



**Cities for Active Inclusion**



**Transforming Rotterdam's South Bank:  
An area based approach to active inclusion  
Rotterdam study visit  
18-19 September 2012  
Summary report**

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**CITIES FOR ACTIVE INCLUSION**

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The EUROCITIES Network of Local Authority Observatories on Active Inclusion (EUROCITIES-NLAO) is a dynamic network of nine European cities - Birmingham, Bologna, Brno, Copenhagen, Krakow, Lille Métropole - Roubaix, Rotterdam, Sofia and Stockholm - each with a Local Authority Observatory (LAO) within its administration. Their aim is to share information, promote mutual learning and carry out research on the implementation of the active inclusion strategies at the local level.

The nine observatories are coordinated by EUROCITIES, the network of major cities in Europe, and supported through Inclusive Cities for Europe, a partnership between the European Commission (DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion) and EUROCITIES.

[www.eurocities-nlao.eu](http://www.eurocities-nlao.eu)

# 1. INTRODUCTION

EUROCITIES Cities for Active Inclusion<sup>1</sup> organised a study visit to Rotterdam on 18-19 September 2012, promoting mutual learning amongst its partners.

The study visit looked at the National Programme for Rotterdam South (NPRZ). This programme deals with the regeneration of the South Bank area of the city (see box 1), one of the Netherlands' most deprived urban areas. This programme will run until 2030.

The programme centres around Rotterdam's integrated approach to getting the people living on the South Bank and those furthest from the labour market into employment through enabling talent, developing the economy and regenerating housing and the physical infrastructure. This regeneration is seen as a pressing issue due to the scale of the problem.



The city of Rotterdam aims to overcome deep-seated problems faced by a particular neighbourhood by integrating active inclusion strategies with urban area-based policies. A wide range of projects are being implemented or are planned in the neighbourhood.

The visit to Rotterdam showed the all-round approach the city is taking to change the situation in the South Bank. One of the striking features is that in addition to the traditional physical regeneration, there is a particular focus on the children and young people of the area. This is reflected in the main policies and activities planned to ensure the long-term benefits of the programme and guarantee a lasting legacy.

The study visit provided the participating cities with:

- in-depth knowledge about Rotterdam's active inclusion<sup>2</sup> practices
- mutual learning opportunities on how to implement active inclusion solutions
- site visits to see policies in action and witness their benefits
- the chance to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the practices
- the opportunity to provide feedback and comments to the host city.

This report summarises the work done so far under the National Programme for Rotterdam South, in particular how different but integrated and coordinated projects were developed for the active inclusion of people living in the seven most disadvantaged districts of the South Bank.

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<sup>1</sup> Cities for Active Inclusion is a dynamic partnership of ten European cities - Barcelona, Birmingham, Bologna, Brno, Copenhagen, Krakow, Lille- Metropole Roubaix, Rotterdam, Sofia and Stockholm - each establishing a local observatory in their administration. Their main aim is to share information, promote mutual learning and carry out research on the implementation of the active inclusion strategies at the local level. Further information can be found at [www.eurocities-nlao.eu](http://www.eurocities-nlao.eu) and on the EUROCITIES website, [www.eurocities.eu](http://www.eurocities.eu).

<sup>2</sup> You can read more about the EU Active Inclusion strategy at: <http://bit.ly/ZwaPa3> The pillars are: sufficient income support; inclusive labour markets; and access to quality services.

## 2. ROTTERDAM IN CONTEXT

Rotterdam is the Netherlands' second largest city. The population has been gradually increasing over recent years and currently stands at 617 000 inhabitants. The greater Rotterdam area has some 1.2 million inhabitants and is the largest metropolitan area in the Netherlands. It is Europe's biggest port and one of the most important in the world, making it a major international commercial centre. Its strategic location puts it at the centre of a massive rail, road, air and inland waterway distribution system.

Overall, the Dutch population is getting older. Conversely, Rotterdam has a relatively young population with 27% of its inhabitants being under 23 years of age. The population is very diverse, with more than 50% of people living there coming from a migrant background. Diversity is especially noticeable in the population under 27 years of age<sup>3</sup>.

