THE AUC AND ITS
NEIGHBORHOODS
AUC NEIGHBORHOOD INITIATIVE
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1. INTRODUCTION

Urban universities possess intellectual and economic resources that could be channeled to make a positive impact on their ‘place.’ The American University in Cairo (AUC) launched the AUC Neighborhood Initiative (NI) in March 2015 to fortify its commitment to its neighboring communities in both Tahrir Square and New Cairo campuses. From the university’s perspective, its academic mission is enhanced through engaging with real world problems, and its attractiveness to prospective faculty and students is enhanced through place-focused economic interventions in the neighborhood. As such, the AUC-NI adopts a place-based strategic approach that focuses on physical and environmental improvements, combined with a civic engagement approach (the social development side) and an anchor strategy (the economic development side). This report will present the research findings conducted January – December 2016 to best situate the NI strategic community engagement within the AUC and the University neighborhoods.

The American University in Cairo (AUC) began exploring the possibilities of establishing its ‘Neighborhood Initiative’ (NI) in March 2015. It was supported in this by the American University of Beirut’s (AUB) own Neighborhood Initiative, building on the concepts of anchor institutions and community engagement. In preparation, the AUC conducted preparatory work funded by AUB through its Ford Foundation grant from July-November 2015.

This report will present the research findings conducted between January 2016 to February 2017 to best situate the Neighborhood Initiative (NI) strategic community engagement within the AUC and the University neighborhoods.
1.1 OBJECTIVE OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD INITIATIVE

The importance of this project lies in its novelty, as the first structured Neighborhood Initiative in Egypt, and one of the few in the Middle East and Africa. Modeled after, and inspired by, the Neighborhood Initiative at the American University in Beirut (AUB) it aims to help raise awareness and visibility of AUC’s commitment to community service and engagement and strives to position AUC as a responsible institutional citizen. The initiative, and consequently this research project, will play an instrumental role in achieving AUC’s current institutional priorities and strategic objectives, respectively Institutional Priority III “Outreach Enhancing Engagement and Access” Strategic Objective III “Location, Location, Location: AUC as an Anchor and a Magnet”.

1.1.1 Research Design

The project is comprised of five primary fields of activities, conducted using the following study design and methodologies in both campuses, Tahrir and New Cairo:

1. In-depth Stakeholder Identification, Mapping and Analysis:
   ● Internally at AUC:
     Through online surveys to determine the current community engagement and context-based initiatives across campus. It also included conducting workshops with student societies and union, attending departmental and centers’ meetings to discuss their interest in NI, and liaising with relevant offices at the administration concerning the university’s benefit from and interaction with the neighborhoods.
   ● Externally in our Tahrir and New Cairo neighborhoods:
     Through structured interviews and field surveys to determine interest, capacity and strategic objectives of community stakeholders and through mapping against AUC’s strategies and objectives for the NI.

2. Community Perception Mapping and Assessment:
   Through structured interviews and field surveys to determine various user groups’ understanding and expectation of the current and potential role of AUC in the neighboring community, as well as the neighboring community in AUC.

3. Internal Social Assets Surveying:
   Through structured interviews and focus group discussions with individuals and departments, centers and offices to map their resources and institutional strengths vis-à-vis the NI.

4. Physical Campus Assessment:
   Through physical mapping and documentation of issues of circulation patterns, accessibility, activities as well as gap analysis of campus utilization as mapped against the physical assets of campus. This mapping exercise examined the boundaries of the two campuses and provided evidence on potential linkages with the surrounding context in both neighborhoods.

5. Institutional Anchoring within AUC for the Neighborhood Initiative:
   Through institutional analysis of AUC structure, mandates of offices, and potential sources of financial and administrative support. It also includes desk research on the experience of other universities that have a NI, including the AUB. This analysis informed proposals for anchoring the NI, and the institutional arrangements for its functioning that are to be submitted for further funding.

The long-term goal of this research project was to establish a Neighborhood Initiative within AUC that works towards just, livable and diverse neighborhoods for both its unique campuses. The immediate objective of the research was providing necessary background information, data, and the design of administrative support structure for the AUC NI. The findings in this report expanded on the preparatory research (Phase I) to complete a more in-depth understanding of the internal and external forces and dynamics that may impact or influence the NI activities. It worked to inform the structuring of an institutional anchor that may include the establishment of a special project, office or unit within AUC.

The result of this project will hopefully be a heightened preparedness for AUC to move ahead with a neighborhood initiative, as well as proceeding with an objective-oriented and informed structuring of AUC’s constructive engagement towards its community.

1 The Phase I report is available for public review on the AUC Neighborhood Initiative website: http://www.aucegypt.edu/about/neighborhood-initiative
1.1.2 Summary of Findings

1. In-depth Stakeholder Identification, Mapping and Analysis:
Community engagement is an important aspect of the AUC’s long-term vision and the sustainability of publicly-accessed AUC services. Both campuses are surrounded by diverse stakeholder groups; however, limited communication between them is a challenge to future development in both areas. The AUC wants to promote dialogue between different groups to push forward the development of these areas. Identified expectations from the AUC could be categorized into: collaboration with neighboring businesses, the City Administration, or with other educational institutes.

2. Community Perception Mapping and Assessment:
The research team found that the overall perception of the AUC as an academic institution is positive; however, most respondents agreed that a gap exists between the students and the surrounding community. There is a need for more university engagement with the neighborhood outside traditional educational venues.

3. Internal Social Assets Surveying:
The research team found that the NI must acknowledge the current social assets already embedded in institutions, individuals, and networks within the university framework. After examination of such institutions and their engagement in the community, the team found further mapping is not necessary. The team suggests working toward greater community engagement.

4. Physical Campus Assessment:
The physical asset mapping provided evidence that there is room to improve both AUC campuses with respect to the use of physical space and facilities, both of which are not being used to their potential. The space could be used to benefit the community by opening such spaces and facilities to the public for gatherings, artistic expression, and cultural exchange. In order to create such programs of community engagement, the AUC must revise regulations of access and use of spaces and buildings.

5. Institutional Anchoring within AUC for the Neighborhood Initiative:
To date, the AUC administration has pledged to provide the NI with an office space as part of the Provost Office. Anchoring the NI within the university administration will ensure that the initiative has the legitimacy to act in the name of the University.

These aims helped inform the greater goal of establishing a NI at AUC by providing essential background information upon which initiatives can be planned and community can be engaged. A deeper understanding of the power dynamics and interests of the main stakeholders in both AUC neighborhoods is a prerequisite to best engage with them through the NI. Equally, it is critical to identify current efforts of AUC community members – faculty, students, and administration – in engaging with the outside community, and examine how the NI can further support their efforts. This helped identify AUC’s capacities and neighborhood interests vis-à-vis the neighborhood, forming a basis for seeking alignment with neighborhood stakeholders. Finally, the different internal AUC mapping activities helped identify and structural means by which the NI can be established and situated. It has also to be realized that all the investigative research activities have a dual knowledge and mobilization effect; they do not only generate valuable knowledge of the neighborhoods, the neighbors and how they can be engaged, but it also generates knowledge on the part of all stakeholders within the AUC and its neighborhoods such that they become motivated to play a role in it.
1.2 PREVIOUS WORK

Phase I report presented the main results of preparatory work conducted in 2015 to support the American University in Cairo (AUC) launch of its “neighborhood initiative” (NI) and informed AUC-AUB dialogue on the interaction between universities and their neighborhoods. The project’s results were presented and discussed during the “Universities and their Neighborhoods: an AUC-AUB Conversation” symposium in November 2015. The aim of this symposium was to raise awareness in Egypt on urban universities and their roles in their neighborhoods and the city, and to hold focused discussions on the AUC and American University in Beirut (AUB) cases. It recommended specific next steps for the AUC’s Tahrir Square and New Cairo campuses and the AUB’s Ras Beirut campus.

