

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ARTICLE

One group of citizens reflected on the poor status of a school building. In a newspaper article they develop a scenario for rebuilding the school via using crowdfunding by the community. To make a newspaper picture, they perform this scenario before the school, and decide that the picture should show how they concretely would engage people into this funding process. Therefore they rewrite the article and describe how a series of silent protests convinced the local community to build a new school via crowdfunding. To visualise the protest action, they attach a white bomb – one of the props that were available - to the school as a mascot. The spatial context of the current container-classes function as a canvas/frame and the old buildings act along as representing the chaotic context. After reading the newspaper, the group of schools running this particular school, contacted our research unit to use the participatory process as input for new concrete building plans for the school.

LEGEND MARKINGS

BLUE

historical or factual information

RED

today

YELLOW

future

position which has always had a good connection with the centre of Godsheide and therefore also with the new community centre.

The residents and policy makers see the bridge as a bridge of activities, a new public place from which you can see, amongst other things, fantastic sunrises and sunsets. The bridge will be explicitly accessible to everyone, including those who are less mobile, but not for cars. Moreover, around the bridge and in its vicinity new alternative forms of housing like dyke houses

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The small article on the MOVE initiative in 2004 was included in one of the later editing phases of the newspaper. The participating citizens found it very important that the newspaper showed that the Future Fiction process was just one of a long series of attempts of the citizens to set up a constructive collaboration with policy. Indeed, already in 2004 the inhabitants made a plan for the green area in the centre and organised cultural and sport activities to share their plans with the world, under the title MOVE.

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One article discusses the re-use of the local church to provide services for the diverse needs of the community, such as day care and elderly care. This proposal was mainly driven by the daughter of the original owner of the closed “Café Vieke” in front of the church, the head quarter of our newspaper redaction. She can hardly walk because of a physical disability. She became an activist dedicating her art and her life to weaker groups in society, to the green Belgian political party and the church community. She and her fellow-citizens discussed the need for places like Godsheide to be open for more people entering and living in their community. Since churches in Belgium, like in most European countries, are becoming less popular, new destinations are sought for them. This led to the choice to re-use the church building as a space for diversity and inclusion. To include this scenario in a picture, the participants gathered people from different societal groups before the church and hung billboards on the fences that visualised the concrete services this spatial hub would offer.

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A group of citizens wanted to create a co-operative CityDepot Godsheide that would connect two parts of Godsheide via a bridge to transport local goods and services. The new co-operative model was very much defined by the participation of the owner of a mobile phone provider in the group and his plea to stimulate local entrepreneurship. In the article the participants chose one of the local participants as a responsible for the initiative. The reflection by all participants on how to connect their own skills and organisations to the initiative, facilitates them to take next steps in realising the project. After the newspaper was spread, they organised a sunrise brunch on the Tuikabelbrug to informally gather and mobilised citizens in supporting and setting up local food markets.

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In one of the articles the citizens describe how an activist collective reclaims a former bridge between two sides of Godsheide. They write about how the collective re-enacts crossing the bridge with a bike. The original Bailey bridge was destroyed in WOII and replaced by a ferryboat until the boat sunk with 35 children on board. Between 1977 and 1979 a new bridge 'Tuikabelbrug' was created at a less central location, intended to serve as a connection for a fast road between the two main cities in the region. However, the road was prevented from being installed. Therefore, people only use a part of the bridge for local traffic. Some of the citizens have been making a plea to have a new, more central biking bridge between two parts of Godsheide. To create a still image, one of the citizens re-enacts the crossing of this fictional biking bridge with his bike. The crossing is simulated with tape and a broken crossing gate that the participants found in the woods on the location of the historical Bailey bridge. In this article and image the citizens chose for an activist take on the process to express the difficulty of working with policy on spatial change in Godsheide, after different attempts in 2004, 2008, 2013 and today. The plea for 'slow' connections via the bridge is now (after the newspaper was spread publicly) followed by a plan that is created by the citizens for this biking bridge and a mobilisation of citizens to count illicit traffic in their village.

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In this article the back-office of the making process of the newspaper was made transparent. It discusses the participatory working process, including a picture of the location of the newspaper's editorial office in a local bar. This article was written because the participants felt responsible for the quality of the content. They were a bit worried that the semi-fictional character of the newspaper would confuse older people in the community. They hope that this article allows them to understand the context. The responsibility the participants felt for the quality of the newspaper, allowed the debate among the participants to be sustained over a longer period of time in several editing and discussion phases.

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