### Box 1: The South Bank of Rotterdam - changing fortunes

Through the development of Rotterdam's harbour, which became a major port in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the population and the area expanded. After the devastation caused during the Second World War, Rotterdam's port on the South Bank was one of the main priorities for reconstruction during the 1940s and 1950s. This led to an increase in economic activity in the area which resulted in a major influx of workers from the Netherlands' southern provinces of Limburg and Brabant. New housing was needed to accommodate this new generation of dock workers.

In the 1960s and 1970s people from outside the Netherlands settled in the area looking for work in the port. But as the port was gradually moved westwards to accommodate larger ships and there were changes to the nature of the work in the port, the docks offered fewer employment opportunities to South Bank residents. The port was no longer a major employer for the area.

These changes affected the population. Those who could afford to move did so, leaving a large number of low-income households.

The population of the South Bank is 200 000 inhabitants, of which 13 000 are seeking employment. A high proportion of working people are on low wages and depend on income support.

## National Programme for Rotterdam South (NPRZ)

The National Programme for Rotterdam South currently consists of around one hundred distinct activities, projects and schemes. The main beneficiaries of the programme are the seven neighbourhood districts with the highest levels of deprivation<sup>4</sup> (Afrikaanderwijk, Bloemhof, Carnisse, Feijenoord, Hillesluis, Oud-Charlois and Tarwewijk).

<sup>3</sup> You can find further information on Rotterdam's demographic make-up in their case study on demographic change: <http://bit.ly/YR6Vwo>.

<sup>4</sup> In 2007, the Dutch government designated 40 areas throughout the country as 'areas in need' requiring specific efforts in five main areas: housing, employment, education, integration and (public) safety. Of these so-called 'Vogelaar-areas', seven are located in the South Bank.

The NPRZ integrates area-based and people-based approaches for social inclusion. It combines physical, economic and social interventions and empowers residents by improving their access to job opportunities and education<sup>5</sup>.

Since the 1970s, the city authorities have tried to address the problems of social exclusion, with some success. However, the people who benefitted from these policies tended to leave the South Bank area to live in more attractive neighbourhoods. Meanwhile other socially vulnerable people moved into the cheap housing left vacant, which means the social problems of the area persist.

This situation led to the proposal of an integrated approach to combating the decline of the area. The NPRZ was developed in cooperation with the Dutch national government. In September 2011, a group of 17 stakeholders, including the city of Rotterdam, the national government and the local residents committee, signed an agreement for the regeneration of the area.

The initiative is centred on three pillars, combining people-based and area-based approaches to urban regeneration:

- ***Enabling talent:*** this allows young people in the South Bank to develop their talents through education and training, craftsmanship, life-long learning and the prevention of school drop-outs. Young people are in a better position to compete for the new jobs being created in high-value sectors in the Rotterdam harbour, such as logistics and the petrochemical industry.
- ***Economy and labour market:*** this pillar guarantees that the population of South Bank is schooled and trained to meet the labour demand generated in the high-value sectors of Rotterdam's harbour and its associated industries, as well as in the care and medical sector and in the creative industries. These activities also help to create an inclusive labour market for people living in the South Bank.
- ***Housing and physical infrastructure:*** the aim is to rebuild and/or upgrade one third of the housing stock in the South Bank over the next 20 years and to improve the physical infrastructure and attractiveness of South Bank (See below box 2 for more information on housing in the city). This will be done in cooperation with the social housing corporations ('*corporaties*') - non-profit providers responsible for funding, allocation and provision of social housing.

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<sup>5</sup> Policies include enhancing the skills of residents of a certain area so that they improve their chances of finding a job, improving the level of quality in education in the area and giving equal access to good schools.

### **Box 2 : Housing in Rotterdam**

World War II bombings left the city devastated and some 80 000 people homeless. New housing was built quickly. These houses from the 1950s do not meet modern standards and needs. House prices in the South Bank area are amongst the lowest in the country. The main problem is the lack of appreciation: the value of homes increases very slowly. Even before the current financial crisis, the value of the housing stock grew well below the national average, the big city average or even the local average.

The Netherlands has a decentralised system where the state has devolved responsibilities for social housing to the local level, sharing programming functions with the housing corporations and municipalities. Housing corporations are not-for-profit organisations and are financially independent; they own and manage social housing provision. However the municipality has a leading role in the allocation of social housing by assigning plots and in setting qualitative standards for the housing corporations through performance agreements.

