

# New players in the public space

Private companies and NGOs are investing in the public space. In the Netherlands this is a rather new phenomena, but in other countries it has become a more regular practice and a new form to finance public space improvement.

Allowing other parties to intervene, pay or administrate the public space raises several questions such as the role of the government and the citizens, restrictions on what it is allowed in the public space and what not, and privacy issues.

URBANOS has worked recently in public space projects assigned by private companies, NGOs, and local trusts, rather than local governments and project developers (the more regular clients for public space design and improvement). These new players start influencing the quality of the public space. In this booklet we present some of these examples. In 2017 we want to investigate the role of new players in the public space and what this means for urban designers and local governments. Please share information with us that comes to your mind about this subject at: [office@urbanos.nl](mailto:office@urbanos.nl)





# Rokin in Amsterdam

Project for the  
Association of  
entrepreneurs of the  
Rokin

The Rokin in Amsterdam is a street in the central area where for many years the construction of the north-south line subway has taken place. When construction is finished, the municipality will build a new public space called the Red Carpet. Due to the long construction process, the area needs to return to the imagery of the inhabitants of Amsterdam. To achieve this objective, Urbanos proposed to temporarily transform the area and generate activities in the public space. After many conversations with shop owners and the municipality, the temporary transformation of the public space, the Rokin square was realized, recreating the idea of the red carpet and providing a place to rest and meet in the middle of the construction zone and the busy centre of Amsterdam.

Temporary transformation and activation of the Rokin in Amsterdam: concept, design and realization.

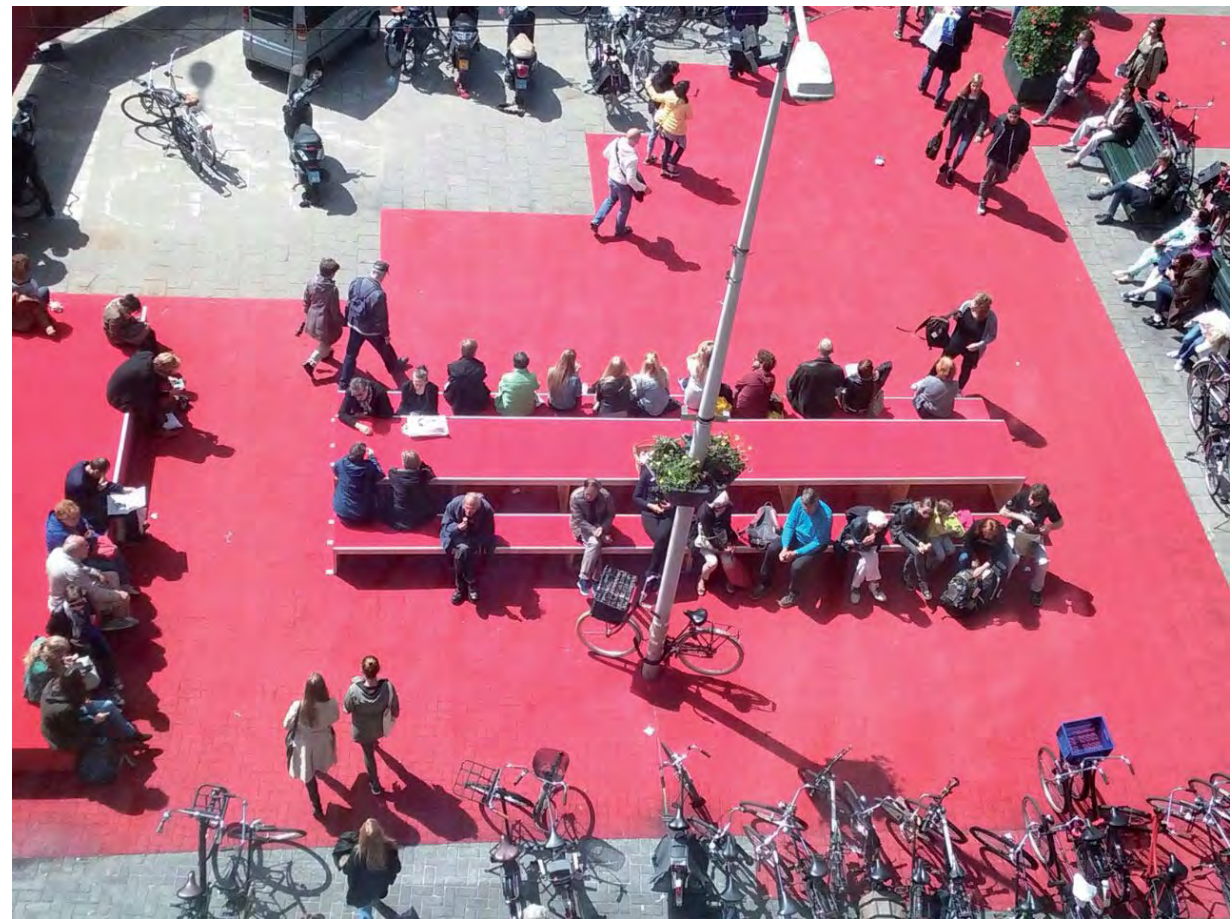
Stakeholders: Association of entrepreneurs of the Rokin, municipality of Amsterdam, sponsors.

Realization: May to November 2015





As part of the project, temporary activities took place in the street and square like music presentations, children workshop with books and a mobile pepernoten factory.





