

Press release

Urban Acupuncture: Launch of an Innovative Project to Transform the City (2025-2028)

Montreal, September 11, 2025—Focusing on the importance of revitalizing the metropolis to address issues of social cohabitation, climate resilience, and inclusion, the “Urban Acupuncture” project -- conceived by experts in architecture, design, and urban planning, with, by, and for the community -- launched last Tuesday, bringing together roughly one hundred partners, key players in the community, and stakeholders from the municipal sphere at the Esplanade Tranquille in the heart of Montreal's Quartier des Spectacles.

This event is the result of an initiative by the research team of the Urban Solidarity program of Architecture Without Borders Quebec, which is developing a planning laboratory focused on public spaces in urban contexts, inspired by the theory of urban acupuncture. Centred on the development of small, targeted interventions in two key areas of the city, this approach to urban planning concentrates on strategic points in the city in order to encourage positive and sustainable transformations on a larger scale. It is characterized by iterative and participatory processes, carried out with, by, and for the communities concerned.

"Like other cities, the metropolis is grappling with homelessness problems and ongoing challenges in urban planning. Added to this are feelings of insecurity and climate crisis issues. The proposals put forward by our team of architects and designers are the result of in-depth research conducted over more than three years. This has led to the implementation of strategies and to the development of interventions based on the real needs expressed by the communities. This is essentially the active approach to urban acupuncture that we are deploying in this project," stated Bruno Demers, Executive Director of Architecture Without Borders Québec.

“Urban Acupuncture” is therefore an opportunity to integrate the needs and aspirations of groups identified as vulnerable into the very design of the urban transformations undertaken as part of this pilot project. It is with this in mind that an intensive design method will be developed. This consists of carrying out a variety of urban occupations, of different types and on different scales. Each intervention becomes a lever for repairing, connecting, and transforming urban space in an inclusive, collaborative, and sustainable manner.

As Maira Gonzalez, project manager at Solidarité urbaine, pointed out, “our goal is to co-create sensitive and inclusive intervention strategies with the communities concerned, in response to the persistent challenges of the territory, and also to support communities

experiencing homelessness, recognizing that there is often a gap between living in a place and intervening there as an external actor.”

Given the complexity of urban issues and the unique characteristics of each sector, a variety of tailored actions will remain essential. With the support of some 50 local partners and stakeholders, 30 occupations will be targeted for intervention by the project's completion in 2028.

This project is made possible thanks to the commitment of the Quebec government's Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing through the Fonds Signature Métropole (FSM) of the Secrétariat à la région métropolitaine.

To learn more about the project and find out about the next steps, visit: [asf-quebec.org/acupuncture-urbaine](https://quebec.org/acupuncture-urbaine)

ABOUT ARCHITECTURE WITHOUT BORDERS QUEBEC

Architecture Without Borders Quebec (AWBQ) is an organization that helps populations affected by crises, natural disasters, or social inequalities. It works with communities to strengthen their capacities through the involvement of various actors in the field of architecture. Created in 2008 by the Ordre des architectes du Québec (OAQ), AWBQ is the official humanitarian arm of the architectural profession. Its members include some 4,700 architects in the province, whose social responsibility and involvement in its activities it promotes.

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