The report recommended that the AUC-NI adopts a place-based strategic approach that focuses on physical and environmental improvements, combined with a civic engagement approach (the social development side) and an anchor strategy (the economic development side). In this sense the AUC, similar to its sister AUB, is striving to promote sustainable development inside and around its campuses in a manner that supports the creation/preservation of a just, livable, and diverse neighborhood.

The information presented in this report was based on two levels of research that aimed to deepen the understanding of the place and people within AUC neighborhoods in downtown and New Cairo. The initial level of effort involved conducting background research that covered the urban management and legal framework governing the neighborhood and any interaction with the AUC. The second level produced a set of data that was collected through field work (two “AUC Campus in Context” workshops in August and October 2015) that included urban patterns and stakeholders mapping. The urban patterns mapping surveyed typologies of land uses, activities and their locations, and mobility and traffic patterns. The stakeholders mapping and analysis included taking stock of existing neighbors as well as visitors to the area and users of spaces and services.

The report documented all these efforts and was organized in three parts, with two parts focusing on each AUC campus: Tahrir Square and New Cairo. Each of these two parts covered three themes that organized the presentation of the results of the preparatory work:

- **Theme 1: Rationale For Neighborhood Engagement**
- **Theme 2: The Edge: Physical, Social And Economic Relationships Between Campus and Neighborhood**
- **Theme 3: The External Context: Legal And Urban Management Frameworks**

The report concluded with Part III that placed the AUC-NI within the wider AUC strategic vision for the coming decade in developing a place-based, comprehensive, and institutionally-embedded framework for its anchor strategy approach that engages with the University’s neighboring community. This section included the fourth analytical theme:

- **Theme 4: Ingredients For A University Anchor Strategy**

AUC-NI acknowledged the Neighborhood Initiative at the AUB for its cooperation and financial support of the preparatory work of the AUC-NI through a Ford Foundation Grant. AUC-NI also acknowledged the effort of a dedicated research team that worked under the supervision and guidance of three AUC faculty members. Last, but not least acknowledged was the efforts made by the previous AUC President, and initiator of the NI at AUC, Lisa Anderson.
PART

AUC

NEW CAIRO
2. SOCIAL ASSET MAPPING

AUC EXISTING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES

2.1 INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

Knowledge of stakeholders within the AUC community provides the NI with an index of current community and research outreach initiatives already being performed within the downtown and New Cairo neighborhoods. This knowledge helps the NI understand how to mobilize the AUC community to engage in the initiative, including promoting the NI internally and debating it; finding who is already engaged in which programs or activities that can be coordinated with or within the NI; and what are the interests of faculty, staff, students and the administration in each of the neighborhoods.

2.2 GERHART CENTER

2.2.1 Overview

The John D. Gerhart Center for Philanthropy and Civic Engagement was established in 2006 to further the University’s community outreach in Egypt and the region. It promotes social change and works to advance social responsibility and civic engagement. The center also provides numerous fellowships and seminars to cultivate the next generation of researchers concerned with public service. To achieve its mission, the Gerhart Center is a liaison between the academic institutions, civil society entities, and for-profit corporations.

2.2.2 Current Community Outreach Activities

The Gerhart Center strives to make widely available research, information, and best practice case studies to build stronger civil society, with a focus on foundations and other forms of social investing through strengthening philanthropy. As such, the Gerhart center builds leadership capacities by providing tailored peer learning and support services to philanthropic institutions in the region. The Gerhart Center makes available an Arab Encyclopedia on Philanthropy, which is an on-line resource featuring Arabic translations of key international documents to guide effective grant-making, corporate philanthropy, and more impactful institutional giving. The Gerhart Center also focuses on building up Student Leaders by empowering undergraduate students to expand their skills in leadership and strategic philanthropy, while encouraging greater civic engagement at AUC. One of the premier community outreach activities the Gerhart Center manages, is the Community Based Learning Program (currently ACE, Advocates for Community Engagement) established in 2006, as part of the American University in Cairo campus infrastructure to forward civic engagement and citizen scholarship. As an academic support unit, it is managed by the Office of Undergraduate Studies, the John D. Gerhart Center for Philanthropy and Civic Engagement and the Center for Learning and Teaching.

2.2.3 Potential Collaboration with the NI

Strengthen the culture and effectiveness of philanthropy in the Arab region.
2.3 RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR A SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT (RISE)

2.3.1 Overview
RISE serves as a multidisciplinary institute dedicated to promoting research of sustainable environments in Egypt, the Middle East and North Africa. The institute represents a reaffirmation and strengthening of AUC’s commitment to sustainable environmental education and research. Building on the accomplishments of the Desert Development Center’s (DDC) legacy in natural resource management, renewable energy and sustainable agriculture in desert areas, RISE has the expanded mission to promote sustainability in a diversity of environments, including rural and urban, desert and temperate, through applied research, education and training programs. The institute is designed to provide new opportunities for AUC students to learn and engage with the environment and related sustainability issues.

2.3.2 Current Community Outreach Activities
Since 2006, RISE has been working in direct partnership with local communities on developing, implementing and testing sustainable community development solutions, focusing particularly on efficient water management practices, integrated farming systems, renewable energy, local entrepreneurship and gender. The majority of their development work takes place at their field sites: Abu Minqar, El Heiz and Shubra Qubala.

Current development projects include:
- Canal Lining
- Drip and Sprinkler Irrigation Systems
- Biogas and Composting
- Recycled Wastewater Community Gardens
- Drainage Agriculture and Salinity Trials
- Greenhouses and Shadehouses
- Aquaponics and Desert Fish Farming
- Drinking Water Filtration
- Sewage Water Management and Recycling
- Solar Energy Chicken Incubators, Operated by Women

2.3.3 Potential Collaboration with the NI
RISE and NI could collaborate on events together, such as a neighborhood markets open to the public, to raise awareness about RISE and a sustainable Egypt within the AUC and broader neighborhood community.

2.4 OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY

2.4.1 Overview
This office was established in 2011 to address the environmental challenges of the university in the areas of energy, waste, and water management. The office collects and records data on consumption of water, energy and production of waste. The office’s purpose is to reduce the above consumptions and forecast operations budgeting. Since 2011, the office has successfully reduced energy consumptions by 30%. There is a carbon footprint report issued on bi-annual basis, data collection and self-assessment carried out on yearly basis.

2.4.2 Current Community Outreach Activities
The office organizes several community outreach programs every year including:
- Earth Week
- Green Career Day
- Behavior Awareness Sessions

2.4.3 Potential Collaboration with the NI
NI and the Office of Sustainability could partner to enhance the mobility of the neighborhood surrounding AUC in both Tahrir and New Cairo to increase the connectivity between the campus and the surrounding area to encourage sustainable practices such as cycling and walking. The partnership could also include raising awareness and hosting events to support more responsible solid waste management practices in both AUC and surrounding communities. The engagement of residents, business and schools from the neighboring communities could help sustain and scale up these campaigns.