## **Active inclusion through area-based and people-based regeneration**

The NPRZ aims to transform the Netherlands' most deprived urban area in a coordinated way. The plan integrates the physical regeneration of the area by improving buildings and the environment (area-based approach) with the socio-economic regeneration by investing in people (people-based approach). The education, training and re-skilling of its large youth population was put at the heart of the strategy.

Over the past 30 years, the Dutch government has encouraged a wide social mix in housing developments. This is to counteract the possible spatial concentration of low-income households. In some areas of the city, the municipality has imposed the rule that a share of social housing must be allocated to people with an income above 120% of the minimum income<sup>6</sup>, as a way to avoid having only low-income households living there.

Rotterdam has applied this approach to different areas of the city, including the South Bank. See box 3 below for an example of social housing provision.

One of the NPRZ objectives is to attract new residents with higher incomes and greater spending power to the area.

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<sup>6</sup> For more information on what minimum income is and how this is calculated, see: [bit.ly/W58K3u](http://bit.ly/W58K3u).

### **Box 3: Housing cooperation Woonstad Rotterdam - providing good quality housing in Rotterdam**

Woonstad is a housing corporation that only operates in the city of Rotterdam. It has a housing stock of around 48 000 homes. It provides good quality homes to people on a lower income by either building or renovating existing properties.

Woonstad focuses on making private landlords responsible for the quality of their properties. Landlords receive a 15-year plan for maintenance repairs and costs, and a schedule of when these are to be done. If landlords comply with the plan, they get a subsidy or a low-interest loan. If landlords chose not to cooperate they are then referred to the municipality which has the power to enforce the required standards.

In Rotterdam just under 50% of the housing stock is social housing. The average waiting time for social housing is 4 years.

## **3. THE SITE VISITS**

The site visits reflected the three key pillars of the national programme for Rotterdam South:

- enabling talent with visits to Children's Zones, STC Waalhaven and RDM Campus
- inclusion in the economy and labour market with a visit to Ondernemershuis Zuid and DAAD
- improved housing and physical infrastructure with a visit to the FieldAcademy.

### **The enabling talent pillar**

#### *Children's Zones<sup>7</sup>*

Inspired by New York's Harlem Children's Zone<sup>8</sup>, this project offers free support to children and families through parenting skills workshops and a pre-school programme. This model is based on the belief that the average child from a deprived neighbourhood can perform at least to the average level of a child from a non-deprived background from any large city in the Netherlands. This is important, as the number of pupils who come from deprived families is 15% higher in the South Bank than in the rest of Netherlands. As pointed out during the visit, if students in the Children's Zones have 'no expectations about themselves, then there are no positive results in their educational outcomes'<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Further information on the Children's Zones in Rotterdam can be found here: [bit.ly/SDwHmH](http://bit.ly/SDwHmH).

<sup>8</sup> Further information on Harlem's Children Zone in New York can be found on [bit.ly/UFXdWo](http://bit.ly/UFXdWo).

<sup>9</sup> This refers to the so-called 'pobrecitos syndrome' where teachers/parents believe they are being compassionate in not asking students from a deprived background to perform better. On the contrary, there is evidence that pupils perform better when more is expected from them.

The South Bank has a high number of children at risk of experiencing problems in the home (violence, divorce, poverty). This makes it difficult for teachers to facilitate children's learning process. Compounding this educational difficulty is the fact that 80% of children living in the South Bank have a migrant background, which makes language development a crucial element. As part of Children's Zone, children between 2-3 years old (known as 'group zero') attend pre-school, which is connected to mainstream schools. This pre-school prepares children for going to school.

The Children's Zones have three main objectives:

1. to provide excellent education: this is ensured through educational leadership, training and employing the best possible teachers, a programme with high expectations and longer learning weeks.
2. to provide support to families: this is done through the establishment of an educational partnership between parents and schools and a wrap-around<sup>10</sup> family support team.
3. to establish excellent learning challenges in the neighbourhoods themselves.

A so-called educational 'pipeline'<sup>11</sup> of excellence for children from 0 to 18 years of age, connects the three objectives.