# Park 't Nieuwelant Vlaardingen

Project for the neighbourhood trust  
Vrienden van Vlaardinger-Ambacht



Redesign and activation of the Park 't Nieuwelant:  
participatory process, design and strategy

Stakeholders: Neighbourhood trust, schools, sport  
associations, community and the municipality of  
Vlaardingen

Participation process: 2015

Presentation project to community: may 2015

Realization: currently by community groups



The neighbourhood trust Vrienden van Vlaardinger-Ambacht asked us to develop a plan to activate the neighbourhood park 't Nieuwelant. Three years before, the municipality renovated the park, but the park still is used by very few people and lacks activity. The neighbourhood trust wanted to stimulate people meeting each other, to increase their involvement and improve the social cohesion in the neighbourhood. They saw the park as engine for these meetings by adding new activities and program in order to seduce the local residents to make use of the park.

We guided the participation process with neighbourhood organizations and local citizens. The main question was about the wishes of the residents, what they needed (spatially) and what they were willing to do for the transformation of the park. With this input, we made a sketch design which was again discussed with the community. This proces lead to a design proposal and a strategy.

The design focussed on enriching the actual situation by adding more sport, playing grounds, meeting places and elements to strengthen the nature in the park. The strategy had two pillars: first, to divide the plan in smaller areas and actions that group of citizens could easily develop themselves; and second to play with temporarily materials to test the demand of the local citizens and their response to the proposed transformation.





# Ruta de la Experiencia Quito

Project for the Human Cities Coalition  
initiated by Akzo Nobel



Participatory process, design and execution

Stakeholders: AkzoNobel, Arcadis, Phillips Lighting, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Pakhuis de Zwijger, IHS, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, Alliander, KPMG, Dutch Embassy of Peru/Ecuador/Bolivia, Stadswerk, inhabitants and local businesses of La Mariscal, Van Vlier Media, Interquimec Ecuador, EPMMOP, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador, Municipality of the Metropolitan District of Quito, Administración Zonal La Mariscal and Habitat III.

Participation and design: March-October 2016

Realization: October 2016



With an awesome tactical urbanism project in Quito the Human Cities Coalition was launched. The Human Cities Coalition is initiated by Akzo Nobel and is a collaboration between the Dutch government, private companies, NGO's and universities to improve the live in cities. The UN Habitat III conference in Quito (October 2016) was the place to launch this new initiative.

The Ruta de la Experiencia started by questioning the local citizens and understanding their needs. We looked for a regular street to demonstrate that these streets can be improved easily and with a limited budget. We then asked people about their opinion; face-to-face, during a workshop and by making orange "Memory Boxes" in which people could send their memories and ideas. The problems in Calle Jorge Washington were quite common for Quito, but probably for many other cities. The people were fed up with the smog of cars and busses, they missed places to meet and play, they wanted more green and a nicer public space and above all they wanted to feel more safe.

With all the wishes and ideas in our mind a concept was made to change the street temporarily and permanently. The members within the Human Cities Coalition were asked to contribute to solve the local issues.







During the Habitat week many activities took place in the Ruta de la Experiencia



- We closed a street, painted it and suddenly Quito had a new large square in its centre. The benches were a great place to relax and the newly planted flowers and trees gave the square a cosy atmosphere. The yellow paint had prints of the native plants that used to grow in this garden city neighbourhood.
- Greening the streets excavating all the concrete and plant flowers and trees: More than 200m<sup>2</sup> of flower beds and 30 trees were planted by volunteers of KLM and with support of Arcadis, Alliander en KPMG. Maintenance is done by the neighbours and the recently opened community garden. A vertical garden (supported by Akzo Nobel Special Chemicals) and painting of school kids replaced one of the most ugly walls of Quito.
- New places to meet, relax, play and sport were created along the street. Stadswerk helped to transform a "dead corner" into a new playground. Parking lots became new mini-parks and terraces for the restaurants.
- To increase safety, street lights were replaced by Phillips Lightning; dark streets turned bright at night. Phillips also illuminated the historic cultural centre Benjamin Carrion, home base of Fabrica Ciudad. The new public spaces and activities led to more visitors and "eyes on the streets".
- Crossing streets was unsafe, we made the corners smaller and less wide and made it easier to cross the street. Bike parking were placed to stimulate cycling.
- Many changes weren't visible, but had an enormous effect. Interquimec and Akzo Nobel Deco Painting took away graffiti and painted most of the houses along the street. Nearly 100 volunteers got a training for painting and used their newly skills to paint walls, houses and streets.



## Result:

- the neighbours believe again in their own neighbourhood and take care of the public space.
- people were inspired by the opportunities; other neighbourhoods have asked the municipality if they could do the same.
- the municipality was studying the possibility to close the street. Our project was the experiment and showed that it can be done.
- the municipality would like to continue the project in different areas, because we have shown that with limited resources bigger changes are possible.



before

after







before



after







before



after





At URBANOS we are fascinated by the question how to make cities more human by changing existing systems and spaces. The local stakeholders are our starting point. We investigate their questions and together design a transformation process to improve their living or working environment. Improvements can involve energy consumption, mobility issues creating more bike or walking friendly areas, bringing back nature, improve the social cohesion or boost local economy. Our urban design and planning solutions tackle these questions and use the local energy to create better neighbourhoods, cities or regions. Our strategy considers actions that can be realized tomorrow to create a sustainable future. We work in the Netherlands and abroad; contact us if you want to know more.

URBANOS wants to research the role and implications of new players in the public space in the Netherlands and explore the possibilities and threats of this recent but growing phenomena. We are interested in researching forms of public-private collaboration/sponsoring of public space. The following questions, among others, will be explored:

- who are these new players in the public space
- why do they invest in the public space, what is their interest?
- how is financial construction in these projects?
- how does the process between the private, public stakeholders and designers works?
- what are the roles of the different stakeholders?



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SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT