DIGITAL MEMORY AID

# SENSE AND SENSIBILITY IN URBAN DEVELOPMENT

24-HOUR WORKSHOP VILVOORDE, 19 & 20 OCTOBER 2016

WE ARE ALL IN OUR OWN WAYS WORKING TO RID THE INTELLECTUAL HERITAGE OF THE 20TH CENTURY, WHEN STATE-MARKET OPPOSITION WAS CONSIDERED TOO LIGHTLY AND COMPLEXITY WAS SHUT OUT.

I FINALLY FEEL THAT WE ARE SHIFTING INTO A NEW PHASE. THAT THINGS ARE REALLY CHANGING NOW.

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# LET'S GO: INTRODUCTION

Dear Annelies, Koos, Isolde, Nanne, Maarten, Jim, Emma, Joost, Imre, Sabrina, Pieter, Jurgen, Frans, Stefanie, Jeroen and Sophie.

Thank you for participating in an intensive brainstorm session in de Kruitfabriek in Vilvoorde. What follows is a impressionistic report of the ideas, concepts and insights that surfaced during the 24-hours of the excersize. At the end of this digital memory aid book we have added an epilogue, in which we look back, reflect and look forward to what it might imply for our future cities. We hereby invite you to do the same.

One thing is certain: The way cities are being developed is shifting. The classic one-two between Municipality and developer or housing corporation is being complemented with a new party: a community with **active citizens**. A rather fuzzy party consisting of a rich variety of eager people with vigorous ideas for city-making. Sometimes this civic potential is incorporated in the developing plan, leaving space for civic initiatives and co-creation. Those initiatives are often launched by socially driven entrepeneurs who take up the role of pioneer, bridging the existing and the new, the temporary and the permanent. ***Passionate persons*** who in their own special way have a nose for the potential of a place and know how to bring out its magnetic charm. This adds the kind of value to area's development the city or the developer could never achieve alone. It is the quality that comes with the diversity it generates, with the dynamics and charm that are found in that specific place.

Today those well-integrated initiatives are too often still a matter of coincidence, which is a pity. That is why we have come together with a group of stakeholders to explore the possibilities of sourcing this civic potential in a more consistent and planned way. In our talks the outlines began to surface of what we call ***"sensitive development"***.

Enjoy reading and good luck exploring the future of inclusive city making!
Bram, Yves, Han, Pepik and Femke

# WHO PARTICIPATED

OUR GROUP CONSISTS OF SOCIOLOGISTS, ARCHITECTS, URBAN DEVELOPERS, POLICY MAKERS, FUNDERS, CIVIL SERVANTS AND RESEARCHERS WHO ALL THROUGH THEIR PROFESSION FEEL CONNECTED TO THIS SUBJECT.

# WHO PARTICIPATED 1/3

**JEROEN** STAD VILVOORDE, PROJECTLEADER LEASURE
*"How can we facilitate a common ground of Private and Local interest?*

**NANNE** VERRE BERGEN
Is interested to see what money can do for social issues and how we can measure the effects.
*"I would like to help to engage private money in Belgium for social urban issues."*

**MAARTEN** NDVR
Is a matchmaker between initiatives and funders. Almost managed to buy an entire housing block collectively with the citizens of Antwerp.
*"Connect urban vacancy with creative potential of citizens."*

**BRAM** SEISMIC
Has an idea for an urban area fund, with area shares for all who add physical, social and ecological value.



So all contributors profit from the total value created.
*"Shareholders will stay committed to improving the area because they have shares instead of money.. "*

**FRANS** DE TUIN IN DE STAD – GRONINGEN
Is interested in ways to validate the energy of citizen initiatives.
*"Change is not difficult. It is merely a matter of finding the right people to match with a clear story."*

**SABRINA** ARTIST – I'M BINCK
*"It is great to see how I alone could be the trigger of a new coalition.*

By approaching developers and clearly comminicating how I can add value and how we can enhance eachother."

**PIETER** GELDSTROMEN DOOR DE WIJK
Technology has opened the way to the smaller scale.
*"In 2030 there will be no difference between the formal and the informal economy"*
*"How can we better use the undervalued resources in urban development, especially the social ones?"*

**YVES** SEISMIC
Is especially interested in a more harmonious distribution of ownership.
*"This workshop made me see how to consider Smart City and Big Data phenomena in a human-centered way."*

**STEFANIE** STUDIO SURPLUS
Is interested in the social impact of architecture.
*"Our temporary proces provides insights for the permanent development"*

➔

# WHO PARTICIPATED 2/3

### JIM CITYMIND
Always is the initiator of his own prototypical projects, connecting local interests to vacant places and buildings in the neighborhood.
*"The city IS dynamic"*

### JURGEN ATOSBORNE
Searches for ways to give co-creation a boost next to the already existing negotiation model.
*"Apparently we can now openly talk about things that 5 years ago was not yet possible."*

### ISOLDE SOCIOLOGIST
Temporary use is a vehicle to be involved in urban decision-making
*"There are houses in this neighborhood which do not even have a kitchen"*
*"For me it has been very helpful to tell our story to people outside the social sector"*

### IMRE SOCIETY IMPACT
In a neighborhood suffering from high mortgages, the city of Heerlen has established a cooperative association to buy up the houses and sell them back to their owners for a new, much lower mortgage rate.
*"It would be interesting to see how the value- financially and socially- that is being created here can also flow to the adjacent neighborhood which so obviously needs it. And to test the possibilities of Social Impact Bonds in urban development, an instrument which until now is mostly used for solving social issues."*

### ANNELIES PROJECTLEADER MUNICIPALITY OF VILVOORDE
*"In these 24 hours the complexity of this area has again become apparent. There is still a lot of work to do in bridging the new real estate development with the existing neighborhood"*

### JOOST 0-0 LONDON
pointing out some painful paradoxes: Everybody knows how important social investments are, yet we keep regarding them as costs/expenses rather than investments.
*"London has the ultimate conflict-culture. Yet, even there, many deals derive from mutual empathy."*
*"Quantifying added value is a well known problem related to this, there is a lack of well-defined indicators."*

### EMMA REFILL THE CITY – MUNICIPALITY OF GENT
Sees the same challenge as Joost, difficulty in connecting social value creation to real estate value creation. Vacancy as opportunity: temporary programming adds positive dynamics to the city.
Hoe kan regelgeving ten gunste van deze tijdelijke programmering werken?
*"How can regulation work in favor of temporary programming?"*

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# WHO PARTICIPATED 3/3

### HAN SEISMIC
Monetizing social values is a double reduction: ethical – economical – monetary
*"Future value is always esteemed lower than value NOW"*
*"By incorporating the long term into a business model, it will automatically adopt to broader values"*
*"Everything is temporary"*

### SOPHIE PROJECT DEVELOPER, REVIVE
Is already working hard on implementing the ideas discussed in the workshop.
*"If one wealthy philantropist chooses to inject in social regeneration, it could change the game completely"*

### KOOS SEISMIC
*"Co-creation occurs automatically when projects are becoming more complex, with more stakeholders and long-term interests."*



**"AS REAL ESTATE DEVELOPER PEOPLE OFTEN SEE ME AS THE BIG BAD WOLF"**

# KRUITFABRIEK

Vilvoorde used to be an industrial city with many factories along the Sea canal. Since the '70-ies recession, many factories have closed their doors, leaving behind large empty sites and polluted ground. When in the late '90-ies even the Renault factory was shut down, the city started to invest in large regeneration projects to revitalize the area. The old industrial area was to be redeveloped as a new housing area. The Kruitfabriek -a former gunpowder factory- is one of the few structures remaining as a testimony of the industrial heritage although its bold industrial structure is covered up by a makeshift facade. Around this building one of Belgium's largest housing developments is taking place, where in the course of 20 years alomst 1000 houses will be realised. The Kruitfabriek will have a prominent position as the attractor of visitors to the area through temporary programming.

Since 2014 the Kruitfabriek is being run by a private party as a cultural hub for art ateliers, music studios, events and concerts, fleemarkets and a cafe with garden. This garden -de Kruittuin- is co-initiated by studio Surplus (Stefanie) and is being supported by the developer and the Municipality as one of the TAB projects. The garden is maintained by volunteers and accessible to the public when the Kruitfabriek is open.

# ENCOUNTER IN THE BLUE SPACE

## TAB – TIJDELIJK ANDERS BESTEMMEN (TEMPORARY ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMMING)

Klaas Lombaert is program manager at Matexi, the real-estate developer of the Kruitfabriek area. He explained how the company has incorporated local initiatives and demand into the plans.

"After being challenged by Stefanie with ideas for temporary use of the Kruitfabriek we came up with the plan to create a position for a TAB developer, a function for temporary alternative programming."

The fuction is ushered in by the extraordinary situation here of large-scale development over a long timespan of about 20 years. It is not a regular function for project developers and the common practice at Matexi Vilvoorde Development and other project developers is still characterised by a rather traditional way of developing: with the focus on the real-estate and its urban plan. Matexi Vilvoorde Development realises that this is not going to suffice here and therefore the TAB plan is a step towards a more flexible and user-focussed developing culture.

## TEMPORARY DEVELOPING AS OPPORTUNITY

According to Lombaert, a building like the Kruitfabriek is an opportunity to experiment with various infill. It is a test-platform to see what kind of programming is in demand in the slowly evolving neighbourhood. The permanent plan could be flexibly developed during the next 15-20 years with room for the succesfull cases to be incorporated over time.