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2.5 CENTER FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

2.5.1 Overview
The Center for Sustainable Development (CSD) was established in 2012 to help Egypt face the challenges of sustainability. It links and integrates different parties as part of an ambitious and comprehensive movement for sustainable development. The work of the CSD is facilitated by a wide network of partners, students, supporters and enablers that are national and international actors, and represent a wide range of sectors including universities, NGOs, private companies and public authorities.

The CSD is unique in its integration of all the AUC schools and research bodies to develop innovative, creative and achievable green solutions for the challenges facing the sustainable development of Egypt and the region. The interconnected nature of the “sustainability challenge” is at the heart of the CSD’s work. The CSD is driven by the urge to better understand, communicate and solve the complex problems associated with the developmental process in Egypt and the wider region.

2.5.2 Current Community Outreach Activities
The CSD concentrates on involving AUC in large national projects that can have a wide impact on the Egyptian community and enable researchers and students to implement their research results and have direct links to the real world. Student initiatives and pilot projects developed at the grassroots level are also supported by CSD. Such projects include The Slum Development Working Group (SDWG), which works toward creating guiding principles and recommendations for a comprehensive and sustainable slum upgrading strategy from a multidisciplinary perspective.

2.5.3 Potential Collaboration with the NI
Potential collaborations could include engaging AUC students and faculty with neighboring stakeholders around the topic of sustainable urban practices. This could include hosting idea and design workshops with the community around thematic issues such as sustainable mobility, traffic and waste management.

2.6 SPORTS CENTER

2.6.1 Overview
The AUC has a state-of-the-art sports center. The AUC’s Office of Athletics offers quality athletic activities and learning opportunities to all students. Programs promote a healthy lifestyle, discipline, teamwork and leadership development, as well as high standards of ethical conduct and sportsmanship. The sports program emphasizes health and enjoyment through recreation, fitness, competitions and sound physical habits.

2.6.2 Current Community Outreach Activities
Three years ago, the AUC’s Office of Athletics began targeting the non-AUC community with a variety of sports academies ranging from swimming to kickboxing. These classes are offered to both AUC students and the non-AUC community with AUC students receiving priority access. The academies are a collaboration between the AUC Office of Athletics and AUC Alumni creating a viable and sustainable program design. Some of the AUC athletic facilities are rented to private academies and other external entities in the evenings.

2.6.3 Potential Collaboration with the NI
Working with the Student Athletes Advisory Council (SAAC): Made up of captains of all varsity teams to discuss ways to generate revenue for the department and potentially charity outreach, etc.

Also working with the Ministry of Sports and the Egyptian Olympic Committee to support developing Egyptian athletes in general with the ultimate objective of working together to support regional and international bids, such as that to host the 2019 World Pentathlon bid.
2.7 UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

2.7.1 Overview
The AUC library has diverse and constantly expanding collections, including books, journals, videos, microforms, rare materials and a substantial collection of electronic resources.

2.7.2 Current Community Outreach Activities
Currently, access to any of the library collections to external users is facilitated through different mechanisms. Library permits external users from local and governmental universities to use the facilities as a way to reach out to the Egyptian academic community and helping them with their limited resources; however, access to New Cairo facilities is only permissible on Saturdays. There have been no complaints about Saturday only access. International and overseas researchers are also welcomed to use the facilities, provided they are working on an academic related matter (thesis, research project, etc.).

The rare books library frequently holds exhibits and events; however, access to the exhibits and events is by invitation only at the New Cairo campus due to security restrictions.

2.7.3 Potential Collaboration with the NI
An analysis of the New Cairo community interests is needed to see how the library can connect better with the neighborhood. Potential collaboration with elementary and secondary schools is promising. The use of technology and online databases and resources, such as the publicly available Digital Archive and Research Repository (DAR)\(^4\) could provide potential satellitising of the library within or at least at the connecting point with the community. Knowledge stations could be hosted as part of the revitalization of our community edge or as satellite services in strategic stakeholder locations, such as schools and cultural institutions like the Egyptian Museum.

2.8 CONCLUSION
NI needs to acknowledge the current social assets within the university embedded in institutions/individuals and networks. What was feasible at this point was examining the institutions and their engagement in the community. Further discussion with all groups needs to be carried out to see where fit for collaboration exists. Further mapping is not needed, but more engagement in an activity. The next step seems to be the connecting and collaboration across and with these existing initiatives. Additionally, creating solid networks and alliances between groups is imperative to strengthening outreach potential.

\(^4\) http://dar.aucegypt.edu/
3. PHYSICAL ASSET MAPPING

CAMPUS PHYSICAL ASSESSMENT

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The AUC has two distinct campuses, each unique in how it impacts and/or interacts with its neighboring community. The NI aims to utilize specific parts of the campus for the benefit of this neighboring community, and in order to do so, it was first important to understand how the AUC community uses open spaces (plazas, gardens, etc.) in both campuses. This sense of obligation towards the community lies within the strategic vision of the university, and was an inherent part of the design concept of the New Cairo campus. A strong community link was an integral part of the new 290-acre campus design, as shown in the original conceptual sketches below. The area selected to be the interface between the surrounding community and the university was the tip of the campus, the visitor's area at Gate 1. This area, designed to be a multi-use space and cultural hub in the area is currently underused by the AUC community, and seldom offers activities and/or events that target – and benefit – neighboring stakeholders, as will be further discussed in this section.

The Neighborhood Initiative research team aims to activate this area for the benefit of the AUC and neighboring community at large. In order to do so, it was first important to understand how space is utilized within the campus to better understand what design features have been most attractive to social activities. Identifying the activity and space usage patterns will allow us to identify input and design ideas for the underused Gate 1 area. Thus, the “Campus in Context | Mapping AUC Campuses: Aligning Visions” workshop was designed and conducted.
The analysis of open spaces’ usage in the New Cairo campus was analyzed from the primary data collected from a mapping workshop conducted during the 2016 Spring semester. Through an open call, the NI research team trained eight third- and fourth-year undergraduate AUC students from different schools in the Campus in Context workshop on how to collect data on three parameters: behavioral mapping, accessibility and porosity, and the perception and cognition of spaces on campus. These parameters were selected due to their relevance to reaching the objectives of the activity; understanding how space is used on campus to act as input for designing future Neighborhood Initiative interventions and activities. Each parameter was analyzed within the following scopes through observational behavioral mapping in different time intervals, physical assets mapping, and conducting interviews with AUC campus:

### Accessibility and Mobility
- Defining physical access points,
- Identifying mobility patterns,

### Behavioral Mapping
- Identifying congregation areas (activity hot spots),
- Illustrating and noting the activity types and patterns,
- Analyzing the social geometry of the users (types of users (i.e. students, faculty, staff, etc.), gender mix, group size, etc.),
- Identifying the proximity to and interaction with nearby physical elements (entrances, food outlets, shading, seating, etc.),
- Identifying temporal patterns of activity.

In order to conduct the mapping of the above parameters in the 290-acre New Cairo campus, the campus was divided into seven zones; Gate 1 area and the AUC Portal, WALEED plaza area, School of Sciences and Engineering (SSE) plaza area, Bartlett Plaza, garden and Conference and Visitor Center area (CVC), university residences and athletic center, and the campus parking lots.
3.3.2 Access and Mobility

Before designing interventions and events that target our neighboring community, it is important to understand how AUC community and visitors access and utilize the campus. The New Cairo campus has five entry gates whose access is restricted to AUC community or invited guests, with the exception of Gate 1, the visitors’ gate, which provides public (yet monitored) access to the Admissions Office, the Sharjah Art Gallery, the Malak Gabr Theatre, and the Allam Amphitheatre, which holds several musical events during the academic year. The main five gates allow vehicular and pedestrian access to the university’s parking facilities. Another security layer supplements this; eight pedestrian entry gates that enable access from the parking lots to the university’s buildings, facilities, and plazas.

