



Improving the quality of life in Large Urban Distressed Areas

Gerland, Lyon, France

E-Compendium: Good Practice Case Studies



Introduction

The purpose of the e-compedium case studies is to provide information about the experiences of large urban distressed areas in Europe. All of the case studies are linked to the LUDA project, either as partner cities or as reference cities. This case study focuses on Gerland in Lyon. Lyon is one of the twelve reference cities in the LUDA project, and Gerland is a large area which has undergone regeneration in recent years.

This case study gives a brief outline of the area's history; the challenges it faces and the potential it has for redevelopment. The case study then discusses the current approach to regeneration in Gerland, and gives a detailed account of one part of the process. In this case, this focuses on an ex post evaluation of the area's regeneration programme.

The e-compedium is designed to be used online. The text includes interactive links which allow you to move around the document, to link to other handbooks, or to open websites. Links are shown as **coloured text**. You can also find the links by looking for icons in the page margins, as shown here.



If you prefer to read this handbook like a normal book, then you can print it out. Please note that all of the handbooks are designed for double-sided printing.

Acknowledgements

This case study was prepared by the School of the Built Environment at Napier University, Edinburgh and the Department of Geography and Geology at the University of Salzburg. The case study is based on material produced during the course of the LUDA project.

Photographs were supplied by the Aleksandra Kolpak at the University of Salzburg. Cover photograph shows road construction works next to the Tony Garnier Hall.

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The backstreets of Gerland. Photo: Aleksandra Kolpak, University of Salzburg

I. Overview

Gerland is part of the 7th Arrondissement (district) of Lyon. It covers 700 ha and is home to around 20,000 inhabitants. The area is on the left bank of the river Rhône and is somewhat isolated from other parts of the city by insufficient bridges. The presence of large transportation structures—including railways, harbour and related storage - adds to the physical isolation of Gerland by separating the district from its surroundings. Land uses associated with this infrastructure dominate, and around 300 ha of land in the areas is occupied by transport and storage uses. The remaining parts of the district include residential, industrial and recreational uses. The whole area has a patchwork structure, with the pockets of industrial, transportation, storage, residential and recreational use of various qualities.

In terms of regeneration, the development of the Gerland Technopôle is at the centre of the development efforts. The technopôle combines industrial micro-activities, services and research activities in the chemical industry, pharmaceuticals and biotechnology. In recent years a new compact district has grown up around the Tony Garnier Hall, and there are plans for a marina development and a new park on the banks of the Rhône, becoming a part of the city-wide network of open space.

2. History & Background

Gerland developed quickly at the beginning of the 20th century, transforming agricultural land into an industrial area. At the time, the area of Gerland was considered to be a great example of architectural modernity. The demonstration of this was seen in the great hall of Tony Garnier (a former slaughter house converted into a cultural centre—shown below) and the 1920s garden suburb built to house the local workforce. However, by the 1970s, industrial decline led to the closure of industrial plants and the decline of Gerland. In the 1980s, the Mayor of Lyon and the former Prime Minister Raymond Bars, began an initiative to convert Lyon into a 'technopolis' focused on businesses, research and education in the fields of biotechnology, pharmaceuticals and health.



The Tony Garnier Hall, Gerland. Photo: Aleksandra Kolpak, University of Salzburg.

3. Challenges & potentials

The challenges faced by Gerland were many. There was functional disorder, a lack of spatial harmony, a negative image, and the chaos that resulted from years of adhoc development and conversions. Many of Gerland's difficulties date back to its earliest days. The spatial and functional isolation dates back to the first activities established in the area, when the connections between industrial land and housing areas were not important. The legacy of brownfield land, former industrial sites and contamination (in the harbour areas) also originate from these times.

Despite the challenges presented by the disjointed and isolated physical fabric of Gerland, the area also has many opportunities. Perhaps the most significant of these is the amount of under-used or deprived land available for new development and spatial restructuring.

4. Approach

The contemporary redevelopment of Gerland is concerned with several things: the physical structure of the district; social cohesion among inhabitants and visitors; the stimulation of the private sector; and, the education of young professionals. A major goal is to provide a skilled workforce for the Technopôle and to build stronger connections between the established industry and new technology.