## WE NEED A MAGNET THROUGH WHICH PEOPLE BECOME ACQUAINTED WITH THIS AREA.

# SOCIAL REAL-ESTATE DEVELOPMENT
## CAN BE DISCUSSED IN THE OPEN NOW
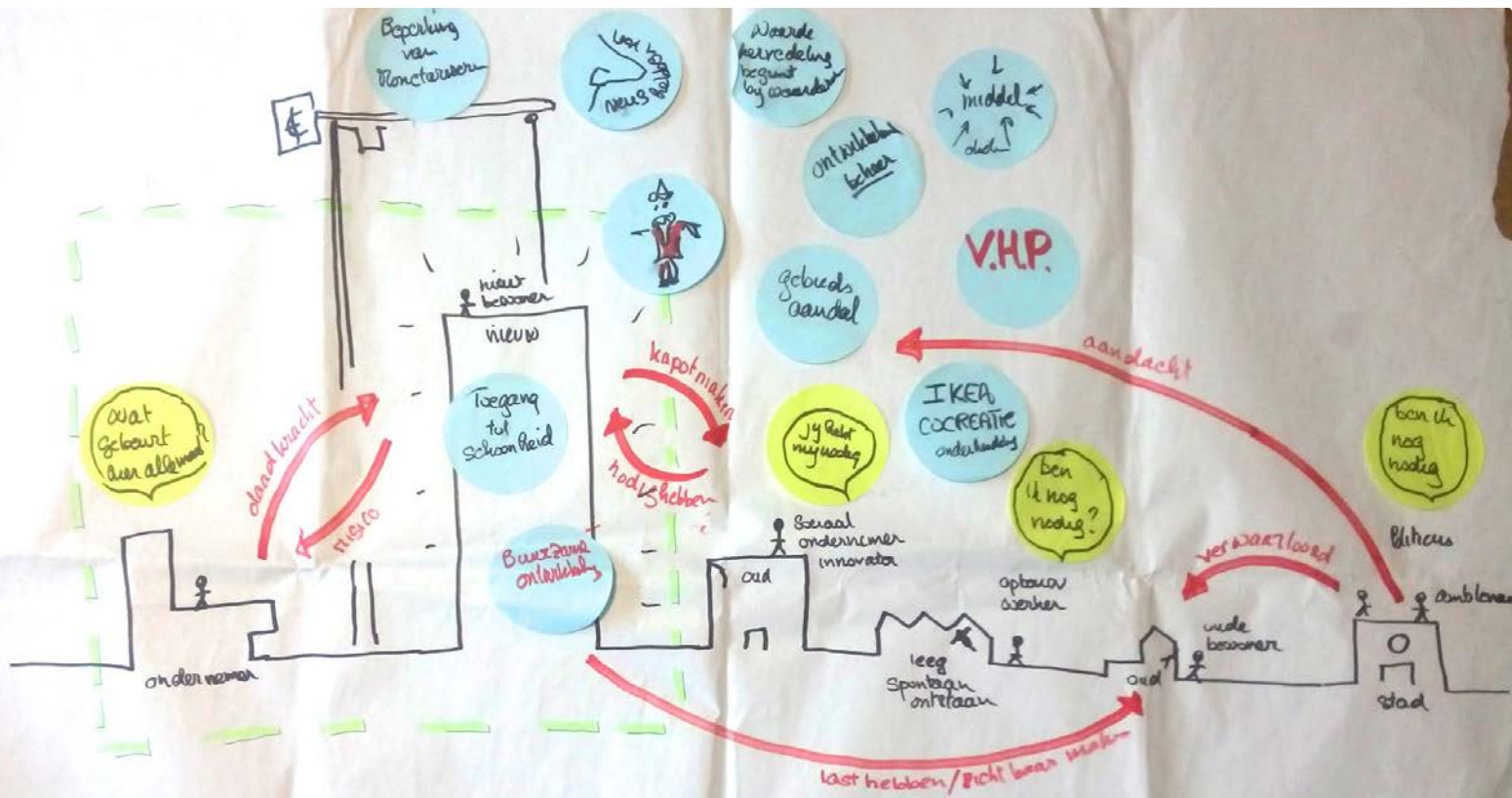
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vaschillende werelden

## PUTTING IT SIMPLY

Let's take the new urban development around the Kruitfabriek as a model for today's citymaking landscape. The picture here emerges from all the different perspectives we have gathered throughout the workshop.

The starting point is a landscape that used to be defined by only 2 parties: the Municipality and the developer.

Add to that the *Zennelab*, a temporary place for the youth to spend their freetime. Situated in a poor neighborhood where some houses don't even have a kitchen.

And there is of course the *Kruitfabriek*, another temporary place for local initiative.

Next to it:
A large urban development site where around 1000 houses will be build in the coming 20 years. For the courageous *developer*, the economic stakes are high.

But there is also an *existing* situation with its own character. A fragile asset that can be easily destroyed while actually it is exactly that character that can make the area *attractive* for newcomers.

The existing neighborhood next door unfortunately is in a *deplorable condition*, something only made more visible by the sharp contrast with the new. A situation the developer has to deal with in one way or another because it *affects* the living atmosphere of the entire area. Perhaps it was the city who has been neglecting the neighborhood just a bit too much.

It is in this setting that a *social entrepeneur* rears its head and tells the developer: *"You need me!"* The *Municipality* at the same time makes retreating moves and together with the *social worker* they wonder: *"Are we still needed?"*
Amids all the confusion the developer frowns: *"What on earth is going on here?"*

All these people come from different worlds. It is not obvious that they understand eachother. A good entrepeneur has a nose for money and opportunity. It takes a **sensitive developer** to also have a nose for social development. For the place. He can make a new place attractive for both the old and new inhabitants, for the natural world, the canal and even for the climate.

