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*Student Charrettes*

*by*

*A Magic Toolbox*

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V A N H A L L L A R E N S T E I N

# PLANNING BY SURPRISE

STUDENTS CHARRETTES

A MAGIC TOOLBOX

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## PREFACE

Since 2008, the research group of the Lectoraat Groene Leefomgeving van Steden (Green Cities Lectorate) has organised 38 charrettes, involving a total of more than 1000 students, including approximately 500 students from Van Hall Larenstein University of Applied Sciences, 40 from other Dutch universities of applied sciences (HBOs) and 500 students from other European universities and polytechnics. For this purpose, the research group has collaborated with six Dutch partner institutes (NHL Hogeschool, Artez, Rietveld Academie, Hanzehogeschool, Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, Saxion) and 16 international partners (in Germany, Poland, France, Belgium, England, Spain, Turkey, Bulgaria, Greece, Portugal and Albania)<sup>1</sup>. Students at Van Hall Larenstein earned approximately 900 credits for the charrettes.

Although we refer to the sessions as *charrettes* in this book, we often refer to them as *ateliers* or *workshops*. They represent a relatively new educational approach, in which students and supervisors work on a spatial planning task, on location, for a Dutch or international client. This is usually done in groups and under pressure of time. Since the start of the programme in 2008, there have been many fascinating, interesting and valuable charrettes, with many participants and excellent partnerships.

The charrette approach fits in well with the general trend of diversification of teaching that has been going on for some

<sup>1</sup> For a complete list see Appendix.

time now, and which has also been implemented at Van Hall Larenstein, through the establishment of 'lectorates' (a unit at a Dutch university of applied sciences that revolves around a specific subject and is headed by a 'lector' [associate professor]). The aim of these lectorates is to incorporate research work and a sense of social responsibility work in the curriculum. The charrettes have similar purposes, that is, providing services to clients and conducting research. These two aims are new features for Van Hall Larenstein, since teaching usually has the highest priority there.

The research group of the Lectoraat Groene Leefomgeving van Steden has published this book to show that charrettes represent a highly interesting new component of the teaching programme at Van Hall Larenstein. They enable students to get a first taste of the professional setting they might end up working in, and teachers to tailor their teaching to professional practice. The charrettes also enable Van Hall Larenstein to enter into numerous new collaborations with Dutch and international partners, and it also uses the charrettes to show how interesting learning can be and – at least as importantly – how much fun. The teachers and organisers of the charrettes hope that this book may inspire the development of many new charrettes.

*The research group of the  
Lectoraat Groene Leefomgeving van Steden*

# **1 INTRODUCTION: VAN HALL LARENSTEIN AND PRACTICE-ORIENTED TEACHING**

In recent years, teaching staff and students at Van Hall Larenstein University of Applied Sciences have often taken part in Dutch and international charrettes where they worked on practical, real-world assignments, organised by the Lectoraat Groene Leefomgeving van Steden. These assignments are commissioned by real clients, are implemented in consultation with local parties, and often involve collaborating with other Dutch and international universities. Under the supervision of teaching staff, students collaborate with students from other institutions, disciplines and countries, working in groups. Such charrettes yield a wide array of concrete as well as more conceptual results, ranging from spatial designs, research reports and advisory reports to initiatives to achieve public participation, awareness or cultural exchange between students from different countries.

## **THE CHARRETTE METHOD**

The Charrette method is a spatial planning method in which groups are subdivided into a number of subgroups, and participants develop ideas not only about planning or design itself, but also about the required funding. The approach involves showering the project participants with facts and information, thus creating a pressure cooker situation from which innovative ideas emerge. The method involves giving students a relatively high degree of freedom, as a result of which the

ideas they come up with are frequently new and unexpected for their supervisors. In these projects, the teacher is often a coach and advisor rather than an instructor. Knowledge transfer can be achieved by inviting external experts, although the institution's own teaching staff can of course also fulfil this task.

The method of practice-oriented charrettes fits in with the current process of innovation that has been going on in the Dutch education system for some time now. The last fifteen years have seen a shift away from traditional class-based teaching, first to project learning and later to competency-based learning. The charrettes have added another option to this, in which there is room for experiments, learning takes place at many different types of locations and teaching staff and students no longer have fixed, traditional roles and relationships, and in which education is not merely focused on knowledge transfer, but is also demand-driven, project-oriented, problem-based, assignment-based, experience-oriented, competence-oriented and result-driven.

#### **EDUCATIONAL VISION**

The charrettes perfectly match the educational philosophy at Van Hall Larenstein University of Applied Sciences, which incorporates the ideas of what is known in the Netherlands as 'the new learning'. In this view, students should acquire their professional expertise in practical settings, that is, situations that closely resemble the professional practice for which they are being trained. The context of the practical setting helps

them internalise and apply the knowledge. Van Hall Larenstein offers problem-based learning, in which knowledge is acquired in an active manner. The training it offers explicitly takes individual differences between students into account, and does not take the form of a one-way communication from teacher to student. The flexible curriculum enables students to make conscious choices, and the teaching staff are not only lecturers but fulfil different roles as subject experts, coaches, educationalists and examiners. They represent a role model and continually work to improve their own ability to encourage and inspire students, always being aware of the points where they have to let go and let the student take over.