3.3.2.1 Campus Access during regular working days
- access to sports facilities
- procedures to rent spaces for non-AUC

3.3.2.2 Campus Access during Special Events
The New Cairo campus includes facilities that can accommodate large congregations at events, namely outdoor spaces such as the Amphitheatre, the Library Garden; and indoor facilities such as the Malak Gabr Theatre and the CVC. The most important event of the year being the Commencement and the Cap and Gown ceremonies, which attract the graduating classes’ friends and family. Some of the events held on campus already target non-AUC persons, whether concerts held by the Student Union (SU) or external conferences hosted at the Conference and Visitor’s Center (CVC). These events – that can attract several hundreds at a time – require special security and mobility measures to ensure the safety of the attendees and that of the AUC community.
As discussed earlier, the Gate 1 area is of special interest to the Neighborhood Initiative. This area, which includes the amphitheater, holds on average 1-2 large concerts each calendar year, which targets AUC and non-AUC communities. As shown below, campus accessibility is altered during such ticketed events. The Gate 1 area also hosts the Theatre and the Art Gallery, however these venues seldom attract visitors of the same scale as the amphitheater concerts. On the other side of the campus, the CVC area also hosts public and ticketed events.

Being within the campus perimeter – unlike the Gate 1 area that is outside the AUC Portal – necessitates the use of barricades to limit the mobility of non-AUC event visitors to designated areas and avoid disturbance to other university activities and classes.
3.3.2.3 Campus Mobility

Part of the campus mapping activity was understanding the movement patterns within the New Cairo campus. As expected, higher pedestrian flow was observed in the morning into the campus, and towards the parking lots and bus gate in the late afternoon. In addition, in the afternoons, there was higher movement along AUC Avenue, with students moving in between classes in different buildings and towards dining facilities and the Sports Complex. It was also important to understand how students perceive the distance to the different edges of the campus, and with the neighboring area. It is interesting to note that the Arts Center is perceived by many students to be “far from everything” as one of the interviewed students put it, even though the time it takes to reach the Arts Center from the library (Bartlett Plaza) is slightly less than reaching the Sports Complex from the SSE Building, which is frequented by students and staff regularly throughout the day. From this one can conclude that perceptual distances and barriers may be stronger than physical ones and that the limited use of the Gate 1 area can be combated if it offers services that interest a wide portion of the AUC community.

On the other hand, the Garden is more often used for AUC internal events, or events that include a limited external guest lists, such as AUC Community Day.

Since its opening in early 2016, the shopping mall across from Gate 5, Point 90, has attracted many AUCians for a quick midday break or an evening outing. Unlike Americana Plaza and Meeting Point, which have been operating for several years, Point 90 enjoys a more pedestrian-friendly route from the campus to its premises. A walk from “Quick” or the library takes approximately X and Y minutes respectively, and more importantly students feel safe crossing the street as pedestrians in comparison to the other two shopping facilities. This shows the aptitude and the unmet demand of the AUC community for leisure spaces located at a pedestrian-friendly, walking distance.
3.3.3 Behavioral Mapping

The campus life is thriving throughout the day with planned activities, such as student groups' and physical activities, and unplanned activities, such as study groups, leisure, and socialization. This is observed throughout the campus, however as one would expect, some places and times are suitable for and/or attract different aspects of campus life. These congregation areas and times were examined by observing activities throughout the campus in different times of day and on different days.

As anyone who walks through the campus on a weekday will notice, the Bartlett Plaza can be considered the heart of the campus, with the highest congregation of students in transit from one point to another, or socializing and/or promoting student group activities or raising awareness on specific issues. Contrary to our expectation however, the busiest time in the plaza was at 11 am, followed by 1 pm during assembly hour.

The end of business hours on campus (4 pm) also witnesses a high level of activity, however it is mostly passing-through traffic towards the exits. During the times in which the Bartlett Plaza is occupied, students tend to use the raised platforms for congregation and seating elements. The raised platform area is one of the key features that define the plaza, with different activities conducted on it throughout the day. Its elevation and high visibility make it used as landmark and a performance stage, in addition to a favored seating area when not booked for activities. The other distinct feature of the plaza is the sunken area in Bartlett. This area is not as utilized for socialization, unless there is furniture (granite cubes, chairs) in them. It is more often mostly used as a planned activities/promotional space.
3.4 CONCLUSION

The AUC New campus was designed with both large open spaces and sustainability in mind. Both the open spaces and sustainability were drawn into the original plans with the idea to use the AUC as an anchor within the New Cairo neighborhood with which the campus resides. Specifically, the visitor’s area at Gate 1, which was designed to be a multi-use space for both the AUC community and neighborhood, still awaits its transformation into such a space. The NI seeks to encourage the appropriate stakeholders within the AUC community to move forward with the conversation of the Gate 1 area into a multi-use space, such as a cultural hub for both the AUC and neighborhood communities. The overall takeaway from the AUC New Campus physical asset mapping was the great potential the campus community has to offer in terms of the underutilized physical space and facilities. Additionally, access and mobility are important in understanding how both the AUC community, visitors, and the neighborhood community access and utilize the campus.
PART

AUC

TAHRIR II
4. SOCIAL ASSET MAPPING

AUC EXISTING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES

4.1 INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

The social asset mapping was conducted through desktop research, primarily through the AUC website and institutional documents, as well as through personal meetings and in-depth interviews with key administrators, staff, faculty and students. The research and interviews were conducted over a period of two semesters, working systematically through all potential units, departments and initiatives across campus.

4.2 THE SCHOOL OF CONTINUING EDUCATION (SCE)

4.2.1 Overview

The AUC has been offering its services beyond its direct interaction with its student population through the School of Continuing Education (SCE) since its establishment in 1924 as a public service division. Over the years, the SCE has developed into one of the leading providers of professional and non-academic studies education in the Middle East by providing a wide range of market- and demand-driven professional certificates and courses that address the curiosity of youth, as well as the practical know-how needs of junior and mid-level professionals. This reputation allowed it to financially sustain itself, and become one of the University’s revenue-generating streams.

According to SCE statistics, there are 22,447 students actively enrolled in SCE courses as of July 2016, a 14.5% increase from the previous year. The vast majority of which are Egyptians (96%) with a Bachelors degree (76%). Additionally, SCE attracted student population with an adequate gender balance, with 44% female enrollment. The SCE is the current main user of the Tahrir Square campus presence, with 77% of the SCE instructional courses taking place there (as of October 2016). This coupled with the short duration of most SCE courses (most courses running for 3-12 weeks) contributed to the loss of the sense of ownership and belonging of the SCE student population to the Tahrir Square campus.