**"THE CHALLENGE IS TO 'SEDUCE' PROJECT DEVELOPERS INTO SEEING AND APPRECIATING SOCIAL VALUE."**



## POWER TRANSITION 2 ➜ 3

Municipality + Developer = Power as the capacity to maintain and reproduce the old "regime".
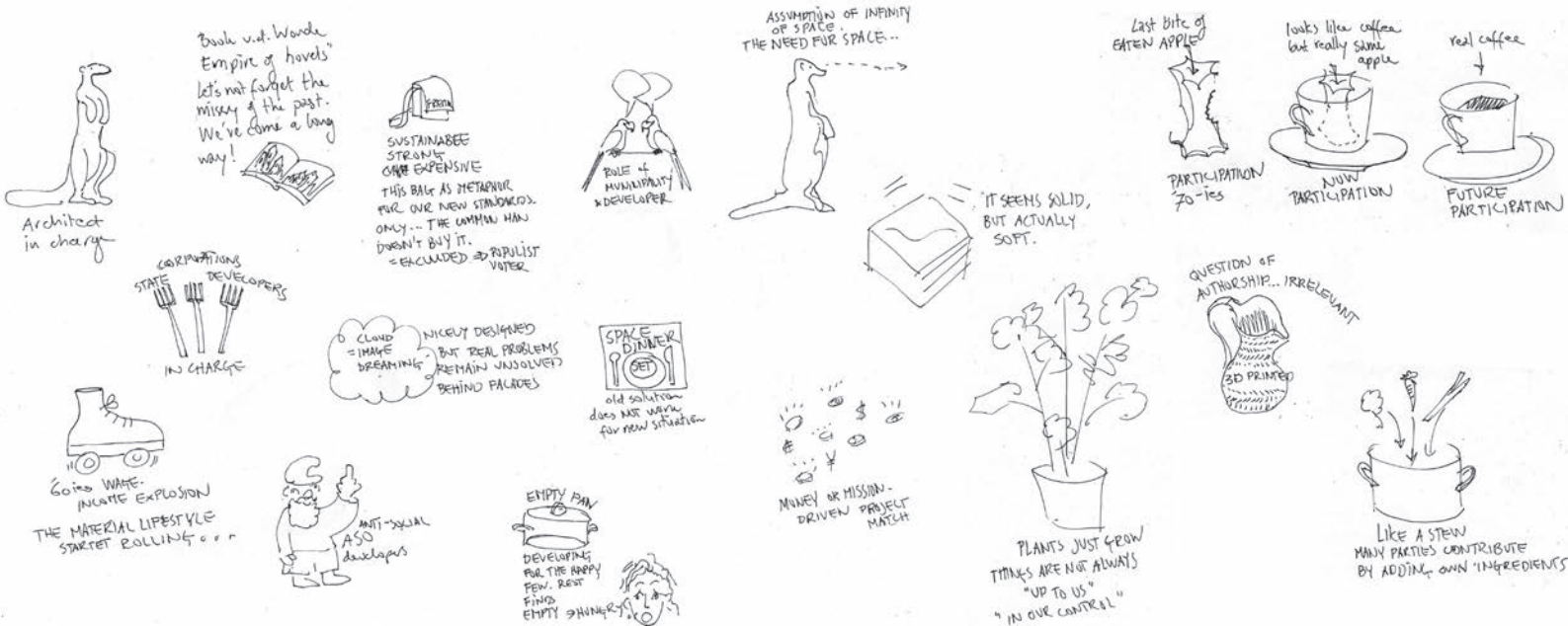
Municipality + Developer + Civilian = Power as the capacity to connect the "regime" with the new.

# MINDMAP OF CITYMAKING OVER TIME

*past* → → → *future*

## ONE MEANS TO SERVE MANY PURPOSES

When the primary purpose of a business is to maximize profit for its owners or stakeholders, all means are made instrumental to serve that one single goal. In this case, the means by themselves are worthless.

A more sustainable model would be to have one single means serving many purposes. This model assumes other value than strictly economical and makes space for the involvement of community initiatives.

