funding for the basic organisation	> Monitoring and communication instruments to demonstrate the effect of the collective: economically, socially and ecologically	> Analysis of attributes of community, joint identification of obstacles and participative/co-creative design of interventions > Reflection on and participative/co-creative re-designing of financial structures, such as synchronising policy and subsidy cycles, aligning the rhythms of institutional and societal organisations and moving from subsidy to program funding
	Incompatibility between local solutions and centralistic systems logic	> Support by connecting intermediaries	> Developing new financial models such as multiple value creation		> Reflection on and participative/co-creative re-design of the relation between societal initiatives and institutional system in terms of ideation, planning and decision-making (i.e. democratic mandate)
	Top down annexation of bottom-up initiatives; top-down formats of stimulating policies for bottom-up initiatives				

Obstacle		Policy measure			
Attributes of the community	**Systemic**	**Support and intermediaries**	**Access to funding**	**Monitoring**	**Experimental learning environment**
	Restrictions and distorted power relations within a collective between societal and institutional partners through financial dependency		> Structural and independent funding for the basic organisation		> Reflection on and participative/co-creative re-design of the relation between societal initiatives and institutional system in terms of ideation, planning and decision-making (mandate) > Reflection on and participative/co-creative re-designing of financial structures, such as synchronising policy and subsidy cycles, aligning the rhythms of institutional and societal organisations and moving from subsidy to program funding
	Appropriation of externalities by non-contributors and lack of appropriation possibilities by the collective (free-riding). Lack of control, risk of subversion of efforts due to formal ownership over assets (hold-outs)		> Developing new financial models such as multiple value creation	> Monitoring and communication instruments to demonstrate the effect of the collective: economically, socially and ecologically	> Reflection on and participative/co-creative re-design of property rules and appropriation models (e.g community land trust, social function of property)

Obstacle		Policy measure			
Attributes of the community	**Systemic**	**Support and intermediaries**	**Access to funding**	**Monitoring**	**Experimental learning environment**
	Economic transition is endangering the potential of an area for long-term stakeholders				> Reflection on and participative/co-creative re-design of property rules and appropriation models (e.g community land trust, social function of property)

Table 3. *Obstacles and policy options for ABCEs*

5. ABCEs action plans

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter we outline the implications of our findings for local actions and policies. We give an overview of concrete policy actions that local governments can develop to stimulate ABCEs.

As guiding principles for the individual actions of the 5 partner regions we use the policy recommendations suggested in the previous chapter, i.e. support and intermediaries, access to funding, monitoring, and experimental learning environments. The aim of ABCitiEs was to investigate if, and how, collaboration between different stakeholders can help in addressing the societal challenges that occur in the environments these stakeholders share, which affect their individual businesses or activities.

At the moment of writing, the shock of COVID-19 is ripping through the business world. With global recession looming and unemployment likely to rise, the effects of COVID-19 are likely to persist beyond the lifting of restrictions on social gathering. There is also uncertainty about how many retailers will even survive the crisis (Millington, 9 April 2020). The eurozone is set for its deepest downturn and its sternest economic test yet. Some forecasters expect GDP to shrink by nearly a tenth in 2020 (Economist, 11 April 2020). In Europe many thousands of firms have rushed to claim state subsidies for the wages of inactive staff. Dividends and investments are being slashed.

Small firms will likely suffer most. As such, it is impossible at this stage to predict what the effect will be on collectives. From a sense of urgency perspective, the idea of forming collectives and involving stakeholders in the development of solutions for societal challenges that they are confronted with seems more topical than ever.

5.2 Implications for policies

In the introduction, we described ABCEs as often intertwined with their surroundings and committed to local social or environmental goals, such as strengthening neighbourhood liveability or reinforcing social ties between residents. We also observed that these are exactly the type of complex challenges that increasingly require a contribution from a larger number of local stakeholders, including businesses and residents, or resident organizations (Innes and Booher, 2010). On this basis, we studied our cases through the Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) Framework (McGinnis, 2011; Ostrom, 2009), since it considers ABCEs as developing through a series of ***action situations***: situations that consist of people with different roles and positions, who make decisions based on information and existing rules.