Teaching at Van Hall Larenstein focuses on the real world. All programmes work as much as possible with authentic assignments, right from the start. Each student is given an assignment at least once every six months, and students learn in their first year how the discipline relates to the world around them, enabling them to develop a broader conceptual framework. Students are also encouraged to become committed citizens of the world; the curriculum includes shared learning, intercultural communication, exchange programmes, sustainability and internationalisation. Students are also encouraged to take responsibility for their own studies, based on their own knowledge, style of learning, needs and interests, and they are given the necessary freedom of choice to achieve this. All of these aspects also feature in the charrettes, as is discussed below.

## DIDACTIC STRATEGIES

In this book, the research group of the Lectoraat Groene Leefomgeving van Steden examines what the charrettes mean for the teaching programmes at Van Hall Larenstein. The charrettes have brought about dramatic changes in the didactic approach, for both teachers and students. This means that teachers have had to develop new didactic strategies. Another major question is always how best to organise the charrettes. How can the university secure real practical assignments for the students? How should teachers and students deal with such assignments and the clients who commission them? How can the outcomes and the learning process in the charrettes be assessed? And what effects do the designs that students come up with in the charrettes actually have in the client's practical setting? These questions are discussed in this book by looking at the charrettes that have taken place so far.

Chapter 2 discusses a number of examples of charrettes, to give an impression of the type of charrettes organised by Van Hall Larenstein. The chapter does not focus on the details, but tries to explore the options by showing the wide array of large and small, expensive and cheap, national and international, complex and simple examples, and to examine how charrettes can be integrated in the practical settings of university, client and stakeholders. At the same time, it looks back at what charrettes have meant for teachers and students, who often worked together in intercultural groups. It discusses the largest versus smallest charrettes, spontaneous versus highly organised charrettes, charrettes producing concrete versus

conceptual outcomes, and the roles of funding, the client and the locations.

#### **HERE TO STAY**

The charrette system requires teachers and students to adopt a different attitude. The didactic approach in charrettes is much more interactive, organic and focused on self-development and self-fulfilment than traditional learning, which is more of a one-way communication. The roles of teachers and students are redefined, which means they sometimes both have the same role, and sometimes very different ones. The relations between teachers and students are not static but dynamic. Chapter 3 uses practical examples to analyse what this means for students and teaching staff.

The type of practice-oriented and interactive training that is represented by the charrettes organised by Van Hall Larenstein now form an essential part of its didactic approach. The question remains, however, how this type of training, which is often experimental and difficult to assess using the traditional didactic methods, can be integrated in the curriculum of the various degree programmes at Van Hall Larenstein. Chapter 4 draws some brief and probably preliminary conclusions on this topic, based on the practical examples discussed in chapter 2 and the analysis of the roles of teachers and students in chapter 3. The book does not claim to present the definitive statement, but tries to indicate the range of options. It tries to offer an idea of the opportunities Van Hall Larenstein has for collaboration with Dutch and international partners to con-

tinue to organise these charrettes. The reason is that we, as teachers, are absolutely convinced that they represent a valuable contribution to the educational programme at Van Hall Larenstein.

## **2 CHARRETTES: LARGE AND SMALL**

A charrette is a process that comes in many shapes. It may be large or small, cheap or expensive. A number of charrettes have been organised in the context of relatively large projects with EU funding, in which Van Hall Larenstein collaborated with a number of international partners. Yet size and budget are not decisive. Results can also be achieved by offering the participating students no more than a room to work in and the occasional cup of coffee. While some charrettes have produced tangible results in the form of designs, some aimed for more abstract results, such as ways to create awareness.

Students at Van Hall Larenstein have been working in charrettes since 2008, supervised by our teaching staff. Basically, a charrette is like a pressure cooker. Students tackle a practical problem in groups, under great pressure of time. This happens on location and in consultation with the clients and other parties involved, usually municipal and provincial authorities, residents and interest groups. A charrette usually lasts for a few days to a few weeks. They always conclude with a session in which the students jointly present the results to the client and other parties involved. The essence of charrettes is that the students are given a large measure of freedom, that they are the ones who assume the responsibility, and as such in a sense organise their own education. Hence, the teaching staff is continually working on methods that allow them to teach and provide guidance within this context of freedom.

Since 2008, the use of charrettes has become ever more firmly integrated in the educational system at Van Hall Larenstein. Initially, teachers were mostly trying to find out what knowledge and experience the students acquired in the charrettes. During the sessions, teachers would intervene in the group process that emerged as the students were working on designs. They responded to the design process, usually on an intuitive basis, for instance by subdividing the group into a number of subgroups, which were each given a different task. These could involve working at different scale levels, or exploring four different scenarios for future redevelopment. In order to record the learning process, professional journalists were later invited to write reports on a number of charrettes, and these reports would also be used as an evaluation. The emphasis thereby shifted to the content, that is, the assignment, the designs and the results produced by the charrettes. This impetus towards professionalisation also made use of the charrette as an instrument. For instance, students of area development were asked to evaluate the charrettes of students of garden and landscape design. To this end, they interviewed clients and other parties involved, and the students who had participated in the charrette, asking how the charrette had gone and what results it had produced. This is discussed in more detail in chapter 4.