**FROM AWARENESS TO ACTION: HOW TO STEP OVER OUR PARADOXICAL ATTITUDE**

Of course we all realise that we are encumbering ourselves with future costs and even know how to prevent them, but we don't. We know that when a community center is closed down, the hospital will get busier. Citizen initatives are not being translated to any change in the system. We know the complexity of social problems yet we keep believing in simplistic solutions, which then fail...
In 2030 urban developers have come to terms with these paradoxes and acknowledge the impact of social regeneration and regard social investments as future investment, not anymore as expenses.

# RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Citizen initiatives, bottom-up city making, the civic society, all this has been extensively studied and so much research material is now available in the form of case studies of cooperations, collective care programs, the sharing economy, etc, one could almost call it Big Data. It should be possible to deduct significant insights that can contribute to a better understanding of how singular initiatives can lead to a plural valuable network. Can we identify key factors that make a broad businesscase?

# A SENSITIVE URBAN DEVELOPMENT IS...

➜ More than stones and icons
➜ With a nose for the social dimension
➜ Cloud-burst (also addressing REAL problems behind the pretty new facades)
➜ Dynamic/organic/never finished/always experimenting

# YOU NEED ME...

Let's imagine together how the reality of city making has evolved in *2030*. We sat together for dinner at Cafe Revolver and each of the three table-teams chewed on *future scenarios*. It has resulted in 3 roughly sketched visions:

1. Gnome Wesley connects it all
2. UHP (Urban Hackers Platform)
3. De buurzame ontwikkelaar (neighborous developer)

## GNOME WESLEY-MODEL
### TRANSIT MODEL & CO-HOUSING

Two more recessions have erased any trust in the real-estate market and forced developers to change their approach. Now the focus lies on co-housing, where groups of 15 to 20 households form a collective building group. The new allotment has resulted in a higher density and more interesting neighborhood. The transit model connects old and new Vilvoorde: existing inhabitants receive a discount on a new house and are supported with their projects, directly leading to a more diverse old- and new Vilvoorde.
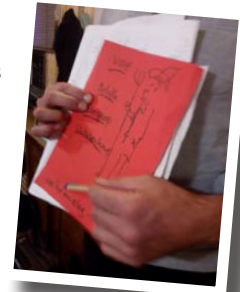
## SOCIAL COMMITMENT CONTRACTS

Local training-and employment programs have been set up and both new housing construction and renovation of older houses is providing local job opportunities. Social bond contracts are agreed with the government The Government has commited itself upon a social contract, in which it agrees to financially compensate every welfare position discharged by the community employment program.

## REMAKE ECONOMY

The youth's innovative power in the make-industry has been strategically spearheaded. The Vilvoorde-Brussels area has been transformed into a sort of Silicon Valley of Circular Remake Economy. Our cafe Sonja has reinvented her hybrid model and is now located on the ground level of one of the co-houses. With people having a lot of spare time due to A.I. they choose to live and work in the Sonja space: a collective livingroom that doubles as workspace/diningroom/childcare room. The Kruifabriek still exists and is partly filled with commercial shops. The Renault Factory's facade has been stripped off, its structure is intensively used for large remake projects.

## URBAN HACKERS PLATFORM
### SOURCING LOCAL POTENTIAL

In the context of a world where banks have become obsolete and Google's data is opensourced, the ultimately flexible network economy manifests itself in an open platform where anyone can plug an idea for urban development. It is an instrument to source the intelligence of the crowd.
Hackers from all parts of society are allowed to react, reject or improve the proposal during a period of two months. This is an instrument to source the intelligence of the crowd, to guarantee societal involvement and to unleash societal checks & balances. Finally the best ideas will surface and be supported by local governments, developers and social entrepreneurs.. "Big data applied to the common interest."
Also, different locations in the city feature a huge meter indicating the *gross city happiness*, the driver behind the assessments of all the proposed initiatives.

## BUURZAME ONTWIKKELAAR
### SOCIAL COOPERATIVES

"Invest in more things and see how they mutually strengthen each other."