4.2.2 Current Community Outreach Activities

Nonetheless, the SCE has been keen to be active beyond its educational mandate and recurring stream of certificates and courses. It organizes a variety of public events that target different types of audiences. There are several annual conferences that target specific sectors, such as development of education through the NileTESOL Conference, which has been running over the last 20 years and targets English Language teachers in public Egyptian schools throughout Egypt, as well as the International Language Assessment Conference in Egypt (ILACE) which aims to improve student learning. Other conferences aim to support youth in the job market through the annual Pharma Career Day that connects pharmaceutical companies with individuals interested in entering the field. A more frequently recurring public event organized by the SCE is the Community Lecture Series, where the University provides a platform for AUC faculty to engage with the public through eight monthly public lectures throughout the academic year. All of the abovementioned events target and are attended by SCE students, AUC community, and the general public.

4.2.3 Potential Collaboration with the NI

The SCE has been successfully organizing conferences that attract many youth from Egyptian universities and young professionals for several years. As such, they would be able to support the NI in marketing and outreach beyond the AUC, as well as selecting the community engagement program, as they may be able to provide insight into the types of issues that may be of interest for that target group. On the other hand, the SCE is interested in expanding the curricula of courses and certificates offered to ensure that all courses addressing the knowledge gap are offered. The knowledge gap of the highest priority and interest in continuing education can be identified through a community needs assessment of the surrounding neighborhoods, as well as current SCE students and alumni.

For more on the SCE mission and offered programs, please visit: http://schools.aucegypt.edu/sce/about/Pages/default.aspx
Since its reopening in 2012, the Falaki Mainstage Theatre – located in the Falaki Academic Center – has been managed through a collaboration between the AUC (currently managed by the SCE) and Studio Emad Eddin Foundation. As the artistic partner, during their tenure as tenant Studio Emad Eddin was responsible for stage equipment, management, while the university rented the facilities to third parties and is responsible for security, management, maintenance, and similar issues. The Falaki Theatre has become one of Cairo’s main venues for independent theatre, hosting an array of plays and art festivals at affordable prices. In its commitment to increase access to artists and performing groups with financial limitations, arrangements can often be made with the administration for a lowered rental fee.

NI needs to acknowledge the current social assets within the university embedded in institutions/individuals and networks. Like the social asset mapping of the New Cairo campus, NI examined the Tahrir campus institutions and their engagement in the community. Again, further mapping is not needed, but more engagement in an activity. The next step seems to be the connecting and collaboration across and with these existing initiatives. Additionally, creating solid networks and alliances between groups is imperative to strengthening outreach potential. The Tahrir campus being in such a central location, the NI should focus on how the Tahrir campus can utilize its central location for outreach purposes.
5. PHYSICAL ASSET MAPPING

CAMPUS PHYSICAL ASSESSMENT

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The effort undertaken in mapping the New Cairo campus was also conducted in the Tahrir Square campus to better understand how open spaces there are currently utilized. Identifying the activity and space usage patterns allowed us to identify the design features that have been most attractive to social activities, which will serve as input to plan and design the most suitable community engagement interventions in the Tahrir Square campus. Furthermore, since relocating the majority of the university activities to the New Cairo campus in 2008 there has been much debate as to the best utilization of the iconic Tahrir Square campus. This mapping activity can also serve as a baseline study of how the open spaces in the three Tahrir Square complexes are currently used, bringing into light an up-to-date understanding of the campus and how it is used.

5.2 CAMPUS OVERVIEW

The Tahrir Square campus is divided into 3 complexes: the Main Campus, Falaki Academic Center, and the Greek Campus, which collectively constitute the nine-acre campus. The Main campus is home to the historic palace, which houses the Oriental and Ewart Memorial Halls, as well as the Margo Veillon Gallery of Modern Egyptian Art and two smaller exhibition spaces. Tahrir Square campus also hosts the AUC Tahrir Library and the AUC Press bookstore and café. The majority of activities in Main and Falaki are that of the School of Continuing Education, in addition to a few research centers, and special events held at the Oriental and Ewart Halls. The Greek Campus is rented under a 10-year lease agreement and has been transformed into a technology park and culture venue called “The GrEEK Campus,” and the Falaki Theatre in the Falaki campus, as of the completion of this research, was operated by Studio Emad Eddin Foundation, an NGO that supports performing artists.
5.3 MAPPING THE CAMPUS

5.3.1 Workshop Design

The analysis of open spaces' usage in the Tahrir campus was analyzed from the primary data collected from a mapping workshop conducted during the 2016 Fall semester. Through an open call, the NI research team trained eight fourth-year undergraduate students from different schools in the Campus in Context workshop on how to collect data on three parameters: behavioural mapping, accessibility and porosity, and the perception and cognition of spaces on campus. These parameters were selected due to their relevance to reaching the objectives of the activity; understanding how space is used on campus to act as input for designing future Neighborhood Initiative interventions and activities. Each parameter was analyzed for each of the Tahrir Square’s three complexes within the following scopes through observational behavioral mapping in different time intervals, physical assets mapping, and conducting interviews with AUC campus:

Accessibility and Mobility
- Defining physical access points to the study area,
- Identifying mobility patterns in the study area,
- Understanding the impact of temporality (morning vs. afternoon vs. evening vs. late night, weekday vs. weekend) and nature of user group (AUC community vs. visitors) on campus accessibility,
- Identify security presence and/or constraints and their interaction/influence on users (if any).

Behavioral Mapping
- Identifying congregation areas (activity hot spots),
- Illustrating and noting the activity types and patterns,
- Identifying the impact radius of the activity,
- Analyzing the social geometry of the users (types of users (i.e. students, faculty, staff, etc.), gender mix, group size, etc.),
- Identifying the proximity to and interaction with nearby physical elements (entrances, food outlets, shading, seating, etc.),
- Identifying temporal patterns of activity.

5.4 MAIN CAMPUS

5.4.1 Accessibility and Mobility

The AUC Main Campus can be considered one of the quietest complexes of the Tahrir campus as it mostly houses some of the educational activities of the School of Continuing Education (SCE), and events held at the Palace’s different spaces. There are five gates that give access to the AUC main campus, but only one gate, on Mohamed Mahmoud Street, is used for regular access throughout the week. This gate started operating in January 2017, replacing another gate on the same street, which is now only used for services and maintenance. There are two gates on Sheikh Rihan Street, one of them opens on workdays, and the other one opened only for VIP. There is also a gate on el-Qasr el-Aini Street which has been closed for some time now for unknown reasons. There is a future plan to create separate gates for staff and students.

Access to campus is controlled, although less rigorous than the New Cairo Campus due to the regularity of public events held at the Tahrir Square campus. Personal identification is required at public events, otherwise access is limited to the AUC community or those invited by faculty or staff.

The campus walls are not permeable except for the corner facing Tahrir Square, which gives passersby a view of the garden space and outdoor theatre created in place of the demolished Science Building.

![Figure (11): Main Campus Access Points](image-url)
The mobility patterns within the Main Campus were mapped as seen below, for three user groups; students, staff, and campus security. Students were observed to take the shortest path to reach their destination, with occasional stops at the cafeteria and other shaded areas. Staff and security tended to move throughout the campus. Students were rarely observed to be taking the southern route facing el-Qasr el-Ainy street as there are no classrooms in that area or other services, except for the AUC Bookstore.
5.4.2 Behavioral Mapping

The main congregation areas in the Main campus are the shaded pergola area, the fountain area, and the entrances to the cafeteria. Due to the nature of the SCE students, they mostly use the spaces for short periods of time before/after their classes. During large events, the activity on campus increases, with attendees heavily using the abovementioned spaces, in addition to entrances to Ewart and Oriental Halls for socializing pre/post the event.

