



AMSTERDAM
PLACEMAKING WEEK
OCT 10-14, 2017

City Expedition Dordrecht A Social Motor to Engage Communities

11 October 2017



PAKHUIS
DE ZWIJGER*

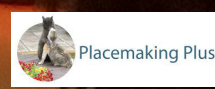
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Placemaking week opening City expeditions

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#placemaking

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PLACEMAKING

Public space is located at the intersection of many global issues from health to sustainability, innovation to equity. Placemaking Week is all about leveraging this convergence.



1 DORDRECHT SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE CASE STUDY

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List of participants

Annemarieke de Bruin
Ciska Meijer
Danielle van Gerven
Diana van der Kroon
Emilie Roell
Eric Stackhouse
Jakub Duncko
Jenny Leuba
John Hird
Julie Heyde
Jurgen Krabbenborg
Ka Man Judy Chan
Kate Goodson
Lander Debrabander
Mariet Jaarsma
Mariska Kien
Menje Almekinders
Monika Wozniak
Paul Elleswijk
Paul Smolders
Quirine Winkler
Rory Pennant-Rea
Ruud Reutelingsperger
Sander van der Ham
Shanna Draheim
Stephen Bos
Viktor Kasala

Introduction to the city

The trip to Dordrecht was part of the Placemaking Week conference 2017. This city visit was organized by STIPO and Pakhuis de Zwijger. The trip to the city took about 1,5 hour by bus and Waterbus. We arrived in Dordrecht at the Merwedekade where bikes were already waiting for us. After a short bike we arrived at Duurzhaamheidscentrum Weizigt for some refreshments and a warm welcome by Rinette Reynvaan (elderwoman of the city of Dordrecht). After this welcome Sander van der Ham introduced the group to placemaking as a strategy to create good public spaces. He then also introduced the four people from the city who actively work on placemaking projects in the city. Each person provided a short pitch on their project and a question they had or a challenge they had run into.



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1. Saskia Platenkamp, who pitched about the regional challenges of the Drechtsteden (the collaboration of cities surrounding Dordrecht) and the process of introducing placemaking in these cities. One of the difficulties is that each city has its own council and political system with their own preferences. Yet placemaking might help build new coalitions with partners that can work on regional challenges as well. So, how to build these coalitions with the local partners and start a placemaking process?
2. Cobien Bruggeling, who pitched about the Vrieseplein. One of the first projects in the city that was called a placemaking project. The municipality initiated the project to redevelop the Vrieseplein, but they wanted to do that together with the residents around the square. This led to an extensive participation project in which residents re-designed the square themselves and where the municipality facilitated the process. The question is what could have been done differently, because one of the main issues was that the costs of the redevelopment were much higher than accounted for. How can the municipality work with certain conditions and still get residents participation?
3. Ifor Schrauwen, local placemaker, provided the third pitch. He initiated the grass root initiative Vogelnest, located in the Vogelwijk in Dordrecht. The housing corporation, that owns most of the buildings in this neighborhood, wanted to demolish many buildings. Yet, what would happen in the meantime. Ifor, as one of the initiators, decided to start a place for the neighborhood to meet and to develop activities together. In the beginning partners, such as the housing corporation and the municipality, were very enthusiastic and willing to invest some money. After a little while, when it became successful these partners wanted to know more and more accountability for the money they invested. By now Ifor spends a lot of time on the bureaucratic process which he'd rather spend investing in Vogelnest. How can placemakers in the city prevent from spending too much time on bureaucratic processes?
4. Ciska Meijer finally, pitched about a brand new project called the Spuiboulevard. This street or boulevard is located between the city centre and the train station and could be a new place to be in Dordrecht. Yet there also lies a big challenge: what does the municipality need to do today to get people involved for the next 15 years. This includes current residents, but also new residents, developers, owners of the buildings and even people visiting the city.

The four people pitching were asked to try to answer their questions or challenges during the day. By visiting inspiring placemaking examples in Dordrecht and by talking to people who went on this city trip. The group split up in two groups, each taking a different bike trip through the city, visiting two inspiring examples and also stopping at two of the locations that were pitched about. Each participant was free to choose the route he or she preferred.

SITES VISITED & PROPOSED SOLUTIONS



2 DORDRECHT SITES VISITED

Crabbehoeve

This 4 years old project is a community center in Crabbehof neighbourhood. It is ran by many volunteers and has one paid person working for the organization, her name is Mascha Lageweg. It started with an old abandoned kindergarten. The transformation meant total reconstruction to make it into a community centre. They have rooms for rent, a restaurant with a well equipped kitchen and a small kindergarten. They also have a front and back garden which is used for harvesting and vegetable production. These vegetable are for sale and the profit is used to buy new seeds for the next year. All people involved are volunteers. They are using mostly social sites to find them. The Crabbehoeve wants to be an inviting place for the neighborhood but that residents sometimes say they find the place to closed and therefore unwelcoming. This has a lot to do with the fence around it.

Advices

- deconstruction of fence,
- cooperate with companies and cafeterias in city and region: they can train their future employe, find volunteers easier.
- try to focus more on neighbourhood oriented activities, let them grown their own vegetables in the garden



2 DORDRECHT SITES VISITED

Het Vogelnest

This project is run by Ifor Schrauwen in the Vogelbuurt. The main aim of this project is to help people from the neighbourhood with their housing problem. This problem is a result of the developments in the neighbourhood, among which are the demolishing and rebuilding by the housing corporation. Through bottom up approach and small scale tactical urbanism Ifor and his team are trying to help people to take care of the public space in the neighbourhood. They do this even though they know they can't avoid the rise of rents in the reconstructed houses. There clearly is gentrification happening here. Vogelnest also helps people with temporary rent in buildings to keep them make it possible they live in the neighbourhood as long as possible. Even Vogelnest change locations multiple times already.