The Greater Lyon's 'Plan of Action for a Technological Metropolis' is a symbol of Lyon's emergence into the age of development; it stresses innovation as a basic theme. The plan aims to create synergies between companies and academic research by bringing together scientific research, education and industry. The process is supported by three main groups of actors: political actors in the shape of Grand Lyon, the city of Lyon and the local district authority; private investors; and technical actors—mainly Mission Gerland, which is responsible for the preparation of the overall strategy and its implementation.

The strategy for Gerland, was prepared (and is now being implemented) by the Mission. The strategy is based on four dimensions:

- proximity
- image
- green development and translocation
- connections;

The main objective of the strategy is to reconnect Gerland to the city by creating and enhancing both physical and psychological connections.

5. Tools & methods

The redevelopment and regeneration of Gerland has several dimensions (as discussed above). The social dimension is supported by creating centres of activity and commercial locations within Gerland. There has also been work to develop new playgrounds and shopping centres as a way of encouraging and supporting social development. The economic and cultural dimensions have been approached in a number of ways: through biotechnology - as a modern and safe activity; the re-conversion of industrial buildings; an improved image; and, the development of a public – private partnership. The environmental dimension has been approached through

new parks and public open spaces, the integration of transport infrastructure with green space and the improvement of existing open space. In relation to the issue of physical isolation, new transport solutions are necessary, though difficult. New ideas—including connections with the motorway and new bridges - are being developed in parallel with the construction of Boulevard Scientifique (shown below).



Boulevard Scientifique & the Lyon Technopole. Photo: Aleksandra Kolpak, University of Salzburg.

The main goals of the planning activities in Gerland are to improve the image and diversity of the area and to create better physical and psychological connections between Gerland and other parts of the city.

Mission Gerland was established to take overall control of the regeneration of Gerland. This single institution has responsibility for projects in the area, and selects the main themes for future development. For example, within Gerland the Mission identified numerous functional spaces and developed them according to the main strategic guidelines. However, while Mission Gerland has responsibility for managing projects in the area, the projects are of course the initiatives of many other actors. The responsibility of Mission is to keep an overview of the projects and make sure that they fit with the overall objectives of the regeneration.

The creation of Mission Gerland has helped to create a positive and stable platform for the development process, especially in the programming phase, where a range of specific solutions were considered. The Mission is also responsible for dialogue among the stakeholders and managing the process of public participation. Public dialogue has been a key theme in the Gerland regeneration programme, and the process has been quite innovative compared to normal French practice. The strength of the public dialogue has been in generating acceptance of pro-

jects and actions. The approach also creates an opportunity for participants to voice their needs and hear the needs and demands of other local actors, e.g. planners, designers and local councillors.

The main stakeholders within Gerland are: the Greater Lyon Community (Grand Lyon), the Municipality of Lyon (Ville de Lyon) and the Conseil General. Individual projects are submitted by local actors, and evaluated and controlled by Mission Gerland. The Mission functions as a tool for coordinating and leading the redevelopment of Gerland. The presence of this specialised agency means that there is someone to coordinate individual actions and monitor the rehabilitation process. At the same time, the commitment to public dialogue in Gerland means that all stages of regeneration process are discussed openly within the dialogue network. Local councillors make the final decisions about the regeneration, taking into account the different needs and desires of stakeholders in Gerland.

The introduction of the public dialogue method is a priority of the local authority. It follows the publication of the 'Chart d'Participation', which provides a legal guarantee of public participation in regeneration activities in the Grand Lyon area. The method is applied to all levels of decision-making (international, regional, city, district and neighbourhood projects). However, it must be recognised that as a new tool, public dialogue also brings some threats. For example, it relies on strong individuals (local politicians) to lead the process, and it can produce unsatisfactory compromises where attempts are made to meet the needs of everyone.

Public consultation takes place on regular basis and involves district and city authorities, community and professional groups, researchers and management. This approach ensures that there are recommendations and suggestions from several fields and levels of perception. The recommendations are then presented to the local and regional authorities and incorporated into the implementation strategies. To support the consultation process on urban projects a specific consultation strategy must be elaborated for each project. At a practical level, the dialogue consists of workshops and meetings organised by a qualified mediator from Mission Gerland. Mission Gerland is also responsible for informing the public about the method. As the technique is fairly new, it is anticipated that the public will be more involved once the method is better established.

