



WATERFRONT COMMUNITIES PROJECT





Key Challenges

Sustainable social integration in relation to organisational innovation

Introduction

The Major Cities Policy (GSB) in the Netherlands, which has been in effect since the 1990s, rests on three pillars: economic, physical and social. The aim of the policy is to integrate these three pillars, or at any rate to coordinate them.

The institutional structure of urban development has long been formed around the physical pillar. The idea that physical interventions are liable to have social consequences and might even be beneficial in social interventions is still fairly novel in the institutional world.

Schiedam has strived from the outset to factor in social qualities into the designs of physical spaces. From the first step on the path to a plan, a unique feature in Schieveste, a 16 ha development between the station and the A20, has been the appointment of a social supervisor tasked with bringing the two domains together.

From social supervisor to location management and floor manager

The social supervisor concept

The idea behind the concept of social supervisor is that a social contribution to urban renewal will be most effective if it is present from the outset. As an 'instrument', the social supervisor therefore interfaces with the urban development supervisor, who monitors the spatial harmony and urban development quality from the start of large, complex projects.

The social supervisor's main role is in the development stage of urban renewal projects, and less so in their execution. His contribution is on a programme level and in the extent to which he brings together parties with their ambitions and objectives. He must make the necessary difference with persuasiveness and information gathered in the contact between the various parties. His key task is to make an urban development area vital, sustainable and safe. His central technical concern is to ensure that meaning is given to the physical space through its use.

A high point in the Schieveste project development was reached in November 2002 with the publication of the Schieveste Master Plan. The Master Plan is evidence of vision and ambition, not only for giving Schieveste an attractive appearance with spatial quality and economic potential, but also from a social perspective, in making the location vital, sustainable and socially safe. The social supervisor has been involved in the Schieveste project development from the outset, with a view to integrating the social domain into the area development. The conceptual input to the social supervisor comes from academic discussions surrounding social integration, social cohesion, learning networks and organizational innovation. He sets out to translate this input into concrete and applicable instruments.

Floor and location management instruments with a social supervision element have been employed and tested in the first phase of the Schieveste pilot project. The results will be used to help ensure the presence of a sustainable social integrator within the entire Schieveste project.





Schieveste Pilot project

Location Management Instrument

The location management instrument was devised in order to retain, and where possible strengthen, the initial advanced, sustainable and livable character of Schieveste into the future. Location management is defined as the instrument that is available jointly to the market and government for retaining and strengthening Schieveste's livability, quality and property value in the long term. Location management offers extras on top of the municipality's activities that arise from its public responsibility.

The floor manager

One of these extras is the 'floor management' product. The Schieveste social climate is essential for the location's economic viability. It is important for Schieveste to be clean, intact, safe and pleasant. The social climate also has an influence on the location's prestige and therefore also on the property value. The 'floor manager' was introduced as a way of obtaining the social climate. Since the start of the first phase in May 2005, the floor manager has been present in Schieveste at various times, and is the 'eyes and ears' of the everyday experience in the area. On the street level, the floor manager switches between the area's existing social relationships and those to be developed. He establishes contact with people who are to play an important role and engages passers-by in conversation in order to gauge their perception of the area. However, it is essential that the floor manager's information on the social situation in the area is incorporated into the project organization's decisions. He links detailed knowledge of the people on the ground with the competencies of the project organization. Among the subjects that may come up are the placement of seating, rerouting a cycle path, the presence of police or organizing an activity. In fact, the floor manager's thinking is from the viewpoint of residents and passers-by, with the professional approach of a social supervisor, but then with actual authority on an implementation level.

Pilot within the Waterfront Communities Project

The 'Waterfront Communities Project' was launched in the spring of 2004: The Schieveste project management office (i.e. the municipality of Schiedam) recognizes the benefits of participating in this European project. Schiedam has an opportunity to learn from the experiences of restructuring urban areas elsewhere. Furthermore, Schiedam has something to offer partners in the project, because the physical design process in Schieveste is running in parallel with the social design process. In addition, the project is able to contribute to putting Schiedam on the European map. Schiedam is therefore taking the lead in addressing the topic within the project that is concerned with the social aspects: social integration and innovation. Last but not least, the project means supplementary funding. And this is no unimportant aspect, considering that the municipality of Schiedam is obliged to take economy measures, the main impacts of which are in the social field.

The first phase of Schieveste, the station forecourt development, is the pilot in the context of the Waterfront Communities Project. The focus in this pilot is the way in which attention is given to the social aspects of the redevelopment, and then in particular integrating the concepts of social supervisor and floor management in the stable location management organization. In addition, resident participation is also an important item within this development. The pilot test on a small scale, which will later be recast on a large scale in Schieveste.

The role of the academic partner

The Verwey Jonker Institute has the role of academic partner within the pilot project. Their role is to monitor the pilot and report their findings regularly and make recommendations. This process has now led to the first evaluation report (June 2005). The second report will be complete in October 2005. A number of conclusions may be drawn from the initial evaluation.





Points of learning and guidelines

- The floor manager started work on 1 May 2005. He has now been introduced to local residents of the forecourt and the Residents' Association 'East'. The construction activities have started.

- What now? What developments are occurring? Initially, the activities of the trailblazer will be the reference point for further investigation. A simple registration system has now been agreed for the trailblazer. He records who contacts him, which contacts he establishes himself, which subjects were raised in the contacts, what action he takes in response to these subjects, etc..

