Dear Mr. Mayor,

Mr. Lilly,

Father Alexander,

Friends of our historic neighborhood,

Welcome to the Acropolis Garden!

It is a great pleasure for us at the HELLENIC Society for Environment and Culture.

It all started when about 14 years ago I was walking and crossing this small olive grove. A glance upwards the Greek flag and just the chapel of Agios Georgios.

Around me a large garbage dump, drug injection residue everywhere, broken floors, benches, hanging iron and, in some openings, small tents of people living there. What a miserable abandonment!

Just above there, Manolis Glezos and Apostolos Santas had lowered the Hitler flag, and there was the great cave where in ancient times the teenagers of Athens in a special ceremony swore to take care of their city!

I felt a tightness.

As the HELLENIC SOCIETY we started contacts with the Municipality and the relevant Ministries.

It is true that the first to respond to our request was, as Mayor, Kostas Bakoyannis.

From ELLINIKI ETAIRIA we undertook the necessary studies.

We agreed on the Vision: to take care of the olive grove, not to cut down any trees, but rather to add a few fruit trees for the pleasure of the family, such as pomegranates, almond trees, orange trees.

In the openings only to put toys for children of different ages, all made only of natural materials. Remove as much concrete as possible, let soil prevail and bring in the element of water which is abundant under the Citadel.

To commission the studies we turned to sponsors. Gerasimos Fokas of Electra Palace, Konstantinos Goulimis, Fokion Potamianos, Konstantinos Sgubopoulos of Perianth Hotel and those who contributed to the Act4Greece platform. We thank them all, as well as the 2 grandparents who gave father Alexander 20 euros from their pension!

In 2018 to raise awareness we organized a celebration here with the participation of Dionysis Savvopoulos, Aliki Kayialoglou, Haridimos Troasos with his Karagiozis, and other artists. The garden was filled with families who all contributed. Thus the studies were completed.

Thank you for their excellent work:

- For the architectural design: Alexandra Stratou and Kyriaki Karachalios.
- For the Phytotechnical study: Thomas Doxiadis and doxiadis+, all three - residents of Plaka.
- For the Study of E/M installations: INSTA llations - Consulting Engineers, Konstantinos Galanis.
- And for the Structural Design: Dimitris Pervolarakis.

For the toys we chose the Richter company, a leader in toys made of natural materials. Peter Heuken, their chief designer who designs playgrounds all over the world sent us a message: "Designing in the Acropolis Garden was the best day of my life!". We also thank Richter's representative in Greece Mr. Yannis Kyriakopoulos and his partner Aris Stavrou.

This was followed by a long period of approvals of the plans by competent public authorities and finally the securing of the sponsor for the implementation of the project by the

Municipality, the Onassis Foundation. We would like to thank the Foundation and its executives, who embraced the project and stood by our side for everything that was needed.

Throughout the implementation, the partner of the Architectural Heritage Council of the HELLENIC SOCIETY, Elias Sakellaris, closely monitored the progress of the project and cooperated constructively with the worthy contractor.

The change of Mayor of Athens found the project advanced but not finished. That could have been the end of the effort and it could have been gradually abandoned and left to fall into disrepair, which is unfortunately common in our country.

But Harris Dukas understood the importance of the project and supported us effectively until its final completion and licensing. Mr. Mayor, thank you!

The Acropolis Children's Garden is a pioneer for our city on many levels.

- It is a garden for the whole family, with natural materials, no cars and parking nearby, no cafes.

- And even a piece of land was reserved for the children of the neighbouring schools: the Plaka Public Schools and the private Hill and Agali School. Today, with the help of Symbeeosis, the children of the schools planted a herb garden and took care of it. We thank the children, the schools and the Symbeeosis company, especially Mrs. Niki Koutsianas and her colleagues.

- Finally, another novelty: the Open Spaces Manager President of OPANDA, Mr. Roumeliotis, agreed to have the garden monitored in its daily routine by 3 mothers, volunteers, neighbours of the garden. Civil Society is being utilized!

We hope that every neighborhood in Athens and other cities will have such a garden that improves our quality of life!

Lydia Karra

Founder ELLET