#### *Site Visit: the Hugo de Groot Secondary School*

In 2009 some 60-70% of the school's students were leaving without qualifications. Using the Children's Zone model, this school is now one of the city's best performing schools. This was possible thanks to the implementation of the Children's Zone's objectives: strong leadership from the headmaster (a role-model), a motivated team of teachers, an increase in the school hours from 28 to 38 hours per week and a change in the physical learning environment with a zero-tolerance policy on anti-social behaviour at school and graffiti being replaced by artists paintings. Teachers cooperate with students, families are supported and parents are intensively involved in their children's education. The 'violent' extracurricular activities offered by the school such as martial arts classes were replaced with less violent after-school sports such as horse-riding, fencing and diving.

#### *Site visit: the Centre for Vocational Education: STC Waalhaven<sup>12</sup>*

The STC Waalhaven is a centre of vocational education<sup>13</sup> which is part of Children's Zone. It offers young people and adults high quality courses in the logistics and transport sector, especially related to shipping. The school works closely with the business community, including the port of Rotterdam.

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<sup>10</sup> This refers to intervention services that emphasize the strengths of the child and family and includes the delivery of coordinated, highly individualised unconditional services to address needs and achieve positive outcomes in their lives.

<sup>11</sup> A productive and integrated system of primary, secondary and (vocational) colleges to bolster students' success especially in the transition periods to the next educational level.

<sup>12</sup> Further information can be found here: [bit.ly/Oril43](http://bit.ly/Oril43).

<sup>13</sup> The centre also offers a masters degree in shipping.

Meetings with potential employers take place every month. Internships and work placements are organised to facilitate students' transition into the labour market. Students are supported, to help them perform well and the school cooperates with parents. As a result, the drop-out rate is very low.

### *Site visit: RDM Campus<sup>14</sup>*

The RDM campus addresses youth unemployment. The former wharf in the South Bank area was renovated into an innovative high-tech education and employment hub. The campus focuses on technology, sustainability and innovation in the fields of transport, construction and energy. It is used for vocational education as well as a research centre for SMEs. SMEs can rent space on the campus at a competitive price and for a limited period to undertake research and innovation and to test prototypes, often in cooperation with the educational institutions.



The campus is a cooperative venture between the Albeda College, Rotterdam University of Applied Science and the Rotterdam Port Authority. It has become a place where students and companies collaborate in an open environment with a focus on new economic activity, and introducing sustainable and innovative solutions in the markets. By ensuring this close collaboration, the young people who attend the campus are acquiring the level and type of education and training that employers need.

The campus was built in an environmentally sustainable way. It is financed through national and local public funds as well as European Regional Development Funds (ERDF).

### **Active inclusion in action**

The three site visits under the 'enabling talent' pillar demonstrate the focus on education. It shows the importance of high quality education and vocational learning for active inclusion. Each of the three educational centres visited reported that the quality of the social services has increased and there are clear pathways to employment in later life for the young residents of South Bank. Working with local employers ensures a coordinated approach to active inclusion, especially for those students in the RDM Campus and STC Waalhaven.

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<sup>14</sup> Further information on the RDM Campus can be found here: [www.rdmcampus.nl/english](http://www.rdmcampus.nl/english).

## The economy and the labour market pillar

### *Site visit: the House for Entrepreneurship (Ondernemershuis Zuid)*<sup>15</sup>

The *Ondernemershuis* (the 'house for entrepreneurs') was established in 2008 as part of the NPRZ's economic pillar. It is a 'one-stop-shop' for entrepreneurs<sup>16</sup> where they can apply for micro credits. The service targets unemployed people who can come to the centre for orientation, information, support to prepare a business plan, entrepreneurship training. After eight weeks the service users pitch their business plans to their support officer who assesses its viability. During the support period, the potential entrepreneurs receive social benefits (minimum income)<sup>17</sup>.

People who have already established their own business can also access the services to get advice on how to stay competitive and maintain their business.

In 2011, the service had 17 500 customers. Due to its success, this initiative will be rolled out to the whole of Rotterdam as promoting entrepreneurship is a city-wide objective.

### *Site visit: Service Desk for Employers (DAAD)*<sup>18</sup>

The city of Rotterdam set up DAAD (the Service Desk for Employers) in 2005 in cooperation with the business sector. It is an innovative service that helps employers find suitable workers to fill vacancies. It also trains unemployed people in receipt of social benefits to help them gain the necessary training and skills so they can find employment.