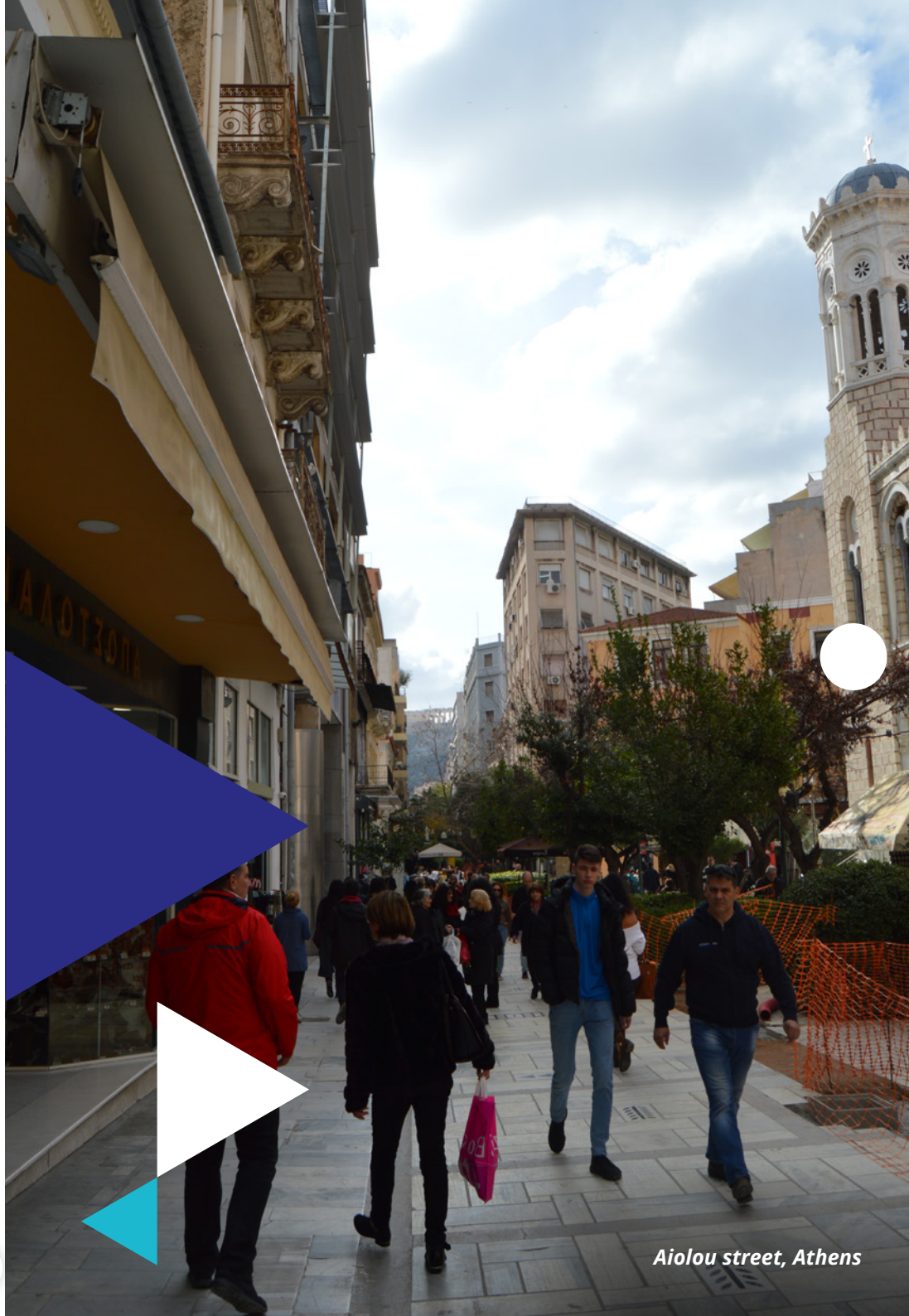
By studying the contexts (chapter 2), collective actions and outcomes, i.e. processes and products, we were able to understand better what evaluative criteria defined their successes and failures (chapter 3). In chapter 4, we further highlighted the obstacles that ABCEs encounter, and in particular addressed those obstacles that could improve with government action.

In chapter 2, we found that existing ABCE policy frameworks mostly focus on either the regeneration of local city centres, shopping streets, abandoned real estate, and neighbourhoods to make them fit for the future; or, on a more local level, and particularly in the case of Amsterdam, on a reduction of the role of the municipality and on support for a higher degree of self-governance in local neighbourhoods. In chapter 3, case study analysis further showed that in collaborative action situations 2 types of ABCEs can be distinguished in the partner regions: either bottom-up and

often defensive/ reactive collectives, or top-down collectives that are generally more opportunity driven. We saw how bottom-up collectives often rise up from a strong sense of urgency, related to high degrees of criminality or bad economic conditions in a neighbourhood, but are generally less focused on setting up a professional organization with long-term goal setting. We saw how intermediaries prove to be beneficial for these kinds of collectives. Then we described how top-down initiatives may arise from the same kind of circumstances, but often have a more regenerative goal setting with a focus on creating a new economy with better opportunities but also often leading to increased gentrification. These ABCEs often have a professional organization from the start, we posed, but tend to have more difficulty with involving the local community which is also essential for making your ABCEs sustainable. Here, in particular, monitoring can help to show the added value of an ABCEs for the local economy and its neighbourhood.

