

# THE CITY AT EYE LEVEL ASIA-PACIFIC

A series of black silhouettes of people of various ages and heights standing on a horizontal line. From left to right, there are two adults, a small child, a person in a dynamic pose, two adults, and a family unit consisting of an adult and a child.

Curated by STIPO, Think City & Urban Discovery

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Jeroen Laven (STIPO), Gert Jan te Velde  
(Vanschagen Architecten) & Paul  
Elleswijk (Havensteder)



# INTRODUCTION

In early 2012, STIPO started the project that would become The City at Eye Level: Lessons for Street Plinths, a book that was published by the end of that year. We sought collective answers to the question: How can we create a user-friendly ground-level that is flexible for years to come, adaptive for multiple uses, pleasing to the eye, and all with little financial resources? The project rapidly developed into an open source project with more than 40 contributing co-authors from its network in not just the Netherlands, but also from Europe and America. But the story continues. Ever since 2016 The City at Eye Level is growing internationally with new editions such as "A Cidade ao Nivel dos Olhos" for the Brazilian market, "The City at Eye Level in The Netherlands" and "The City at Eye Level for Kids". Next step: "The City at Eye Level Asia-Pacific!"

The City at Eye Level Asia-Pacific will be an open source project and book, a response to the increasing demand from Asian urban practitioners for case studies on creating great cities at eye level, suitable to their local context. For the City at Eye Level we turn streets and areas into places where people feel at home and want to stay (placemaking), enhance quality of public space and plinths, together with the community. Our method combines use, design and organisation (software, hardware and orgware). Because of the unprecedented growth in the recent decade in Asian cities, there is more need than ever for clever and creative planning solutions and

better design principles. The book will adopt urban challenges particular to the Asian context, which impact the preconditions for achieving a better city at eye level who translate to a themes framework of the book. Read more on page 12. The book will be curated together with Think City (Malaysia) and Urban Discovery (Hong Kong) as core partners, international organisations like UN-Habitat, Isocarp, IIAS, Project for Public Spaces and Bernard van Leer Foundation as network partners.

In this booklet we reach out to urban practitioners as potential collaborations. First we introduce the basics of The City at Eye Level, a program for improving cities, streets and places worldwide, an open source network for action, strategy and learning. We tell you all about our new project "The City at Eye Level Asia-Pacific" and with practical details on how you can be involved in the making of the book.

We are very happy to be able to create this new edition on great cities, places and streets in Asian cities with you!

*March 2019*



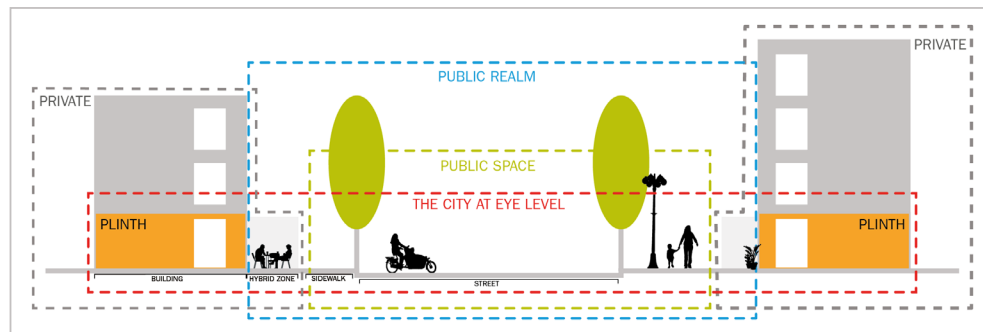
# THE BASICS



# WHAT MAKES A GREAT CITY AT EYE LEVEL?

Public space quality is the backbone of a sustainable city. Great streets, places where you intuitively want to stay longer, human scale interaction between buildings and streets, ownership by users, placemaking and good plinths (active ground floors) and a people-centred approach based on the user's experience – that is what *The City at Eye Level* is all about. *The City at Eye Level*, initiated by STIPO, is a book, an open source learning network, and a program for improving cities, streets and places all over the world.

City inhabitants and other users experience their cities in what we call the 'public realm'. It has a broader meaning than just 'public space', it includes facades of buildings and all the elements visible on the eye level in public spaces. Especially the plinths are an important part of buildings. They form the City at Eye Level.