It is worth noting that the sports field is not regularly used, except for Thursday evenings where some staff book it to play football, often with their children.
5.5 FALAKI CAMPUS

The Falaki Campus currently houses the administration for the School of Continuing Education, the courses of the SCE offers, as well as the Falaki Theatre, which offers regular plays open to the public as well as holds private events and screenings. It is one of the most frequented campuses due to its multiple uses, from SCE students and the general public alike.

5.5.1 Accessibility and Mobility

The Falaki Campus has 2 operational gates; the main one is located on Falaki Street and is used by the SCE students and public. The secondary gate located in El Sheikh Rihan Street, and is only accessible to AUC staff. The campus is open all weekdays till 9 p.m. Once inside the campus, there is no visual connection with the outside as all the walls are impermeable.

5.5.2 Behavioral Mapping

Unlike the other two Tahrir Square campuses, the Falaki Campus has only one open-air congregation space, the plaza. The plaza connects the different buildings and facilities in the campus, namely the new and the old Falaki buildings, and the cafeteria. The seating area is heavily used by all campus users, particularly during the times of the day they are shaded. Users are either studying, socializing, eating or just waiting for their classes, individually and in small groups.
5.6 THE GREEK CAMPUS

The Greek Campus inhabits the block surrounded by Tahrir, Falaki, Mohamed Mahmoud, and Youssef el-Gendy streets. The campus is currently rented under a 10-year lease agreement and has been transformed into a technology park and culture venue called “The GrEEK Campus,” and now houses offices and co-working spaces. Additionally, under its current management it also evolved into one of downtown Cairo’s main hosts of cultural and music events.

5.6.1 Accessibility and Mobility

The campuses has 5 gates, 2 on the sides which are permanently inaccessible, 2 on the outside corners, used for staff and businesses renting spaces in the campus, while the main gate on Tahrir Street, is the only one which allow access to visitors. Visitors are required to show identification at the gate.
5.6.2 Behavioral Mapping

As the Greek Campus now houses numerous businesses, it is more alive during regular business hours – unless there is a special event in the evening. The two most used areas are the seating areas in the main plaza and the cafeteria area, as well as the recreational area - the table tennis. Users can be found working, studying, eating or socializing in groups and individually. On weekends, activity on campus decreases, with only a few businesses and food outlets operating.

Due to the relatively regular users in the Greek Campus, they develop a sense of ownership of the space and make slight modifications to seating areas to fit their needs and desired comfort, in a manner unlike that documented in the other two campuses where seating areas remained largely unchanged.

During large public events, such as concerts, the division of the open spaces differs. The main and upper plazas are used to set up the stage and the audience, while the rest of the open space is used for servicing both the stage and the audience (sound engineering, food/drink vendors, etc.).
Although the Tahrir campuses are significantly smaller than the New Cairo campus, nine acres downtown Cairo constitute a large area in terms of quality space in the heart of Cairo. As such, this space should be utilized in the most appropriate ways possible. Again, the AUC campus should act as an anchor within both the AUC and neighborhood communities. Due to most of the AUC activities being moved to the New Cairo campus, there is more physical space and facilities available for potential use by the AUC and neighborhood communities. The AUC should use this to its advantage to not only think about the space for additional AUC programming, but how to utilize the space to engage the neighborhood community. Currently, there is limited space downtown for people to express themselves (i.e. freedom of speech, gathering, artistic expression, cultural exchange). Perhaps the Tahrir campus could utilize some of its space as a multi-purpose space like the Gate 1 area on the New Cairo campus. Create a space for both the AUC community and neighborhood community to come together in a cultural hub.
6. COMMUNITY PERCEPTION

NEIGHBORHOOD INTERESTS AND EXPECTATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This section describes an exploratory study on community perception of the university in both the campuses of New Cairo and Downtown- Tahrir Square, exploring four primary thematic areas: knowledge of the university, relationship with the university whether direct or indirect, opportunities to advance the community relationship and finally their personal preference for how the current condition can be improved. Individual one-on-one discussions of known and random community members took place and were recorded in collaboration with the Social Research Center (SRC) at the American University in Cairo. In doing so, our definition to community perception was mainly driven by the four thematic areas as key issues that impact the overall perception. The figure below shows a community perception model developed by the research group.

6.2 OBJECTIVES

The objective of the survey was to establish a better understanding of the issues and concerns facing the community; and in doing so to highlight the aspects of engagement and initiatives needed. The findings from this exploratory research exercise are grounded in empirical evidence to promote community engagement and possible ways for AUC to impact the society, particularly in the surrounding inner ring and proximal engagements. It is our aim that by developing such mutual relationships AUC could respond to the real community needs and expectations as relates to downtown and new campus locations and in coordination with the city and key members of the community. In doing so, a better definition of the community will appear and will help the university in its mission. In this respect community engagement would be central to the university’s trajectory as well as play a role in imparting the university’s role in transforming the lives of the community. The exploratory study conducted was useful to affirm initial assumptions and perceptions concluded in previous workshops or based on the initial suppositions of the research team. While the study is limited to a focused group of individuals, a more detailed study is required to address the key issues in a more structured exercise, to address the major issues and propose a list of interventions to resolve issues raised.

6.3 METHODOLOGY

The methodology used was a qualitative research exploratory study employing a snowball sampling method. Snowball sampling is a recruitment method that employs research into participants’ social networks to access specific populations. Snowball sampling consists of two steps;

- Identify potential subjects in the population. Often, only one or two subjects can be found initially.
- Ask those subjects to recruit other people and then ask those people to recruit.

Participants should be made aware that they do not have to provide any other names.

6.4 LIMITATIONS AND CONSTRAINTS

The ability of the research team to conduct a full neighborhood wide survey with direct access to random samples was impeded by the security restrictions and permissions from CAPMAS which were not possible to obtain at the time of the research. To mitigate this the research team in collaboration with the SRC conducted a snowball method and documented the results of the exploratory work through one on one focused interviews (sample size = 28).
6.5 SUMMARY OF THE KEY STATEMENTS AND SURVEY OUTPUT

6.5.1 Questioned on the “Knowledge of the campus”, the following responses were extracted from the survey:

The research team found that the entire sample pool knew where the campuses were located and that the AUC is an academic institution. Some respondents further added that AUC is an expensive university for the future leaders of Egypt. There was knowledge about the university offerings; bachelor, masters and doctoral degrees. Additionally, a respondent knew about the continuing education program. Although several respondents knew about events hosted by the university, an overwhelming majority of the respondents have no knowledge about events or what is happening inside either AUC campuses, or that a large majority of them are publicly accessible.

6.5.2 Questioned on the “Relationship with the campus”, the following responses were extracted from the survey:

The research team found that the responses were varied. There was an overall positive response with respect to the AUC’s presence in both neighborhoods. The population of the AUC community in New Cairo provides the surrounding neighborhood commercial centers with a large customer base, and several respondents acknowledge this positive relationship. Respondents with a direct connection to AUC (i.e. alumni, businesses, etc.) knew of and occasionally attended events held on both campuses. Some respondents without a direct connection to AUC knew of events, but the majority discussed barriers of entry to the campus. Many of these respondents also discussed the AUC’s high level of security and police activity surrounding the campus. Of primary concern from this question is who has access to both AUC campuses? If the AUC wants to people to attend events, how can the AUC solve campus access issues?