Public institutions, such as municipalities, often play a key role in ABCEs most importantly because they manage public space. In this project, we therefore addressed the following two sub-questions. Firstly, what is the relationship between formal government and the ABCE initiative, and how does this condition the development of the ABCE? And secondly, how do current regional policy instruments facilitate or hinder ABCEs and how can this be improved?

In chapters 2 and 3 we found that municipalities can have multiple roles, ranging from founder, to active stakeholder, to funder, to advisor, to impenetrable bureaucracy. In chapter 4, we highlighted that in particular 6 obstacles can hinder ABCEs, namely: (1) local solutions developed by the collective do not fit in the one-size-fits-all approach of the bureaucracy; (2) local collective solutioning is 'encouraged' by the system but comes with too many strings attached; (3) local collective initiatives rely on funding from a bureaucracy that is an active partner at the same time (role conflation), entailing problematic power relations; (4) collectives generate externalities (such as real estate value increase) that cannot be appropriated by the members of the collective; (5) collectives represent a declining



Aiolou street, Athens

segment in a district that is in economic transition; and (6) when collectives consist of actors who do not own the real estate they care for, their actions can be undermined by those who do.

Suggestions for improvement

So, how can policy instruments be improved to facilitate ABCEs? On the basis of our research, interviews, stakeholder meetings and expert consultations, we broadly suggest improvement in the following thematic policy directions:

(I) access to funding;
(II) deployment of intermediaries;
(III) the application of monitoring; and
(IV) creation of experimental learning environments.

Improvement (I), access to funding, particularly feeds into obstacles 1 and 2 and sometimes 3 that bureaucracy often has a one-size-fits-all approach, has many strings attached, or can cause role conflations. ABCEs come in many forms and can serve many causes, which often makes it difficult to fit in the mold of financial rules and regulations of the different departments in municipalities. Improvement (II), intermediaries, has proven to be a solution for obstacle 3, role conflation, but may also provide a solution to most of the other obstacles. Intermediaries, also known as boundary-spanners, are often self-employed professionals, who guide ABCEs in areas like fundraising, management, marketing and capacity building. They generally have good contacts with local municipalities and have a large network of city makers that they can draw from. Improvement (III), monitoring, can be particularly useful for tackling bottlenecks 4 to 6, which are difficult to address, but can be improved by capacity building. For this, it is important that you can show what you have achieved with your collective and how your collective improves elements in your local neighborhood. Monitoring of footfall or broader impact for the neighborhood has proven to be a useful means showing results and can help ABCEs in building their network and increase membership. Also, it can attract private investors. Finally, improvement (IV) is essential to guarantee sustainability of ABCEs. In order to fully understand the challenges and opportunities in a neighborhood, ABCEs need constant analysing, prototyping, testing and improving to stay healthy and generate impact.

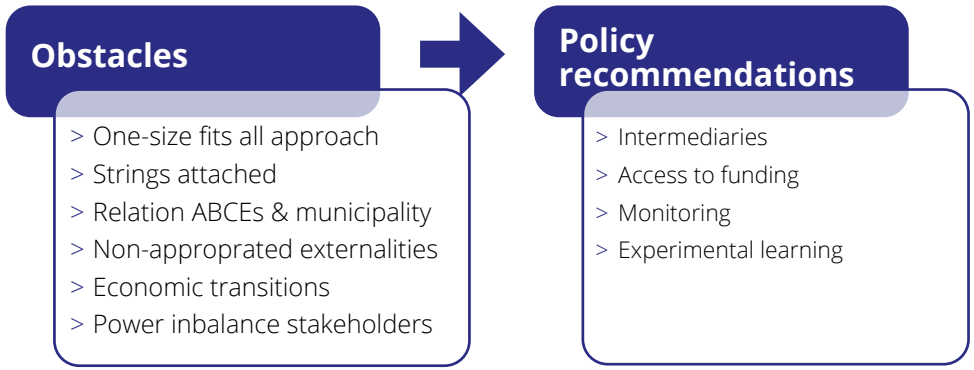


Figure 2. *Overview of obstacles and policy recommendations*

5.3 Actions proposed

The aim of this project was to distribute learnings from five European regions on how to support ABCEs, reduce the vulnerability of SMEs, and contribute to sustainable urban development. Furthermore, by doing this, to generate innovative and effective policies and policy instruments that foster or stimulate area-based collaborative enterprises,

By capturing the local learnings more systematically, identifying critical success conditions and sharing these across regions in Europe, the idea was that improvements might be made more effectively. The differences between the partners (regarding urban planning context and cultures, national, political/ legal/ administrative differences, etc.) allow for drawing lessons across national and cultural borders and make the results more widely applicable.
The partners involved in this proposal are all experimenting with ways of initiating or supporting ABCEs. Local governments are looking for more insights into methods to facilitate these new collaborations, the effects of their policies, and guidelines for

improvement. Actors starting with or involved in the ABCitiEs research project are all in search of knowledge and methods to strengthen the (sustainability of) area based collaborative enterprises, now more than ever.

Based on our case study research, we broadly discern four policy directions for improvement: (1) access to funding; (2) intermediaries; (3) monitoring; and (4) experimental learning. These policy directions have been the inspiration for the individual action plans of the 5 regions involved in the ABCitiEs project. In the table below, we give an overview of these individual action plans.

Uzupis Art Incubator, Vilnius

Partner with main responsibility for the implementation of the action	Policy instrument addressed	Action	Source or inspiration from the project (initiative/ activity or good practice that inspired this action)	Relevance (how the action contributes to improve the policy instrument(s) addressed)	Initial time frame
City of Amsterdam	Amsterdam Entrepreneurial Program (AOP) 'Neighborhood Economy'	Setting up a Service Desk for entrepreneurial collectives to make funding more accessible, less fragmented and more strategic	Cases Noorderpark, Geef om de Jan Eef, Reguliersdwarsstraat, and Withington	The action aims to make the municipal subsidy policy programme more accessible, less fragmented and more strategic	March 2020 – January 2022
City of Amsterdam	Coalition agreement "A new spring, a new sound" (Municipality of Amsterdam, May 2018)	Develop a toolkit to help and inspire entrepreneurial collectives and civil servants using the Right to Challenge in a practical and accessible way	Cases Plein 40-45, Withington, Athens cases	The action focuses on the policy instrument 'Right to Challenge'. The action aims to experiment with Right to Challenge for entrepreneurial collectives to work better with local initiatives and to make better use of local knowledge of entrepreneurial collectives	March 2020- January 2022
Sunrise Valley & MRU	Vilnius City Strategic Action Plan 2020-2022	To introduce a new collective business support program of Business Neighborhood in Vilnius City Municipality	Lessons learned from Amsterdam and Manchester partner experiences dealing with BIZ and BID	It is planned to integrate Business Neighborhood program into Vilnius City Strategic Action Plan 2020-2022 aiming to promote area-based collaboration. The program will motivate local enterprises to improve business environment and to better meet local community needs	July 2020 – May 2022

Partner with main responsibility for the implementation of the action	Policy instrument addressed	Action	Source or inspiration from the project (initiative/ activity or good practice that inspired this action)	Relevance (how the action contributes to improve the policy instrument(s) addressed)	Initial time frame
Municipality of Athens	Establishment of a pilot Collectives Office	Establish a new office that will operate as a one-stop shop for most issues related to collectives in Athens and perform a thorough mapping of existing and potential collaborations of SMEs	The more integrated approach towards ABCEs from the City of Amsterdam	No policy instruments specifically target ABCE in Greece. The proposed action will facilitate cooperation and trust building between the municipality and the business community	September 2020 - May 2022
City of Varaždin	ITU Integrirana Teritorijalna Ulaganja (Integrated Territorial Investments Mechanism), Strategy of the City of Varaždin (2020 -)	Entrepreneurial Neighborhoods – the Urban Center for Creative and Digital Industries is designed as a place where entrepreneurs from various fields of creative industries and creativity operate – fashion, design, painting, sound design, ceramics, photography, film and video, marketing, architecture, art, arts and crafts, software and computer games, music, performing and visual arts, industrial design, 'low tech' production	Vilnius Tech Park ICT start-up hub is a role model in the way it integrates IT and tech companies with companies that interfere in the creative industries. For three Varaždin cases, and in particular for CKI, the example of Romantso creative space and collective in Athens is particularly inspiring	The action aims to introduce and facilitate collective place management and the use of infrastructure sharing	July 2020 – May 2022

Partner with main responsibility for the implementation of the action	Policy instrument addressed	Action	Source or inspiration from the project (initiative/ activity or good practice that inspired this action)	Relevance (how the action contributes to improve the policy instrument(s) addressed)	Initial time frame
City of Varaždin	ITU Integrirana Teritorijalna Ulaganja (Integrated Territorial Investments Mechanism), Strategy of the City of Varaždin (2020 -)	Craft workshops and thematic presentations – creation of a multifunctional space for holding trainings held by associations, entities in crafts and SMEs. Lectures would be aimed at two target groups: students of craft occupations and tourists. The idea is to present and promote the products and services of local entrepreneurs and enrich the tourist offer	Abandoned spaces and their renewal for some businesses in Vilnius (Užupis) and Athens (Aiolou street area and Kypseli Municipal Market)	The action aims to introduce and facilitate the use of shared infrastructure and the temporary use concept	July 2020 – May 2022
City of Varaždin	ITU Integrirana Teritorijalna Ulaganja (Integrated Territorial Investments Mechanism), Strategy of the City of Varaždin (2020 -)	Multifunctional HUB café and tourist chill room – HUB café is a network place for educators and citizens of all ages who want to constantly learn and upgrade their knowledge. The place will be open for all kinds of educational activities ranging from workshops, seminars to private education. A wide range of local products such as food, snacks and drinks will be made available.	Abandoned space and their renewal for some new businesses in Vilnius (Užupis) and Athens (Aiolou street area and Kypseli Municipal Market)	The action aims to introduce and facilitate the use of shared infrastructure and the temporary use of concepts	July 2020 – May 2022

Partner with main responsibility for the implementation of the action	Policy instrument addressed	Action	Source or inspiration from the project (initiative/ activity or good practice that inspired this action)	Relevance (how the action contributes to improve the policy instrument(s) addressed)	Initial time frame
City of Čakovec	ITU Integrirana Teritorijalna Ulaganja (Integrated Territorial Investments Mechanism), Strategy of the City of Čakovec (2020 -)	The City Market – facilitating thematic groupings of citizens connected with the same goal of interest or activity; creating an open multifunctional space for different scenarios of use (temporary events, traditional crafts, co-working, health and beauty, learn and play)	Vilnius Užupis Republik	The action is aimed at gathering stakeholders, helping stakeholders to articulate ideas and integration into the decision making process	September 2020 – May 2022
City of Čakovec	ITU Integrirana Teritorijalna Ulaganja (Integrated Territorial Investments Mechanism), Strategy of the City of Čakovec (2020 -)	MTC – implementation of the ABCE approach in a space that enables dynamic connection of entrepreneurs, artists and other thematically connected groups, volunteers and organisations	Approach of the City of Amsterdam – Noorderpark Onderneemt	The action aims to introduce and facilitate collective place management and the use of infrastructure sharing	September 2020 – May 2022

Partner with main responsibility for the implementation of the action	Policy instrument addressed	Action	Source or inspiration from the project (initiative/ activity or good practice that inspired this action)	Relevance (how the action contributes to improve the policy instrument(s) addressed)	Initial time frame
Manchester City Council (and Manchester Metropolitan University)	Manchester City Council Local Plan. Greater Manchester Combined Authority Spatial Framework	To assess the views of the public, the government and other stakeholders to policy supporting collaborative working in local and sub-regional planning policy documents	The positive effects of collective action in Withington, where the actions of a collective have contributed to significant progress and instigated beneficial development, cannot be ignored. This activity needs to be encouraged and supported through local and regional policy	The GMSF and Manchester's Local Plan aim to ensure that new development improves the vitality and viability of district centres. It is clear from our own work in centres and the experience of our partners that collaborative working magnifies the benefits of development. Encouraging developers to work collaboratively with other stakeholders supports the requirements for consultation ensuring it takes place at an early stage. It also helps to establish on-going partnerships which have proved invaluable in making centres places people wish to visit and spend their time	January 2020 – May 2023