In early 2012, STIPO started the project that would become "*The City at Eye Level: Lessons for Street Plinths*". We sought collective answers to the question: "*How can we create a user-friendly ground-level that is flexible for years to come, adaptive for multiple uses, pleasing to the eye, and all with little financial resources?*" The project quickly became an opensource project with more than 40 contributing authors and many international examples. The focus shifted from plinths, to human scale: the true city at eye level. The second edition was all about putting other physical components on the table like façades, buildings, sidewalks, streets, bikeways and trees, processes like participatory planning and the importance of the emotional and social aspects of cities. "*What makes a space a place to be and a place to linger? And more importantly, who?*".

As the city evolves, so does the field of urban planning. In all of our current projects, we rely very little on our formal training in planning. After all, we are no longer planning cities—we are reinventing, reusing, and living within them. Our most meaningful, high-impact projects are founded on the principles of co-creation and depend on experimental, bottom-up initiatives, temporary use, user- and place-based strategies, and DIY urbanism. For us, co-creation is at the heart of generating long-term effects. Who is at the table, what networks are we using, what assets do we have to share, what tools can we use? As partnership patterns are changing and local/regional municipalities no longer have a stronghold, around the table we see various user groups, community members, property owners, developers, entrepreneurs and public/private industries. Often STIPO operates as "public developer": we then take the initiative ourselves, in a collaborative spirit, to develop public space qualities in our cities. Our books try to capture the various groups and share their stories as well.

## OUR PRINCIPLES

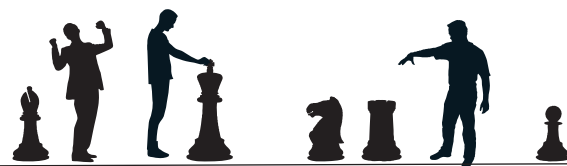
- **Build on uniqueness, on the soul of the place**
- **Analyse before you act, work with a vision**
- **Aim for long lasting qualities**
- **Use stratification - multiple and diverse use for a fair and inclusive city**
- **Take ownership, work with the community, investors big and small**
- **Act on short and long term: quicker lighter cheaper**
- **Combine investing in hardware, software and orgware**
- **Value creation; a viable business case**
- **Combine working and thinking on different scales**

# WHAT IS PLACEMAKING?

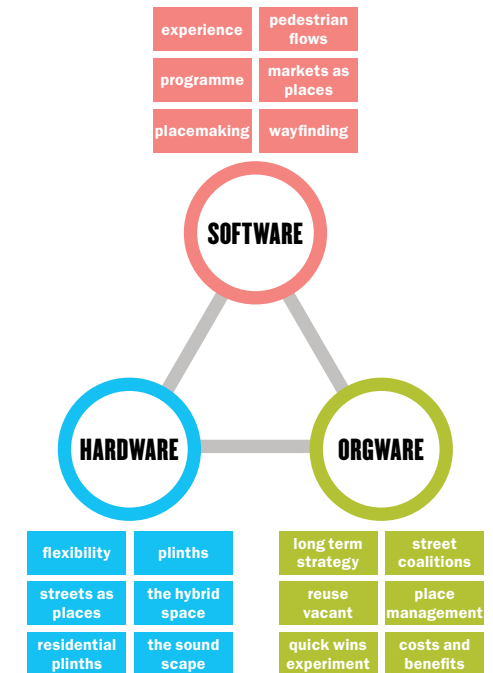
Placemaking inspires people to collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces as the heart of every community. Strengthening the connection between people and the places they share, placemaking refers to a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximize shared value. More than just promoting better urban design, placemaking facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution.

## Trends

- Shifting from a car-oriented city to a walkable and bike-friendly city
- Shift from single-use areas towards mixed use neighborhoods
- Shifting from a top-down towards a middle-up-down approach. Focus on community involvement & co-makership
- Shift from a government or developer oriented management towards a mixed management model on different levels such as plinth management and street management
- Shifting from conservative financial models towards progressive ones, such as co-financing and the circular economy.



# SOFTWARE, ORGWARE & HARDWARE



To build a great city at eye level, one needs to consider three approaches; hardware, orgware and software. These three approaches influence each other; if you make changes in one sphere, changes in the others will follow.

**Hardware** is the physical appearance of buildings, streets and the city. The design and building rules that can make a difference in creating a more people-centred city. Hardware touches every scale of a city; the plinth, the hybrid zone, the street, the area, and the city as a whole as well as the connection between all the scales.