6.5.3 Questioned on the “Opportunities for the university”, the following responses were extracted from the survey:

The research team found that the majority of respondents view the AUC as a strong institution with potential social impact and welcome the AUC as a community leader. Common opportunity themes included leading community awareness campaigns, hosting events, and engaging in environmental issues. The respondents view AUC as a leader within the community; however, it appears that AUC could do a better job with community engagement through the suggested themes.

6.5.4 Questioned on the “their own preference”, the following responses were extracted from the survey:

The research team found that the majority of respondents answered similarly to the “Opportunities for the university” question. Common themes again included leading community awareness campaigns, hosting free events, and engaging in environmental issues. The respondents would like to see AUC take the lead in the community with respect to the environment. They view AUC as an institution with the ability to educate the public and potentially make a positive environmental impact in the community. People would like to see programming around environmental issues, specifically litter and recycling. Respondents made clear that AUC needs to do a better job at connecting with the community. As such, opening the New Cairo visitor’s gate up in a more public way would help bring the community together.
6.6 OVERALL “PERCEPTION” IN LIGHT OF THE PREVIOUS QUESTIONS:

Overall the respondents “Perception” about the AUC as an academic institution is positive. The respondents acknowledge AUC as one of the top universities in Egypt graduating high caliber students. Aside from the high quality of education, the respondent’s overall perception of AUC could be described as negative. “Enclosed on itself”, “not open”, “closure”, “introverted”, and “negative” were some of the repeated words and phrases from respondents. The securitization of the university, with the high walls and gates seems to impact people’s perceptions. As with the previous questions, it appears that there are barriers of access to the university that manifest themselves in respondent’s negative image of AUC.

6.7 PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS EXTRACTED FROM THE EXERCISE

- The definition of the community differs in each of the two campus locations
- Most agree on a gap that exists between the students and the surrounding community
- Most agree on access for the unprivileged to education and information
- Most agree on the need for more engagement by the university in aspects that can advance the surrounding community
- Most agree on the prestige, quality of education, caliber of students, faculty and staff which is an asset for the community
- More venues of impact are required in aspects other than just education
PART III
THE WAY FORWARD
7. INSTITUTIONALIZING THE NEIGHBORHOOD INITIATIVE

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Institutional anchoring of the Neighborhood Initiative within the AUC is pivotal for the sustainability of the project and its evolution into an integral part of the AUC culture. In September 2016 the administration pledged to provide the initiative with an office space as part of the Provost Office. Anchoring the NI within the university administration will ensure that the initiative has the legitimacy to act in the name of the University. This will also allow it to capitalize on the success of the preparatory phase, facilitating the implementation of the first program of activities of the neighborhood initiative. All NI activities require strong administrative support within the AUC and with external primary stakeholders, such as the Cairo Governorate; and the NI team has already started taking action to push their efforts to the next level. On the external front, a meeting was held with the former Cairo Governor in November 2015, in which the governorate’s commitment to support the AUC NI in both campuses has been confirmed, and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the cooperation between the AUC and Cairo Governorate signed. Additionally, one of the NI coordinators (Dr. Magda Mostafa) has been invited to serve as a member of the governorate’s committee on the rehabilitation of downtown Cairo.

One of the upgrading projects that recently took place is the façade renovation of the Lycée Français School, adjacent to AUC Tahrir Square. The Lycée Français project which the NI liaised was made possible through the support of AUC and the Cairo governorate, as well as corporate sponsorship. The signed MOU ensures the governorate’s support and cooperation for the NI activities, particularly those activities that require local government permission or security clearance, such as renovation of streets, licensing street festivals or activities, and so forth.

A later development emerged with the Presidential Decree 604 in December 2016, and establishment of the national Cairo Historic Development Committee (CHDC), under the chairmanship of Special Counsel Engineer Ibrahim Mehleb. AUC was once again extended participation in this instrumental body in the form of membership of the NI’s Principal Investigator, Dr. Magda Mostafa, to the CHDC’s Technical Sub-Committee and Community Dialogues Committee, as well as observership to the Financial Committee. This membership establishes a crucial connection to opportunities of government partnerships and participation towards shared strategic objectives.

7.2 FURTHERING THE INSTITUTIONAL CITIZENSHIP AND URBAN AGENDA AT AUC

The NI mission encourages a livable, just and sustainable neighborhood. NI seeks to address different forms of inequalities in the neighborhoods surrounding both the downtown and New Cairo AUC campuses. Embedded in the design of all interventions is a stress on knowledge dissemination, empowerment and identity all with a youth focus. NI will partner with community leaders to integrate the AUC community and stakeholders with the communities they live, work, and study and create a common ground of shared values that counteracts the common perception of the AUC community as an enclosed community on itself, disengaged from the surrounding operating in isolation. The involvement of students in particular - AUC’s main constituency - will also foster a sense of community service that will hopefully continue with them through their professional careers and manifest through continued applied research and designing innovative solutions tailored to the community’s problems.
7.3 **OBJECTIVES**

### 7.3.1 Conducting Participatory Assessment of Community Needs and Assets

Effective community engagement activities are those that are demand-driven and whose development agenda stems from the community needs and not the University’s vision alone. This will ensure that the initiative’s development efforts are meeting priority needs of the community and capitalizing on existing assets. This activity will utilize the identified local stakeholders and networks developed during the first phase of the project, particularly the stakeholder mapping processes that have been performed by the AUC NI team in 2015-2016. It will also build upon our understanding of the activities and that already take place around both campuses (both formal and informal), which were mapped during earlier workshops conducted by the NI team and undergraduate students.

This process will identify and engage active members from the community (volunteers) and train them on how to conduct a participatory community assessment of needs and assets. Similar to NI earlier research activities, the investigative task force will include representatives of the AUC student body to capitalize on their interest in community engagement projects. This assessment includes the following stages: team formation and training (which will include members from the community and NI team), community walks and streets interviews, and thematic-based focus group discussions. The outputs of this research will then be analyzed and synthesized. The final outcome will then be presented to the community in a neighborhood meeting, where the NI presents the prioritization of the area’s problems and development opportunities. The Gerhart Center for Philanthropy and Civic Engagement will play an important role in implementing this activity, particularly the engagement and training of community volunteers. The Social Research Center at AUC will play an important role in the qualitative surveys, interviews and focus groups as well as the analysis of qualitative research.

### 7.3.2 Developing and Implementing a Year-long Program of Events for Community Engagement

At the core of the NI activation is to develop and execute a program of events for community engagement, which provides sustained relationships with the neighborhood stakeholders over a period of time that is long enough to build trust, mutual understanding and cooperation. These events are an important interaction medium between the AUC and local stakeholders, and as such the target of these events will include AUC students and faculty, local community and businesses, and probably other interested universities. The innovative and stimulating programming will be based on the outcomes of previously conducted research such as stakeholder analysis and neighborhoods’ mapping to better understand the interests of our target groups, as well as collaborations with AUC offices and schools already involved in community outreach activities, which were identified and reached out to during the internal social asset identification activity in the internal grant. This is in addition to incorporating the results of the community needs and assets assessment (Activity 1) and the design lab (Activity 2), as well as the University’s strategic vision of the AUC as an involved and active member of the community. Events will be scheduled to take place every 2-3 months on both campuses, and will include a variety of interests targeting AUC students and youth in general with a focus on cultural, arts, sports, and skills development. Additional resources will be mobilized from corporate sponsorship – the NI already received interest from several neighboring corporate entities on supporting such events.