Partner with main responsibility for the implementation of the action	Policy instrument addressed	Action	Source or inspiration from the project (initiative/ activity or good practice that inspired this action)	Relevance (how the action contributes to improve the policy instrument(s) addressed)	Initial time frame
Manchester City Council (and Manchester Metropolitan University)	Non-statutory Policy: Place Management Withington Regeneration Plan	Monitor effectiveness and continued involvement of collectives in the Withington Village Development Plan	Whereas the Manchester Local Plan and the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework are both statutory local planning policy documents, not all municipal policy within the UK is set in a regulatory framework. Local councils can also adopt a policy through internal governance structures	Develop a programme of collaboration and support for Withington, with the intention of drawing out insights which can inform the local area planning process across the city. Develop a robust evidence base through which to inform the culture of working within the municipality, and to improve engagement with new and existing local collectives. In alignment with the first action, the intended outcome is that collectives become the primary mechanism through which to deliver the City's wider policy objective to support a network of distinctive high quality centres, strengthening local identity and essential services close to homes	September 2020 – July 2021

Table 4. *Overview of action plans proposed by partner regions*

5.4 Conclusion and policy recommendations

Overall, ABCEs can be an effective instrument for stimulating change and activating the local neighbourhood. The current crisis makes it increasingly clear that change in our current economic system is necessary. We are facing major challenges that we cannot possibly solve alone. Collaboration and the linking of ambitions are becoming increasingly important, and this requires ecosystems that are better suited to the issues of the future. Cities are increasingly experimenting with networks and collectives that collectively coordinate their neighbourhood or shopping area, including BID and BIZ.

Many good results have already been achieved with this, but much can also be improved. ABCitiEs research shows that collaboration requires commitment from all parties, and that shared ownership is essential in this. As administrators of public space, governments play an important role in these collectives, but they struggle with their role in these collectives, while the variety between collectives presents an additional challenge.

Municipalities often switch between top-down and bottom-up approaches, which often has an unexpected effect on the degree of shared ownership. That is a missed opportunity, because there is also a lot to gain in these forms of collaborations for governments.

Although ABCEs are deployed in many cases to encourage the regeneration of local development areas or real estate, ABCEs can also be effective as an opportunity-driven collaboration form with interesting possibilities for neighbourhoods and municipalities to address societal challenges in a more bottom-up and experimental manner.

Municipalities play an important role in ABCEs as city managers and funders of ABCEs initiatives and projects, and policy improvements that further professionalize the cooperation between municipalities and ABCEs are essential to actually reap the benefits of collaboration and come to local solutions for urban challenges in a cooperative and inclusive manner. In this project, recommendations have been suggestions in four directions, however many more suggestions can be made for individual ABCEs depending on the context and existing rules and regulations. We therefore see ABCEs as a promising research and policy direction, in particular to address more complex societal challenges like the development towards a more energy efficient and circular economy. Such challenges require close cooperation between different local stakeholders, something that lies at the core of an ABCEs.

In the light of the current COVID-19 crisis, however, there are several uncertainties for ABCEs and policy makers that may affect implementation of the action plans and that need to be taken into account as they might turn either into threats or opportunities. Here, we list four of the most important ones.

First of all, there is a further digitalization, which may change the ABCEs formed by shopping streets with more shops operating online as well as the way we work and the level of commuting. Secondly, tourism has come under severe pressure. A decrease may force us to rethink city centres as many shops will need to close and customer demand will change. Thirdly, during the crisis we saw a surge of regained interest in the neighbourhood, its facilities and its SMEs. This may increase the need for ABCE initiatives, yet it is still unsure if this development will continue in the long run. Fourth, COVID-19 restrictions have led to a sharp decrease in global CO2 emissions, due to declining tourism and commuter flows. We do not expect this to last, and even more people may drive by car to work in the near future, but many people seem to have rediscovered the importance of a green and healthy living environment. The question is to what extent the government and society seize this development to make the transition to a more sustainable economy and society. In any case, we welcome this development and we believe that ABCEs can play an important role in initiating bottom-up change in the neighbourhood.

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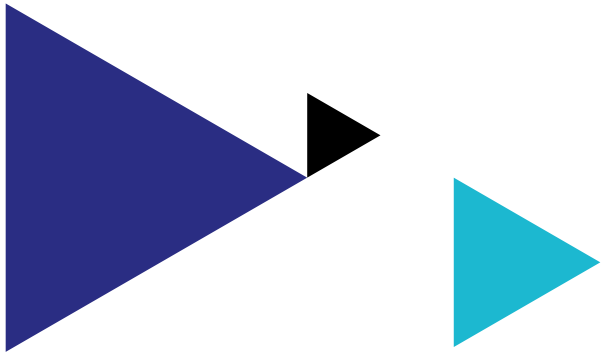

Aiolou street, Athens


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ΔΗΜΟΣ ΑΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