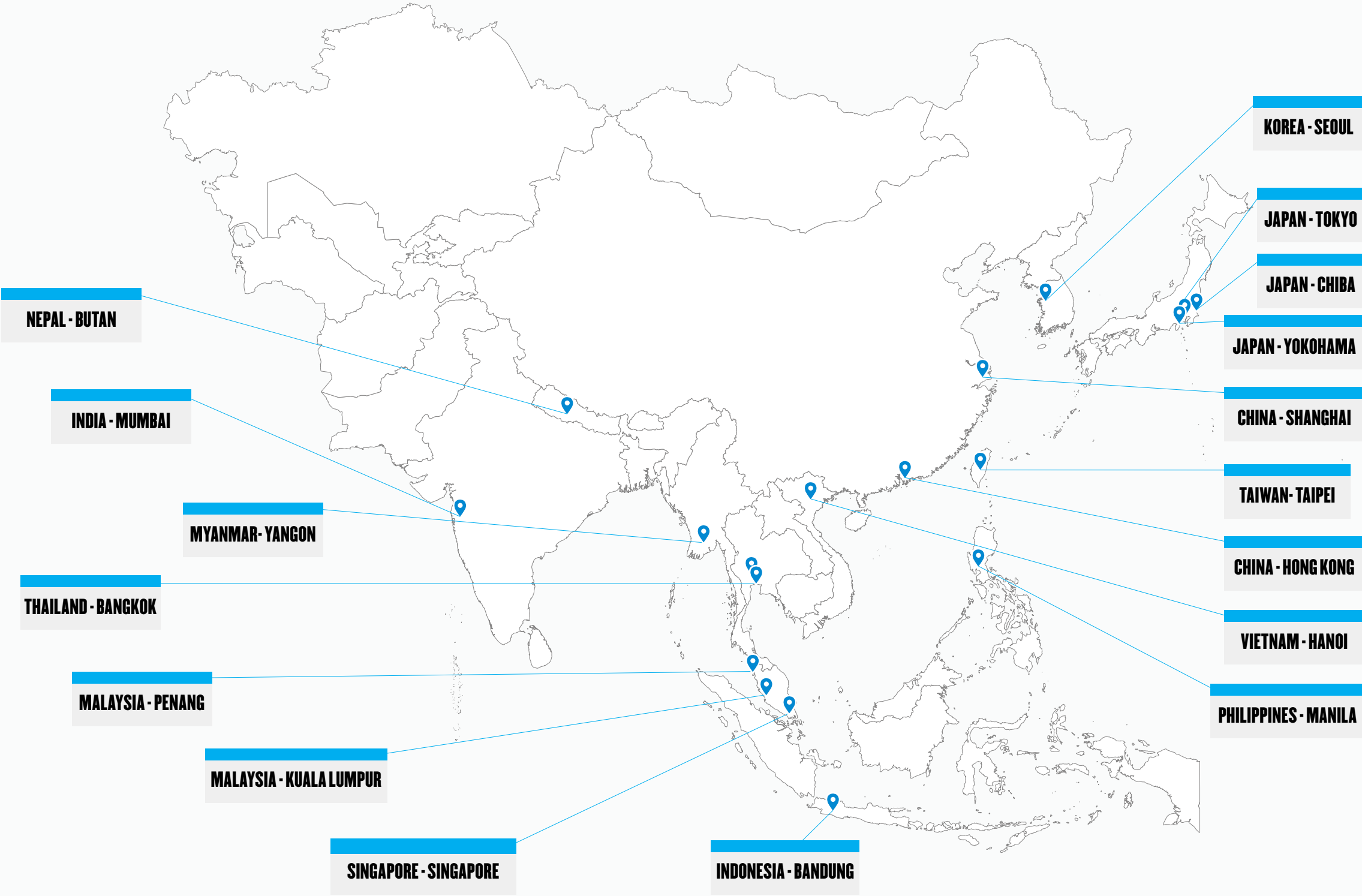
**Orgware** is the way we organize a good city at eye level. How can cities and market parties work together. How can we give people influence to improve their surroundings. How can we organize this in a sustainable and viable way. It can be adapted on different scales by creating teams and coalitions for managing plinths, buildings, streets and cities. Various time-frames such as quick wins and long-term strategies have to be taken into account.

**Software** is the least tangible part, nevertheless, equally important. It regards the user's experience and their perceivance of the built environment. Aspects such as wayfinding in the area and the programming are crucial to consider, as is the order of functions in a street or area. It is also essential to incorporate a mixture of uses within the area and in public spaces, on both smaller and larger scale.

# ASIA PACIFIC



**LOCATIONS OF SELECTED CASES IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION**





# WORKING TOWARDS AN ASIAN EDITION

STIPO noticed a demand for an Asian City at Eye Level, responding to the increasing demand from Asian urban practitioners for case studies and examples suitable to their local context. Because of the unprecedented growth in the recent decade in Asia-Pacific cities, there is more need than ever for clever and creative planning solutions and better design principles. Big developments rise from the ground and many of these areas are lacking soul and a pleasant human scale. In the 70s the Netherlands faced a similar expansion and many mistakes were made. Lack of flexible ground floor design in high-rise development, therefore no connection to the public space and sidewalks, a car-oriented urban grid and almost no human scale. STIPO analyzed the mistakes made in Dutch cities and used the developed lessons to develop methodologies and design principles to create better cities at eye level. Tapping into these observations in Asia-Pacific cities STIPO connected in 2016 with Asian partners within our network to research the actual need for similar methodologies.

## SHARING EXPERIENCES TO HELP DEFINE AN ASIAN PARTICIPATORY APPROACH TO PLANNING

STIPO, Think City (Kuala Lumpur and George Town) and Urban Discovery (Hong Kong) initiated The City at Eye Level Asia project as core partners, partly to expand their network and disseminate knowledge across the region. Think City and Urban Discovery are invaluable partners, known for

their distinguished leadership in the field of placemaking, urban design, community building and cultural heritage preservation. Kuala Lumpur and Hong Kong furthermore are both hotbeds for transformation, where there's an ongoing debate looking to reshape the field of urban design and planning, to a more participatory approach.

Through the book we hope to raise awareness on urban challenges particular to the Asian context, which impact the preconditions for achieving a better city at eye level, such as: climate (heat, unpredictable rainfall and pollution), lack of public spaces (overcrowding and over-tourism, walkability/bikeability), specific cultural contexts in terms of classes and gender, large scale often standardised development, position of governments towards market forces, demolishing older parts and being pushed to outskirts of the city, safety and sanity in public space and different notions of public and private.

## AIM

By launching an Asian City at Eye Level edition we aim for adapting the developed methodology, such as criteria for better cities at eye level, plinth- and place games and the knowledge for a good city at eye level to an Asian context. We aim to provide the correct and proper terminology and create space for dialogue to develop networks of human scale public spaces for urban designers and creative initiatives in the planning field. By creating a platform and bringing different disciplines together we hope to bridge the Asian and Western urban worlds.

The book will work towards the Placemaker Week in Malaysia in 2019 with the launch of the book and Asian Placemaking Network. The predetermined and selected ambassadors will together form the full program and speakers list of the Placemaking Week in Malaysia with the book launch, plenary sessions, workshops and break-out sessions as well as field trips to case studies from the book and Asian versions of plinth- and place games.

## TARGET GROUP

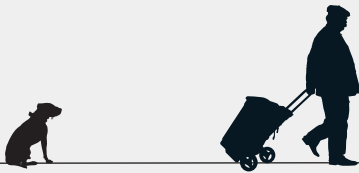
The book is targeted at a variety of urban practitioners: government officials, local politicians, real estate developers, investors and trust funds, city managers, land/homeowners, placemakers and activists. Because the project is explicitly cross-disciplinary in nature it will appeal to a range of professions: architects, planners, urban designers, economists, civil servant, marketeers and engineers. But also to the newly emerging professions such as street managers, placemakers, public developers, and destination branders. We facilitate a dialogue between professionals and their clients: city residents, local community groups, neighbourhood associations, NGO's, entrepreneurs, schools and street organisations.

CONTENT

The book content will be co-curated with local ambassadors from different cities in Asia and will be published both online (bilingual) and in print (English). Responding to challenges in the urban context the following themes are selected as a framework for the book in order to feed a discussion:

THEMES	TOPICS
FLUID X FORMAL	<b>Resident-created or upgraded public spaces</b> - How to amplify to resident created public spaces? We look at citizen-led examples of urban upgradings, like random street corners or bus stops turned into lovely sitting out areas or community gardens with home-made furniture, pots and plants, religious artefacts and even self-fabricated exercise equipment.
PRAY X PLAY	Religious sites as public spaces - How to replicate the shared space concept of urban religious sites? We look at temple complexes, churchyards, mosque compounds and school grounds that also function as important public, community and recreational spaces, not just to pray but also to play.
DAY X NIGHT	Multi-purpose day/night spaces - How to optimise use of space in cities that are dictated by hot climate and high rents? We look at creative use and management of spaces; for example a street food market in the morning, traffic lane during the day and a football pitch by night, or busy thoroughfare during the week and pedestrian zone in the weekend.
COLOUR X CREATIVITY	The city as a canvas for urban creatives - How to use streets and back alleys as performance venues, exhibition space and creative outlet for urban artists and performers? We look at successful artistic projects that do good for the city and community.
PUBLIC X PRIVATE	Privately managed public spaces - How to demarcate the line In between what is public and private space in a dense urban environment? It is often blurred. We look at successful examples of privately managed public spaces that are responding to the citizens needs such as rooftops, arcades, footbridges.

THEMES	TOPICS
OLD X NEW	<b>Keeping the human scale in skyscraper cities</b> - How to use the qualities of old city centres (human scale, character, open squares, walkable streets) and translate them successfully for high rise environments? How to keep activity at street level?
INDOOR X OUTDOOR	<b>Creating a comfortable environment</b> - How to create comfortable spaces when the urban environment becomes hostile for humans? How to deal with heat, pollution and flooding? We look at creative solutions like providing shaded streets, connecting walkways, water gardens and separated cycling lanes.
OVERCROWDING X UNDERUSED	Accessibility and empty spaces - How to steer people away from overcrowded places and open up underused spaces? Parks, plazas, waterfronts are not always accessible for all. We look at places where attractive spaces were created in unusual places like under footbridges, disused laneways or overpasses.



# ABOUT THE PARTNERS



**Think City** is an Malaysian urban rejuvenation organisation based in Kuala Lumpur and George Town. The organisation is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Khazanah Nasional Bhd. Established in 2009 to spearhead community-based urban regeneration in George Town, its impact and successes allowed Think City to expand its mandate into Kuala Lumpur, Johor Bahru and Butterworth. Think City works with local governments and the corporate sector to implement projects that will improve liveability and add public amenities in the areas of the arts, heritage, culture, environment and economic resilience. Think City is core partner of the project.

**Urban Discovery** is a Hong Kong based social enterprise with Dutch origins which has over 15 years of providing advisory services and training in the field of urban regeneration, community building and heritage revitalisation throughout Asia. Its extensive network includes developers, governments, NGO's and community organisations in many Asian cities. Clients also include multi and bilateral agencies (World Bank, ADB, UN-Habitat etc.) and cultural institutions (UNESCO, Ghetty Foundation, Asia Society etc.) and professional (Asian Institute for Architects, Urban Land Institute etc.). Urban Discovery is core partner of the project.

**UN-Habitat** is the United Nations programme working towards a better urban future. UN-Habitat is mandated to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities. A recent new key-focus, for which Stipo is one of the international collaboration partners, is to develop the quality of public space, as emphasized in

the New Urban Agenda, concluded upon at the Habitat III conference in Quito in 2016.

**The Southeast Asia Neighborhoods Network (SEANNET)** is organised as a platform of individuals and institutions with close working connections with the UKNA network. The programme is funded (2017-2020) by the Henry Luce Foundation in New York, USA. SEANNET selected six cities in Myanmar, Thailand, Philippines, Vietnam & Indonesia as their project areas. SEANNET is under the coordination of the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), a global humanities and social sciences research institute and knowledge exchange platform.

**ISOCARP** is the international Society of City and Regional Planners. Founded in 1965 the Netherlands, highly-qualified planners came together to share their Dutch knowledge internationally. Isocarp grew to a global association of over 700 experienced professionals, bringing together recognised and planners from more than 85 countries worldwide.

**Bernard van Leer Foundation** believes in giving all children a good start in life and build healthy, prosperous and creative societies. As a private foundation they focus on developing and sharing knowledge, provide financial support and expertise to partners and help to test and scale effective services. The City at Eye Level for Kids publication as one of the winners of the Urban95 Challenge in 2017.

# SOME EXAMPLES



## SLIPPERY SQUARES AND CONCRETE BUILDINGS

### CASE STUDY SCHOUWBURGPLEIN

Rotterdam,  
the Netherlands

**INTERVIEW WITH**  
René Dutrieux  
*project manager*

**“It’s important to show the  
cultural richness and modern  
heritage to the citizens”**

#### **FACT 1**

9 cultural institutions

#### **FACT 2**

2.3 million visitors per year

#### **FACT 3**

60 outdoor public events per year







## TIMELINE

- 1887 construction of the Grootte Schouwburg (theatre)
- 1940 bombing of city centre of Rotterdam, Schouwburg partly destroyed
- 1947 opening of temporary Schouwburg
- 1953 opening of the Lijnbaan, the world's first car-free pedestrian street with shops and housing
- 1962 opening of concert hall De Doelen at the Schouwburgplein
- 1966 construction of parking garage under the square
- 1987 demolishing of temporary Schouwburg
- 1988 construction of the new Schouwburg
- 1996 reconstruction of the square and opening of cinema
- 2010 founding of the Vereniging Verenigd Schouwburgplein (Association of United Schouwburgplein)

## CONTEXT

The Schouwburgplein (Theatre Square) is situated in the city centre of Rotterdam, which was rebuilt and modernized after the WWII bombing. The city's most important cultural institutions in performing arts are located around the Schouwburgplein, attracting millions of visitors per year. The square is also close to the modernist Lijnbaan shopping complex, an icon of the reconstruction of Rotterdam after the war and the first major pedestrian-only shopping street in the world. Despite the many visitors to the institutions and the nearby shopping streets, the square has been a void in the city instead of a place for (cultural) gathering.

## CHALLENGE

One important challenge is to reveal the cultural richness and the modern heritage of the buildings to the citizens, and to bring life to the square. As the Schouwburgplein is just outside the main flow of pedestrian traffic, people don't coincidentally pass by. Also,

theatre-goers tend to arrive just before their show and depart quickly after, spending little time on or around the square. Three main goals were set in order to make the square more attractive: improve the physical quality of the square, bring visibility to the culture *inside* the buildings, and activate the square with programming and events.

## SOLUTION

In 2008 the city council made a proposal to the cultural institutions: the municipality would invest in physical improvements of the public space, while the institutions would program events outside their buildings to activate the square. This was the starting point of the association Vereniging Verenigd Schouwburgplein, in which the nine cultural institutions, community organizations, and the business association are represented. The objective of the association is to strengthen the square as a hospitable metropolitan cultural plaza for all Rotterdammers and thereby economically strengthening the area.

Since its start, the association has worked on a multi-annual program to activate the square and turn it into a more pleasant

place. In recent years many changes have occurred. Spatially, the mobile seatings "Enzo's" and a small outdoor stage were placed on the square. The association has also built a multi-annual program to activate the square, working in close collaboration with the cultural institutions. Control is ensured on the basis of a location and activity profile in which the character of the square and the type of activities are determined. Furthermore coordination takes places with the other squares in the city to align activities and events.

Physically, the plinths of the theatre and the concert hall are now more open and accessible due to investments by the municipality. The theatre's lobby is turned into a meeting place where you can go without visiting a show. Also concert hall De Doelen is being upgraded with a more hospitable and open entrance, including an inviting grand café to the street.

## SECRETS

### Create a representative association.

The association is the main contact for all activities and ensures quality control for all events. A program leader collaborates with

the cultural institutions and programs the cultural activities. Additionally, a “square master” functions as the liaison between the surrounding residents, entrepreneurs, and with the municipality.

**Connect the inside and outside of the buildings.** The buildings of the cultural institutions around the square were internally focused and didn’t display what is happening inside. The theatre’s lobby is now open to the public, and the concert hall is undergoing renovations for a more hospitable and open entrance.

**Program, program, program.** To turn the Schouwburgplein into a lively public place, more activities and events were needed. New activities and events on the square have activated the square and attracted new visitors.

## LESSONS

**Determine the profile of the place.** Regulate the kind of activities and events according to the quality profile of the square and its institutions. For Schouwburgplein, this is the starting point for all activities and events. The locations profile has an official status, determined by the city council, and has some strict rules on noise and type of events. The location profile is also useful in the communication with the surrounding residents, when discussing possible events.

**Slow transformations and small steps:** instead of some big events and activities, the association is working on a longtime transformation of the square. It takes time to build new cultural traditions and to change the physical appearance. These slow transformations apply to the nature of being a city.

## IMPACT

The primary output is an active and structural cultural program (from 2011 onwards) with events organized by the cultural institutions and ‘external’ parties. Part of the programming are larger more-day events that recur every year (such as the Circus City



Festival, the 24 Hours of Culture Festival, and the Dance Week), but also small weekly events on Sunday like yoga sessions and performances. In 2009, only 11 events took place on the square; in 2014, that number increased to 60 events. These events on the square attracted 75,000 visitors. The eventual aim is to offer around 100 events on the square in 2016. More than before, Schouwburgplein has gained a reputation as a cultural square in Rotterdam.

## DO

- Cooperate between all parties with common purpose
- Activate with programs and events
- Open the plinths and ground floors to the public

## IN CONCLUSION

The slow transformation of the Schouwburgplein into a vibrant cultural square consists of physical, functional and organizational aspects. The association works well for all parties to collaborate on the improvement of the square, both physically and functionally. While upgrading the quality of the public space and strengthening the relation with the plinths of the building, the programming of cultural events and activities will attract more visitors and bring public life to the square. Over the last years, the programming of activities at the square has increased by cultural productions of the institutions as well as external events.

# TAKE ACTION #2 - DISTRICT: BOTTOM-UP MEETS TOP-DOWN AT EYE LEVEL

Jeroen Laven, Gert Jan te Velde & Paul Elleswijk

## ZOHO ROTTERDAM

The Zomerhofkwartier in Rotterdam, better known as ZoHo, is a former industrial/business area on the edge of the city centre of Rotterdam. Throughout the last decade, housing corporation Havensteder purchased most of the real estate in the area with the intention of redeveloping the area into a residential zone. Havensteder already owns over 10.000 houses in adjacent areas and ZoHo is located between their current properties and the city centre. The future of ZoHo directly influences the social and economical value of their existing property portfolio.

Recently we see a trend emerging among light industry: they are moving out of the mono-functional city edges and want to be present in the vibrant city centre. The housing redevelopment plans of ZoHo were postponed, partly due to the economic crisis in The Netherlands, and partly because of this trend. Perhaps it was a good idea from the start to transform ZoHo into housing, but maybe better alternatives exist for such a central area where few people live.

In 2013, Havensteder decided to take a risk with ZoHo and give ‘slow urbanism’ a chance. For a period of 10 years, the area has the opportunity to redevelop *itself*. Unless a party would come with a financial offer we can’t refuse, ZoHo could give itself new meaning for the city. The area could rediscover its own future. During these ten years, it will become clear what the future has in store for the area: housing, commercial functions, in existing or new buildings. Whatever fits the best.



mindful management and the presence of interesting front runners (such as Stipo) who not only moved to the area, but also brought their expertise to improve it.

We are proud to say that ZoHo can be described as an area with 100 unofficial owners. Parties are working together to give ZoHo a new future that will be good for individual parties, for the area, and for the city.

## ZOHO AT EYE LEVEL

As a former industrial/business area the public space was designed for the car with wide streets, too much parking spaces, and mundane paving. Furthermore, the plinths of the oversized buildings were often used for storage and indoor parking and were closed with no public functions on the ground floor.

The location itself is superb: at the edge of the city centre, near to the (new) central station and adjacent to an emerging neighbourhood. Large buildings lay on the south and west side of the area, and little through traffic makes it an unknown area for people from the city or even the neighbourhood. Altogether ZoHo has been known as an unsafe and unattractive area. For the tenants, the city and Havensteder, this was the reason to improve the public realm.

## DIRECT ACTION

Using the lessons from the first edition *The City at Eye Level*, the tenants, the municipality, and Havensteder started working on improving the quality at eye level, the public realm. Examples:

- *Improving plinths*: In contracts with new tenants on the ground floor a deal was made that the plinths must have a public function and appearance. For each plinth, tailor-made contracts were made that fit the need for the owner, tenant and neighbourhood.
- *Improving ZoHo's public realm* Tenants play a role in maintaining and developing ZoHo's public space, facilitated by Havensteder and the city.
- *Improving safety*: Tenants and residents take an active role in improving safety. A neighbourhood corporation was started in which this function takes place.

## SIX EXAMPLES OF IMPROVING ZOHO AT EYE LEVEL

1. *Roodkapje*, a local cultural platform, was the first “new” tenant in ZoHo. Their combination of a restaurant, art gallery and musical venue were given a temporary space in a former supermarket. On their opening night, 1500 people came and put ZoHo on the Rotterdam map. Roodkapje was invited with a temporary function for ZoHo as part of a placemaking strategy. After two years Roodkapje moved, allowing for a more permanent function.
2. Instead of having a closed façade with dormitories as a plinth, *hostel “De Mafkees”* invited social entrepreneurs in their plinth, from a bike repair shop to a youth information centre. This way, both the building and the area connected on a deeper level.
3. *Restaurant Gare du Nord* is a successful organic vegan restaurant in a former train wagon on a derelict building site. The restaurant added a movable plinth



## SLOW URBANISM

The approach in ZoHo is called *slow urbanism*. It can be described as an organic process where the traditional public planning partners (in the Netherlands, the housing corporation and government) give room to other parties to urbanise themselves.

In ZoHo, Havensteder teamed up with Stipo, a local public developer, who agreed to move to the area. In close co-operation with the local government and new and existing tenants, they started the process. During the first year (2013) they managed to fill almost all of Havensteder's vacant real estate. The area has become known as a place for urban planning experiments and revitalising the city in the professional world in Rotterdam, the country and even internationally. The experience at eye level plays a key role in this revitalisation.

## WHAT KEY FACTORS LEAD TO THIS SUCCESSFUL START?

### Havensteder

- Havensteder decided not to redevelop their property in the area for 10 years themselves.
- The incoming rent and expenditures for the property in the area as a whole needs to break even (at least) during this period. Havensteder does not lose money; prices are moderate.
- Havensteder does not have any, or very little, financial investment for the area.
- Tenants from Havensteder benefit from flexible lease contracts, maintenance, choosing co-tenants, etc.
- Havensteder invites tenants to pitch ideas that improve the social welfare of adjacent neighbourhoods, where Havensteder owns most of the property.

### Government

- The government focuses on facilitating, not providing money but creating more leeway in rules and speeding up processes, where the area (corporation and/or tenants) asks for it.
- Using maintenance as a chance for Investing in public space. For example, the drainage system in ZoHo needs updating. The government invests in public space, and combines this with a climate adaptation strategy. The government invites local parties to team up in this process.

### Tenants

- Tenants in the area take initiative to lead and co-make the area's vision and strategy.
- Tenants invite potential future tenants to advise Havensteder on which potential new tenants should (not) be given space.
- Tenants think with Havensteder and the government about a strategy for the public realm, both the public space and the buildings.
- Tenants program the area, have a website and their own marketing strategy.
- Tenants are active in the social improvement of the area.

By itself, ZoHo clearly had a lot of potential. The progressive and flexible approach of Havensteder and the government initially attracted tenants who felt co-responsible for the area. The total combination created a winning start: open-

to the area. The restaurant works with staff from the neighbourhood and adopted the public green space in front of the restaurant, now used as an open-air terrace, public garden and for food production.

4. *Het Gele Gebouw* ("The yellow building"), characterised by a closed façade on ground level, actively opens the plinth. A pop-up cinema is active in the plinth of the building and the former garage was transformed into the Mesh Print Club (a screen-printing club). The next step will be investing a part of the rent in further opening the plinth and adding a restaurant. Only adding two doors and a new window and changing the allocation from office to restaurant would create a totally different use of the plinth: a minimum budget with a maximum result. Van Schagen Architecten, also located in the building, lead the process of outlining the necessary investments for the plinth and improving the quality of the building. Plus, in front of the building, bicycle parking was added and a parklet has taken over an underused parking spot.

5. Rotterdam-based landscape architects, Urbanisten, were asked by the municipality to make a climate adaptation strategy for the *public space in ZoHo*. Together with tenants, local residents and facilitated by the city, implementation started straight away. In a few days, two parking spaces and the adjacent sidewalk were transformed into a small park, symbolising the future of the area. This was only the first step of a broader transformation that also benefits the use of the plinth and the Gele Gebouw.

6. Residents from the Noord district, of which ZoHo is a part, started an *area cooperation*. This cooperation focuses on resident initiative to improve their area in an economic sustainable way. Money should be circulated in the area whenever possible. One of the first goals the cooperation is to improve safety. Together with the police, owners, government and tenants, social and physical analyses have been made of how to improve safety. The analyses now lead to action.

## THE NEXT STEPS

There is a lot of energy in ZoHo. The 100 unofficial owners of the area share responsibility to improve the quality of the area and on eye level. This has led to success, but at the same time, effects are difficult to see to a new visitor. The next step is to make the strategy sustainable.

The stakeholders will further develop a *City at Eye Level* strategy in which bottom up and top down vision and plans meet. A joint strategy will lead to unexpected results, and will fit the area best. The goal is that within a few years all the plinths and the whole public realm will reach another quality level. The government will invest in the maintenance of the public space, but besides that little finances exist. We will still reach our goals. As long as the ZoHo spirit continues, and Havensteder and the local government facilitate the process, then the investment power of local parties will be adequate. The future for ZoHo at eye level is bright.



# STIPO

**“STIPO offers an open window to a better city”**

The City at Eye Level is initiated by STIPO, a team for interdisciplinary urban development, based in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Stockholm and Thessaloniki and operating worldwide.

We are a multi-disciplinary consultancy team for urban strategy and city development. We have operated for 25 years in neighbourhoods, cities and regions. Our core values are long lasting quality, soul of the city, variation of functions, ownership of citizens and public quality.

Our core partners include UN-Habitat, Project for Public Spaces, Future of Places and Gehl Architects. We have a worldwide network of many local partners with whom we work together to develop based on locally rooted knowledge.

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STIPO: [sienna.veelders@stipo.nl](mailto:sienna.veelders@stipo.nl)  
+31 6 55160969 | Zomerhofstraat 82  
Rotterdam | The Netherlands