Employers are the main clients of DAAD. DAAD staff actively engage with the business sector and they have information on relevant job vacancies in the Rotterdam area.

Once DAAD has assessed the skills of the unemployed person, they are enrolled in specific job training modules that are organised in full cooperation with the educational institutes.

This service is provided for free to employers, which makes DAAD more attractive compared to private job agencies. In exchange, employers working with DAAD sign a 'social return contract', meaning that employers commit to dedicate 5% of their overall staff costs to hiring long-term unemployed people.

DAAD involves all stakeholders, including the city of Rotterdam, job centres, the Rotterdam development agency and education institutes.

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<sup>15</sup> For more information, please follow this link: [www.ondernemershuiszuid.nl/index.html](http://www.ondernemershuiszuid.nl/index.html).

<sup>16</sup> The number of people starting their own business has doubled in the last 25 years and is important for the Dutch economy with some 1.1 million people being self employed (12% working people).

<sup>17</sup> In order to receive social welfare in the Netherlands it is compulsory for unemployed people to be actively searching for a job and if this requires training they are obliged to follow the training course.

<sup>18</sup> Further information can be found at [www.daadwerkt.nl](http://www.daadwerkt.nl).

## Active inclusion in action

The two site visits under the economic and labour market pillar show the clear focus on tackling the skills gap and promoting entrepreneurship in an area with high long-term unemployment. The two services present an integrated approach as they provide their users with a minimum income during their training, provide a quality social service and offer a clear pathway into the labour market.

Both of these services focus on employer's needs and work in close collaboration with them.

## The housing and physical infrastructure pillar

### *Site visit: FieldAcademy<sup>19</sup>*

The FieldAcademy is a local research and design centre for urban regeneration. It was established in 2008 as a result of cooperation between TU Delft<sup>20</sup> (Delft Technical University) and the municipality of Rotterdam. Architecture students, researchers and local residents all contribute to creating a new approach to city development (a 'district driven approach') with the wellbeing of its citizens, its community, environment and economy in mind. The office functions as a local knowledge centre for the community in the South Bank.

The academy offers students practical experience with formal education. They work on regenerating the existing housing stock of 30 000 homes and on creating a new urban centre in the South Bank. They also ran a project involving local residents: the architects adapted urban planning and design by studying how people move around and interact with the environment in their day-to-day life.

## Active inclusion in action

FieldAcademy offers a coordinated approach to active inclusion as the students collaborate with residents, boroughs, housing corporations, municipal services and property developers. Residents and local politicians exchanged views on how the area should be renovated. Residents were further involved through participating in workshops with the students and giving their input on their design proposals. The integrated approach is demonstrated through the training and educational opportunities offered to students and professionals. It also offers pathways to employment for the students.

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<sup>19</sup> More information can be found at [www.veldacademie.nl/en/pages/veldacademie/1](http://www.veldacademie.nl/en/pages/veldacademie/1).

<sup>20</sup> Further information can be found at [home.tudelft.nl](http://home.tudelft.nl).

## 4. KEY POINTS OF THE FEEDBACK SESSION

Participants highlighted that Rotterdam demonstrates strong commitment to ‘making things happen’ in the area, which can be seen in the different projects and initiatives.

The focus on education with clear pathways into employment is evident. Some participants mentioned that policy for vocational education and training and the high quality of the educational facilities are inspiring.

Some participants indicated that citizen engagement and making residents part of the change was central to making the programme a success. One highlighted the importance of involving the national government, adding that it is essential that the plan is a long-term one.

On the obstacle that cities would face in implementing a similar initiative, one city pointed out that they do not have the power to get their national government engaged (which makes it difficult to ensure funding), while another city cited the fact that they do not have minimum income as an impediment to developing initiatives like the ones studied in Rotterdam.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS FROM THE STUDY VISIT

The study visit in Rotterdam was a mutual learning opportunity for the partners, allowing them to witness first hand a coordinated and integrated approach to urban regeneration. Over the two days, participants learned how the NPRZ will transform a whole urban area through:

- education and training
- pathways to employment and fostering enterprise
- improving the housing stock and access to quality homes.



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For more information see: [ec.europa.eu/progress](http://ec.europa.eu/progress).

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