2 DORDRECHT SITES VISITED

Vrieseplein

The Vrieseplein is a square where placemaking activities have been done a few years ago together with residents. The square during our visit was empty and the surrounding area had some empty plinths. The square is well designed but it feels a little disconnected from the surrounding building and places, such as the water and the small Greek restaurant on the bridge. It is not supported by the buildings around it. There are also roads and bicycle paths around the square that form a barrier. A big problem that was considered was the casino on corner of the square with blind facades. Potentially it could be a corner shop next to square that could attract many residents during the day. More residential plinths might also help. And there is a unique characteristic: the canal next to the square. This could be connected better to the square. A very easy solution could be to put out moving chairs on the square and provide the possibility for people to sit there that get food from the fast food kiosks on the bridge. This might also help to aliven the square. When it comes to the hardware it is necessary to slower the traffic and bring more green into the area. Active programming of the square should also take place in future. But this can easily be done by residents.

Advices

- cancel casino and use groundfloor for public function,
- cancel road at least on one side of square,
- bring green and create visual connection with canal,
- let residents and entrepreneurs program the square,
- move chairs from fast foods on the other side of the bridge closer to the square.

2 DORDRECHT SITES VISITED

DOOR

A completely volunteer bottom-up project. DOOR started as a place for starting artists in the centre of the old city of Dordrecht. Soon after they launched their centre, many people with psychological problems started to come and work as volunteers there. After some time they found out how big the community of these people in Dordrecht is and the potential DOOR could provide for them. DOOR as a community center wanted to help people with psychological problems who don't get the proper help from the system because, for example, they're not being seen or don't know how to access the proper channels to get the help they need. For example people who are unable to work but can under the right circumstances be of great help. The amount of volunteers is huge, around 60 of them are coming during the week. The centre is art orientated. But the café connects visitors with the artist on the 1st and 2nd floor. The products of these people are sometimes used as city decorations. The centre also organizes art presentations and concerts to local artists from Dordrecht and other artists from all over the world. Their main challenge is funding to provide for the daily work that needs to be done and to make sure there is an increasing number of volunteers.

Advices

- cooperate with companies and cafes from the region, use the DOOR cafe as a training centre for their future employees,
- communicate with the community on the street, become a place for them to meet ,-
- use artists from DOOR to improve the street,
- become a cooperation to professionalize services and become a partner for all kinds of organizations in the city.



2 DORDRECHT SITES VISITED

Spuiboulevard

The Spuiboulevard is located between the city centre and the train station. It's a big, but empty space at the moment. Yet it has all the potential to become a place in the near future. Recently a decision has been made to start developing the boulevard. The municipality got in touch with many owners of the buildings and some developers. Some of these owners and developers are willing to make it a great place. Yet not all of them. The challenge is to invite everyone to work together and create a place where people want to spend their time and come back to.

Advices

- involve the residents around the area and make them a partner in the placemaking process, especially the home owners are likely to participate,
- start conversations with the developers and owners of the buildings: make them aware of the value of great places.

Groei tuinen

They just moved from their previous location to a brand new place. Well, brand new is not the right word, because they're located in an old school building. They're busy moving the former groeituinen (growing gardens) they had to the new place. But to do this it requires a good design first. That has been made. A coffee-stained sheet of paper is produced on which the new design of the garden is visible. The area has been split up in parts, each part filled with certain types of plants and vegetables. Soon it will look great again.

Yet, the move to the new location also provided a problem. Because, even though it's still rather close to the old location, people don't come around to help anymore. There is always a core group that comes and helps, but it only works when many people from the neighbourhood come to help and become part of the community.

The Groeituinen serves the purpose to help people in the neighbourhood grow, by participating in maintaining the garden. In their new location they can do this even better, because they get to work with other parties in the new building as well. There is, for example, a wood workshop that can use the wood from the garden to make objects from wood. One of the wood workers tells about how she has come to be a wood worker and that it's by now partially a hobby and partially busy. She produces lamps, which she sells. Some of the money people earn goes back to the wood workshop.

At the new location is also a place for Somalian refugees. They can meet there but also get in touch with the neighbourhood community. There are a lot of activities organised by the group itself.

2 DORDRECHT SHORT SUMMARY OF THE CITY VISIT

After these projects we cycled back to Duurzhaamheidscentrum Weizigt for a short discussion with both groups. And also to ask the four pitchers of the day what they learned. The discussion mainly focused on the role of the municipality and how it should find the balance between being top-led and bottom-fed. The municipality can play a role with helping initiatives to start up and to provide them support along the way. This support can have different forms, such as in help with the process, to financial support, to advice or delivering expertise.

Support can come also from private sector. Job offers for skilled volunteers might be good motivations to keep stable group of volunteers and these restaurants, hotels, shops...etc do not need to spend so much time to teach new personnel how to act, work and communicate with customers. Big potential in task of development of the city and design of riverbanks are design oriented universities and students. Workshops and tasks for projects or competitions might be cheap way how to get very clever and contemporary ideas from future generation.



DE STAD OP OOGHOOGTE IN NEDERLAND

Samengesteld door Jeroen Laven, Sander van der Ham, Siënna Veelders & Hans Karssenber

blauwdruk

You can read more stories on
the city at eye level and placemaking in the Netherland in our
new book

“The City at Eye Level
in the Netherlands”

More info on

www.thecityateyelevel.com

City Expedition Dordrecht

Social Motor to Engage Communities

Report by: Viktor Kasala & Sander Van Der Ham

More info about Placemaking Week Amsterdam 2017

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