In 2030 social cooperatives are the recipe for a broader, inclusive society, against gated communities. Its members are volunteers who collectively organize car sharing, energy infrastructures, etc. They work for the cooperative enterprise, managing and developing an urban area, setting new money flows in motion brought in by such activities as creating new homes for elderly, doing welfare work, and energy production for other neighborhoods. It is an agile organization, fast to notice little defects and rapidly act upon it to make that little difference that matters so much in everyday life. Is there a need for a picknick table in the neighborhood? The cooperative can arrange that.

"IN 2030 SOCIAL COOPERATIVES ARE THE RECIPE FOR A BROADER, INCLUSIVE SOCIETY"

THE BEST WOULD
BE WHEN
PEOPLE THEMSELVES
ARE THE INVESTORS
OF THEIR OWN
LIVING ENVIRONMENT

# LOOKING BACK >>> FORWARD

## EPILOGUE

**THIS 24HOUR SESSION WAS TRIGGERED BY 3 QUESTIONS:**

➜ 1. Apart from economic value, how can social and cultural value be *estimated*? Which *key figures* are available and which ones urgently need to be generated?

➜ 2. How to *mutually weigh* the created fysical, social and cultural values? Real-estate developers and social programming can reinforce eachother to the extent to being counter effective. Gentrification or temporary functions claiming a permanent position are just examples of how even good opportunity can lead to hassle and loss of value. Could a better estimation of value prevent this?

➜ 3. In what ways can various stakeholders receive return on their investments, how can **value capturing** take place? Traditional options would be subsidies, lower rents or loans but we also like to consider neighborhood cooperatives and shares. Here various forms of (im)material investment is payed out according to the time banking principle.

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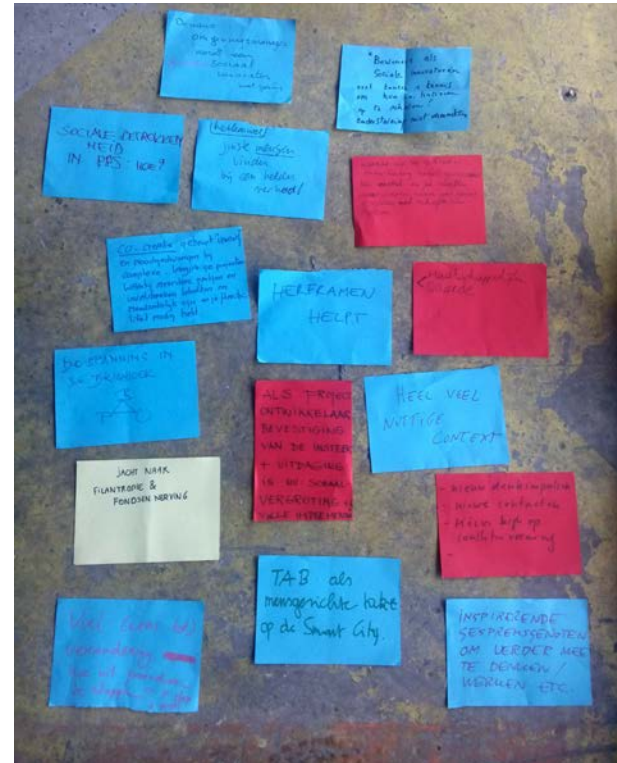
## REALITY CHECKING, LONG TERM NECCESSITY AND A NEW PROFESSION EMERGING

During the 24h session we found ourselves confronted with a concrete, daily reality that forced us to reconsider our starting points.

On many occasions during the sessions we encountered some sort of *"multiple value creation"*. The most powerful probably being Jurgen's statement that 'sensitive development' as we got to name it, is about making the switch from using many means to reach one goal, to reaching multiple goals with one means.

Another thread weaving through the reflections was the emergence of the *"local knowledge professional"*. People who creatively translate in-depth human-centered knowledge into workable ideas for project developers. Matexi, the project developer supporting the Kruitfabriek, acknowledges the importance of this competence in its development in Vilvoorde and is now even planning to employ such a local knowledge professional within their own organization.