From a social inclusion and equity perspective, the NI will also seek to engage marginalized groups relevant to the NI, such as those involved in informal activities around the campus (street vendors around the New Cairo campus for example). This will provide them with the opportunity to interact with relevant stakeholders in their community and to have a venue to express their ideas.
7.3.3 Supporting and Capacitating a NI Unit at AUC

The continuation of the NI in this phase requires financial support for a core technical and administrative team that implements the NI program of interventions. This will ensure filling the institutional anchor that the AUC will develop (unit, department, core team, etc.) with technical capacity and administrative support. As a result of the NI team lobbying efforts, the AUC administration recently pledged support for incorporating the NI within the Provost Office and promised to offer financial support to the NI office once its results and contribution to AUC strategic vision are more tangible. This field of activities will include remunerations for this core technical and administrative team that will implement the NI institutional plan and the activities proposed in this document which coincides of the overall university strategic sustainability plan.

7.3.4 Supporting the Establishment and Activation of AUC Community Councils

According to the AUC’s Strategic vision for the next five years, it is imperative for the University to maintain and institutionalize the relationship and communication channels between the AUC and its neighbors. One of the channels through which this goal will be reached is the establishment of a NI community council for each campus. This will be based on the stakeholders mapping and analysis as well as the identification of change agents, natural leaders and community representatives during the NI’s initial activities and interventions. The definite criteria for membership will be developed within the project in consultation with relevant stakeholders and agencies, and senior AUC administration. This activity also includes setting up the structure and regulations of these community councils, promoting and recruiting potential council members and the stakeholders, and the actual formation and activation of the councils in partnership with the university’s key administration offices. The NI community councils should play a guiding and supporting role for the NI’s activities in order to gain legitimacy in the neighborhood and communal sense of ownership. The councils should approve plans, proposed projects, and facilitate access to resources. Training on good governance, community mobilization and other topics will be delivered to the council’s members.

7.3.5 Promoting the NI Concepts in Egypt and the MENA Region

One of the outcomes of this stage of the NI mobilization has been the launch of a website to promote the concept of neighborhood engagement in Egypt and in the region, documenting the AUC NI experiences. In the next phase the NI plans to support the website’s further development to create a bilingual (English and Arabic) platform that acts as a repository for all information relating to the NI for the AUC community, engaged stakeholders in the neighborhood, and the general public, as well as a source for promoting the concepts of active citizen engagement and anchor strategies. We also aim to strategize the visibility of the NI through following activities:

- Preparing publications, such as reports and journal articles that reflect on the AUC NI as the first university in Egypt with a neighborhood initiative program – and one of few in the MENA region – in light of the western experience in this field.

- Conducting targeted outreach to Egyptian universities in Cairo and other governorates to promote the university NI as well as the role the university can play in its surrounding neighborhood. Potential cooperation that may emerge in Cairo with Egyptian public universities include Cairo University, Ain Shams University, Helwan University, as well as neighboring private universities such as the GUC and Future University.

- Preparing a regional workshop, with key local and regional universities, resource experts, and neighborhood stakeholders to further promote the concept of university engagement beyond Egypt and share experiences on similar initiatives in the MENA region, with particular attention to experience exchange with the AUB’s well-established Neighborhood Initiative.
8. FURTHER STEPS

8.1 EXPECTED OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

This project will result in the capacitation of a core team that ensures the continuation of the AUC NI over the coming 1-2 years. It will also result in the visibility of the NI nationally and in the region, hence leading to the promotion of the approach of anchor strategy and university community engagement. Other tangible outputs will be the community councils for the two neighborhoods, the NI program of events, and the implemented NI improvement projects. Most important it is a win-win initiative as it involves the university students and faculty into real life projects in the community that can take education to a level beyond the classroom and impact the neighborhood too in a positive way.

On a more direct level, the outcome of the proposed program of events and activities is that the AUC will become a place of interest and a popular destination for its neighbors in both campuses. There are direct benefits to the community in terms of better mobilization for and engagement in improvement of its neighborhood, as well as the enjoyment of an improved neighborhood, as well as the facilities of AUC made available to them. There are also direct benefits to the AUC community in many practical terms, such as better immediate context when approaching the campuses, a more friendly community and better services and facilities for connecting the AUC community to the world outside the campuses’ walls.

8.2 RISK MANAGEMENT

As discussed above, it is expected that the NI’s planned activities will not face substantive implementation obstructions from the authorities, particularly with the good relation built with the governorate MOU and membership to the CHDC Sub-Committees, which will be further solidified with the activities planned in the preparatory phase. However, as the political climate could change we are putting in place the following risk management interventions to minimize the risk and/or the impact of any unforeseen stalls to planned community events or the implementation of improvement projects:

- Ensuring our effective participation in local administration committees in the Cairo Governorate’s committee on the rehabilitation of downtown and the New Cairo City Council, now being implemented through CHDC. This will keep the lines of communication open with the authorities and give the chance to address any issues informally early on.

- Conducting regular meetings with University leadership to update them on the Initiative’s progress and address any issues that may arise.

- In the case of not securing approvals for conducting a community engagement event outside of campus, we will contain all events to the earlier discussed spaces within campus while keeping events open to the public.

- In the case of not securing approvals for a selected implementation neighborhood improvement project:
  
  * The NI team will negotiate with the authorities to see how the project could align with the Governor’s vision and current revitalization project of upgrading downtown Cairo and increasing economic opportunities and livability in New Cairo.

  * The NI team can collaborate with the governorate on the project, thus increasing their ownership and interest in the project from an authorizing body to a partner.

  * The NI team can collaborate with private sector and/or civil society organizations already active in the areas of improvement projects, such as the al-Futtaim Group in New Cairo which is currently partnering with the government to construct a pedestrian bridge to create safe pedestrian access to Cairo Festival City, and al-Ismaelia Real Estate Investment which has implemented with partners such as CLUSTER several small upgrading interventions in downtown.
8.3 ACTION PLAN

• Establish advisory board for the Neighborhood Initiative.

• Conduct initial meeting with governorate officials, particularly the newly-appointed Cairo Governor and the Head of the New Cairo City Administration.

• Conduct meetings with AUC senior administration on a quarterly basis.

• Prepare database of NI-related scholarly work conducted by AUC Faculty and graduate students and other scholarly work.

• Develop methodology for community perception assessment and engagement.

• Establish contact with other initiatives and design labs, and local and regional media outlets to publicize NI activities and spread its civic engagement ideology.

• Conduct 2 participatory assessments of community needs and assets in neighborhoods surrounding, one per campus.

• Conduct 2 design labs for NI engagement activities, one per campus.

• Prepare and implement a program of community engagement events. The program will include 8 events per campus over the duration of the project, for a total of 16 community events.

• Implementing 2 pilot physical improvement projects, one per campus.

• Implementing 2-4 additional physical improvement projects. The financial resources for these projects will be raised from the corporate community in both communities.

• Conduct 5 Community Council meetings (on a quarterly basis).

• Develop a bilingual NI website within the AUC portal (this objective has already been partially achieved).

• Submit 1-2 journal papers in scientific journals documenting the experience of the AUC NI as one of the few programs in the MENA region and promoting the concept of active citizen engagement and anchor strategies (already in progress).

• Conduct outreach to 10 Egyptian universities in Cairo and other governorates to promote the university NI concept and the role of universities in their surrounding areas.

• Organize 1 regional workshop to promote the concept of university engagement beyond Cairo and share experiences of similar initiatives in the MENA region.
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