

# The Green Project



## Description of the project including the project's goal

### **Ameliorate the everyday environment of the citizens and highlight substandard areas of the city.**

For almost three years atenistas have been working continuously and consistently on those spots where it is needed to clean, to repair, to paint, to built, to perform, to garden.

They deal with frequent small projects like:

- transforming abandoned public places into parks and playgrounds,
- painting schools all around Athens,
- collecting food and/or clothes for people in need,
- offering free guided tours around the most historical or completely unknown places of the city,
- supporting creative artists to change the image of neglected neighborhoods,
- organizing cultural events in unexpected places in order to highlight them and spread joy among the Athenians.

## Project's objectives, activities and achievements

### **• Transforming abandoned public places into parks and/or playgrounds**

This is the first and most characteristic project of the atenistas group. It runs on a regular basis (approximately once a month) by the "Green Team" consisted of 35 persons.

They pick a place that is either proposed by neighbors on the atenistas' website or discovered by them during their spot-finding missions.

Afterwards, they investigate the property status of the place, they contact the municipality and they inform the neighborhood.

They meet once a week to delegate responsibilities: architects make the designs, agriculturists propose the plants and the trees to be planted and the team ends up with a final project and coordinators. They instantly communicate via their private group on Facebook.

The date is announced to the other teams of atenistas, so that they all schedule accordingly.

The "Creativa Team" undertakes the artistic part of the project by proposing and performing graphic designs, pictures, cartoons etc on the nearby walls.

“Actions” take place on the weekends and are announced via atenistas’ newsletter.

On the day of the “action”, members of all the teams of the atenistas group, as well as friends, followers and neighbors meet on the place. Materials and tools are brought by the “Greens” and everybody is willing to follow the instructions of the coordinators.

The place is cleaned, repaired, planted, painted and filled with playground toys.

In the next 6 to 8 hours a whole transformation takes place. At the same time atenistas inform the inhabitants that the most important thing is to love, respect and maintain the place that will improve the image of their neighborhood and ameliorate their everyday life.

One of the most characteristic “Green projects”, with the participation of 100 people, took place at Sepolia area on Saturday, March 2<sup>nd</sup> 2013 and you can find all pictures at: <http://atenistas.org/2013/03/06/sepolia/>

Along with the “Green Project”, the “Creativa Team” **renovates many public schools around Athens by painting and performing graphic designs, pictures, cartoons.**

- **Creating positive events in the memory of the city residents by organizing cultural events in order to highlight neglected neighborhoods and buildings.**

The most popular and open project of the atenistas group. It runs on an ad hoc basis (but usually once every two months) by the “Culture Team” consisted of 38 members.

They pick an unexpected spot, somewhere that people do not usually go or are afraid to go. They focus on neglected and underdeveloped neighborhoods, neighborhoods with mainly immigrant population and/or buildings with historical and architectural interest.

Afterwards they are “inventing” an event, inspired by the history of the place, music, fine arts and/or famous people that lived there. They visit the place and contact the people, who could probably participate, i.e. singers and groups, dancers, painters, writers, archeologists and so on. They also contact the public or private owner of the place to ask for permission.

They meet upon the needs of every single project to delegate responsibilities: One or two coordinators and persons responsible for the communication with the participants, the owners of the place and those who are offering the technical equipment. They instantly communicate via their private group on Facebook.

The date is announced to the other teams of atenistas, so that they all schedule accordingly.

“Actions” take place on weekends and are announced via atenistas’ website and newsletter, Facebook and Twitter pages.

These events gain a lot of publicity and attendance has sometimes exceeded 3.000 people.

On the day of the “action”, the members of the team meet on the place and do all the necessary technical preparations for the event, sometimes along with relevant professionals. In some cases they also go on the spot the previous day in order to clean and tidy up the place. During the event members of all the teams of the atenistas group safeguard the place and help the public to enjoy the event.

The most famous “Culture projects”, with the attendance of more than 3000 people, were the performance of the National Opera of Greece in Varvakeios Meat Market and a Tango Night in the Old Railway Station. You can find all pictures and videos on:  
[http://atenistas.org/2012/11/05/lyriki\\_varvakeios/](http://atenistas.org/2012/11/05/lyriki_varvakeios/) &  
<http://atenistas.org/2012/04/05/tangopelop/>

Along with the “Culture project”, the “Polis Team” organizes **imaginative guided tours around the city in order to bring to attention certain areas**. These tours are focused on specific historical periods, other cultures or original neighborhoods.

They contact professional guides, professors and writers as well as museums and places of interest in order to participate at the event. The participating museums offer free entrance and guided tours for the day.

After the events each guide, with map included, is uploaded on the atenistas’ website so as the people can download it and visit the area with their friends.

### **How young people were involved**

Most of the atenistas’ members are young people, they participate in all the teams and in this way they are involved in the designing, organization and implementation of the projects. They have expressed their will to join the atenistas group mainly through the group’s website and Facebook page and/or on the spot of the projects.

### **Project funding.**

The group is not funded by any private or public institution or company and only accepts material donations.

The responsible team of every action contacts companies and individuals that have expressed their will to help by offering some of the materials needed, as well as the technical services of the municipality to help with transfers and building materials.

Some members collect palettes and car tires for making installations for the children.

Although there is no funder for transparency reasons, there is always a project report: while the “action” takes place there are some posts on atenistas’ Facebook page and the week after a formal announcement on atenistas’ website with pictures, details and thank you notes to all the people that participated in the event.

### **Project’s connections to national or international environment processes**

The green project is important because it does improve the civil environment. Neglected parks, playgrounds and empty spaces in the city are transformed into green and clean places where young people can spend safely their free time. As they experience the difference between before and after of these places, they do understand how their everyday life is improved as they can enjoy public space. So they learn not only to respect but also to protect the environment. In the same time, in cases when they themselves have participated in the action of atenistas, they are emotionally connected with the place and consider it part of their everyday life.

**Project's connections to national or international health processes**

Young people, especially those who live in degraded areas in the center of the city, and are now able to spend more of their free time in open public spaces that are clean and tidy feel much better, enjoy themselves and generally their psychological condition is improved. This also helps them realize the connection between environment and health.

**Follow up, outcomes and future plans**

It is an ongoing project as the group gradually intervenes to more and more neighborhoods and public places. The group returns to the introduced spots from time to time to ensure the sustainability and the good use of the place and rebuild possible wear and tear.