## CHANGE AGENTS

The pressure inducing project developers to act in a different way than usual, appears to come from two sides.

**Firstly**, the development's time scope is mid- to longer term. This again is inherent to brownfield development



in general as opposed to greenfield developments, with the latter ones likely becoming a rarity in the near future. Since in this case it is much more difficult for the project developer to forsee the needs of its project's future inhabitants, he is more inclined to leave space for multiple scenario's and invest in cultural and social values.

One could ask whether this is linked with urbanization in Europe. It is predicted that 85% of Europeans will live in cities by 2050. As a consequence, the workfield of project developers will increasingly be an embedded urban context. The borders of urban development projects are fuzzy, or at least fuzzier compared to clearly defined greenfield developments, build in new land areas from "scratch", in short time periods on smaller scale.

**Secondly**, we have identified the 'dynamics of making visible'. The neighbourhoud next to the Matexi development, the 'Broek' neighbourhood, has probably been somewhat neglected by the city over the last two decades. With Matexi's modern, high profile development entering the area, this neglection has been rendered highly, even painfully, visible.

However, a connection between the two areas did not seem to establish naturally. Project developers tend to stick to the borders of their designated area. On top of that, the two areas were kept apart by both a cultural and physical threshold. Each area features its own temporarily programmed empty building but each catering to a completely different target group. Zennelab's audience is supposed to be kids and youth, while the Kruitfabriek's audience is made up of young urban professionals. Add to that the physical barrier formed by the river Zenne, making the separation complete. It therefore felt much more than just a symbol when the spokesman of Matexi on the second day of our 24h session informed us that our reflections with him on the possible added value of establishing more links with the existing neighbourhood of the Broek, had led to a change of the design plans. More precisely they had now included a *bridge* in their plans, leading from the Kruitfabriek site to the Broek area. It is built on the insight that bringing down the physical barrier between the two areas unlocked the potential of a more integrated vision on the challenge ahead.



### BALANCE OF AGREEMENT

The idea of unbalance in participation (for example voluntary engagement) and return (in share of added value generated by project developer), was not present as strongly as expected. It seemed that within the framework of the Kruitfabriek, each cooperation was based on a balanced agreement on investment and return by the people bringing activities to the Kruitfabriek. To a large extent the same was true for the Zennelab, although relationships seemed a bit more unstable and precarious there, probably due to the target group being

kids and youth. This difference is enhanced by a difference in 'radius' of collaborations. Where Zennelab is primarily embedded in the very close vicinity (although they see kids from the outer parts of the city joining activities), Kruitfabriek reaches an audience in the entire city and its surrounding region. After work parties at Kruitfabriek attract large crowds, coming from as far as 40 km or more.

In the absence of inhabitants of Matexi's future development it is only logic that the Kruitfabriek finds its audience elsewhere. However, awareness is rising that over time the radius of Kruitfabriek activities will have to become smaller, or at least grow a stronger orientation on the direct environment, including the Broek neighbourhood of course.

## COLOFON

## DISCLAIMER
# POINTERS FOR USING THE DIGITAL MEMORY AID

**The Digital Memory Aid** is a storage place for newborn ideas and concepts. During a good brainstorm or envisioning session, participants see new connections and come up with new ideas. They can see these ideas in front of them. New ideas are very volatile, it's hard to capture them or transfer them to people who were not present during the brainstorm session. A week later, the ideas often have faded form our memory. We recall a vague notion of a good feeling and positive energy but we cannot easily reproduce what we had in mind. The Digital Memory Aid contains everything that can help remember and capture the energy of what happened in the brainstorm: sketches, impressions, opinions, quotes and ideals. The Digital Memory Aid is a place where concepts and images are structured further and made communicable. In the Digital Memory Aid all ideas are good. The ideas that generate most energy should be explored further.