Public dialogue supports the creation of local dialogue networks and helps to uncover new solutions for the area. It is also a way to consult local actors and gauge the reactions of the community to the ideas which are presented. The public dialogue method is currently being used at the strategic and operational levels of the regeneration process (during the diagnosis, visioning, programming, implementation and evaluation stages—described in [handbook E4](#)).

This is achieved through the creation of:

- **policies:** in order to make the project acceptable to everyone, a strategic vision has been elaborated to allow upstream participation;
- **programmes and projects:** these are discussed with local actors and the representa-



tives of community groups before they are voted by the councillors.

The regeneration of Gerland has been financed by public and private funding sources. Funding from Grand Lyon is being used to support the public dialogue initiative.



Public dialogue workshop at Mission Gerland. Photo: Aleksandra Kolpak, University of Salzburg

6. Innovation & unusual features

A clear and transparent structure for the realisation of the strategy

The technical implementation plan for the regeneration of Gerland includes various elements:

- area (recognition of the demands, potentials and possibilities for improvement);
- sectors (creation of a functional plan for the specific parts of the area resulting in a stable heterogeneous structure);
- elements of action (recognition of private, public-private, municipal and regional programmes and projects for the area);
- action plan (general synthesis and coordination of on-going projects - presently in action Project Gerland 2004 – 2006 from Nov. 2003),
- detailed action plans (in terms of time schedule, technical implementation, functions, financing, etc.); and,
- project implementation review (small scale evaluation system, based on the Plan d'Action).

Public dialogue as an innovative participation method

As discussed above, public dialogue is a particular feature of the Gerland regeneration process. It was initiated by the local authorities in Grand Lyon and developed into its current form by researchers and technicians at Mission Gerland. The technique has been used at all levels of regeneration activity in Gerland. The actors participating in this process are inhabitants and local associations, councillors, and elected members.

Training and information

Community planning in Lyon's Gerland also includes teaching and actions to improve public participation and develop an active citizenship. This has involved the development of urban workshops and seminars within schools and universities as well as public exhibitions and meetings.

The top-down nature of the regeneration process is seen as a constraint by the community. It is also clear that the method is not without its problems. For example, the obligatory inclusion of elected members in professional technical discussions has been both an obstacle and a success. While this has contributed to the evolving process of public participation in Gerland, it has also slowed down the entire process.

Best practice

- The positive approach of 'Une grande vision pour un grand quartier' – which searches for potential, not problems.
- The innovative process of public dialogue, which provides public support and acceptance for the design process and rehabilitation activities.
- The connection between economic development and quality of life, with the Technopôle understood not only a centre of technology, but as a place where 'Lyon is expanding from within' to become an innovative and multifunctional new town.
- The creation of the clustered excellence centre, which is attractive to investors and international researchers in the field of bio-sciences.

7. Results

The basic vision for the further development of Gerland is as a multifunctional living cluster, where economic development is based on private firms, public research centres and schools of excellence. The aim of the 'Plan of Action for a Technopolitan Metropolis' is to bring together scientific research, education and industry in one location. The plan for the Gerland Scientific Park can thus be seen as a symbol of Lyon's emergence into a phase of redevelopment. The park itself is considered unique, as it should possess all the basic urban functions as well as the triple focus. This is to be: a top-ranked scientific and academic location, a sport and entertainment cluster, and a leisure zone. In this way the development of Gerland, already strongly marked by the presence of the Technopole, is supposed to serve not only the regional, but

also city and local needs.

8. Lessons learned

The Gerland experience has brought a number of key lessons, many of which relate to the new approach to public participation. From a negative point of view, there have been problems overcoming the lack of trust between the public and politicians in order to make the dialogue happen. This is related to the lack of experience of public participation in France. In addition, the process has revealed how important individuals and 'local champions' can be—as the understanding and motivation of these people can have a significant impact on the process.

On a more positive note, the public-private partnership has been very successful. The success is due to some extent to the ways of working which have been adopted. For example: using mediation and negotiation among the stakeholders and involving stakeholders at all stages of the redevelopment process. This has created a transparent process of communication and co-operation within the partnership.

9. Further information & links

If you would like more information about the Gerland story, then you can contact:

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<http://www.lyon.fr> and <http://www.techlyongerland.prd.fr>

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