- The trailblazer has regular contact with a floor management working group, comprising the location management project leader, the community manager for 'East', the communication officer of the Schieveste project management office and, on an on-call basis, the project leader of Phase 1. The trailblazer makes agreements in this group on his activities, discusses the experiences and prepares action (e.g. organizing activities). From time to time the group will deliberate on the possible implications of the trailblazing experiences on the future floor management in Schieveste.

The concepts of social vitality, social durability and personal safety serve as a background for monitoring the trailblazer. The investigation will attempt to flesh out these concepts. Furthermore, mindful of the theme within the Waterfront Communities Project, there will be attention for innovations. These innovations may be concerned with the role and attitude of the trailblazer as well as his interventions.

A challenge is, from the viewpoint of social supervision, to anchor floor management in the location management organization, which is growing together with Schieveste development.

Conditions for success / guidelines for analysis levels: It can often be observed in urban renewal processes that the visionary level of thinking on the future and the vitality of the city rapidly narrows down to getting the 'job' done, of depositing buildings and infrastructure in a certain area. It goes without saying that you have to focus in order to achieve results, but if you forget that you work for the city, then the city will forget that you work for it. So, keep focused in your work, but think broadly.

Position: In the interests of the client you need to have a position in which you are allowed to go against the grain somewhat. The supervisor position is an innovation that is far from fully developed. The uncertainties are considerable, and from the outside it hardly appears slick or professional. Making a success of an innovation of this kind demands ambition and administrative commitment.

Environment: A social account holder within the programme organization has an inestimable value. He switches between the progress within the programme organization and the effort of the social supervisor. Nonetheless, a wider positioning – with a think tank of social actors or a regular conference to discuss the tasks, the approach and the results – would be worth considering.

Budget: In view of the fact that there is no established pattern of expectations for the social effort in urban renewal, each activity has to go through an arduous process of developing and assessing proposals, and possibly honouring requests. Agreements should be made before the start of a project on a budget for social interventions.

Flesh and blood: Without the start of an organization, there is no body capable of developing and executing plans. A person who devises and runs useable approaches is indispensable. To continue the metaphor of the physical sector, the supervisor would be more like the designer of the social process and this person the contractor. You need a configuration in which to think, act and organize





Other partners

Schiedam's approach to social integration is new in comparison with the partner cities. However, all proposals speak of 'returning the harbor-area to the citizens' to facilitate a multiple use of space, the area must be accessible to different groups, therefore, large parts of the area have to be transformed (back) into public space. However, what constitutes a successful public space. In the different proposals we find the following answers:

1. It plays a role in the narrative of the city: the things that happen there have something to say about the city, and play a role in de (hi)story of the city.
2. It facilitates interaction and encounters between diverse people.
3. It is the stage for an interesting social play (for tourists or bystanders/passers-by), so you could 'organize' this social life.
4. It is a showcase for the identity and the culture of the city.
5. It connects the local and the global.
6. It connects the intimate and the anonymous.
7. It signifies (part of) the city.
8. It generates a specific life of itself: innovation and interaction.
9. It generates economic possibilities: tourism, innovation, profit, and business.

We also asked them what they understood by a successful public space, and what was being done in their cities to make the public space a success, and what would be done in the future.

Four cities responded (Oslo, Hull, Odense and Hamburg), a summary of which, with interesting points, is presented below.

Oslo

The best examples of recent developments of public spaces in Oslo can be found in urban renewal areas in the existing, dense inner city, such as:

"The Medieval park": an area around the remaining ruins of the medieval Oslo, created 10 years ago as a protective zone with a water basin recreating the shoreline of the medieval Oslo. Turned out to be both a great asset for the neighboring housing area and a popular arena for festivals, concerts etc.

"City Hall Square": the creation of a new tunnel through the centre of Oslo, it was possible to close the City Hall square for traffic and re-establishing both the connection to the water from the City Hall and the main public square in Oslo for large gathering at the National Day, Concerts etc.

"Kiellands Park": Previously a run-downed left over space between heavy traffic arteries was recreated as an urban oasis with the use of water (a hidden creek has been re-opened), green areas and stone works, attracted several out-doors restaurant and has been an important factor in the success of the area as a living quarter.

Odense

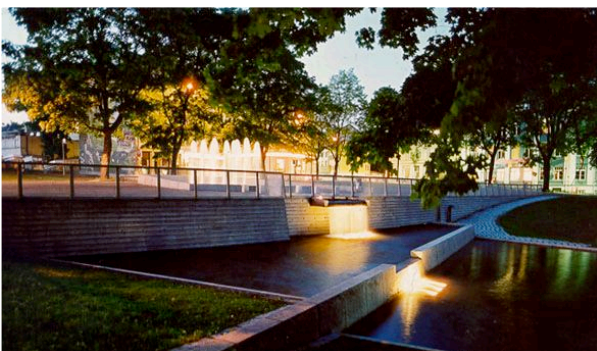
In Odense they are establishing a public 'water-culture-house': a new form of swimming and fitness place, and other water based activities and facilities, such as optimist dinghy, canoe, kayak and so on. A whole new idea is introducing free public pedal boats, as a substitute for small bridges.

Hull

The city of Hull agrees the most with statement number 2: The culture, cultures of the people are the soul of the city and the bottom line must be the expression of the City at the human scale through both physical and social structures. The space must support and encourage social interaction through which all the other functions depend (private, civil, commercial). Intensity of use through diverse functions (such as leisure, retail and employment) should also be encouraged.

Hamburg

The main effort in Hamburg is on using the public spaces for events and concerts, and to promote them in the media, thereby also promoting the public space.





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