#### **EU FUNDING**

Since 2008, Van Hall Larenstein has participated in several major projects with EU funding. Projects such as Valuing At-

tractive Landscapes in the Urban Economy (VALUE-Added, <http://www.value-and.com/>), Lively Cities (LICI, <http://www.lively-cities.eu/>) and Forms for: Adapting to Climate Change through Territorial Strategies! (F:ACTS!, <http://www.factsproject.eu/>) were funded through the EU's Interreg programme, while the Peri-urban Land Use Relationships programme (PLUREL, <http://www.PLUREL.net/>) was funded by the European Commission's Sixth Framework Programme.

Such large European projects presented a valuable occasion to introduce teaching staff and students at Hall Larenstein to international professional settings. The VALUE-Added programme led them to projects in the Dutch town of Amersfoort, the English city of Sheffield and the city of Stuttgart in Germany, while F:ACTS! activities included projects in Patras (Greece), Aveiro (Portugal) and Lugo (Spain) and LICI involved working in Eindhoven (The Netherlands) and Tournai, Louvain-la-Neuve and Namur (Belgium). The groups in these charrettes often included students from other universities, such as the Polis Universiteti in Tirana (Albania), the Universidade de Aveiro (Portugal) and the Universidade de Santiago de Compostela (Spain). Teaching staff collaborated with their colleagues at these universities, as well as with clients from different countries.

#### **STROFYLIA NATIONAL PARK**

An example of a charrette that was part of a larger project is the project regarding the Kotychi-Strofylija national park in Greece, just south of Patras. Six students of garden and lands-

cape design at Van Hall Larenstein worked to develop plans for the future of this conservation area, in multidisciplinary groups with six students of sustainable land planning from Santiago de Compostella, two students of business management from Tirana and nine students of biology and chemical engineering from Patras. The client, the development company for the Achaia region NEA, which manages the park, wanted scenarios for its future management, but lacked the necessary expertise to develop them. It asked the students to design scenarios for the management of the nature reserve, which is affected by drought and forest fires and is under great pressure from climate change and encroachment by farmland and the tourist industry. NEA wanted to know how habitat management could be combined with alternative energy generation, more recycling-oriented waste management, and innovative agricultural, cultural and recreational projects. The charrette took place from 21 to 25 May 2012.

The Strofylia charrette is a good example of a large, international charrette that grew into a social process. It was not a holiday, however. Although the students were housed in a tourist resort, they worked from 9 in the morning to 9 at night and were rarely able to take 15 minutes off for a quick swim. The pressure of work is exemplified by their first day. The group of 20 students started by interviewing farmers and tourist industry operators, conservationists and officials, and then worked out their preliminary ideas in groups dealing with topics like climate change, tourism, cultural history and biodiversity, and 'cradle-to-cradle'. This led to heated debates, as the Spa-

nish and Greek students preferred a much more detailed approach than the Dutch students, who wanted to concentrate on the larger outlines. These intercultural disagreements ensured that discussions continued well beyond 9 pm. After some conciliatory efforts from the supervisors, the differences were settled on the second day, and later the students realised that their approaches were in fact complementary. The students were thus engaged in the project throughout the days, although they also found the time to start friendships and chat about more personal matters.

After this first exploration, it was time to delve a bit deeper into the task at hand. The students attended lectures by experts on topics like enabling a village to organise its own energy supply, using agricultural waste as the basis for biogas production according to the cradle-to-cradle philosophy – ‘waste is food’ – or the options that are available for innovative recreational projects.

These lectures then led on to design sessions, in which students sketched, researched things on the Internet, made calculations, etc. Once again, pressure of work was high. The evening before the final presentation became a veritable pressure cooker situation, with students working frantically on designs and presentations. At the final session, they presented their results to the client, the stakeholders they had interviewed and others who were interested. In addition to ideas for raising the height of dunes and improving irrigation and firefighting, the students came up with the innovative idea to link the park to the Greek myth according to which Heracles had built

a defensive wall in the area, in order to attract more culturally minded tourists to the park.

#### **EDWARD STREET PARK IN SHEFFIELD**

Large projects can also lead to small assignments. The charrette to redevelop the small and neglected Edward Street Park in Sheffield (UK) in the context of the EU's VALUE-Added project lasted only three days. Six Bachelors students at Van Hall Larenstein worked together with eleven Masters and PhD students of the University of Sheffield and the University of Manchester. The aim was to produce *quick and dirty* sketches, maps and photomontages featuring innovative ideas for the redevelopment of the park, based on interviews with its users. The students were showered with information, to such an extent that some started to feel a bit lost. Nevertheless, the aim was clear and unequivocal: making the park more attractive for a public of mostly young users. The charrette method was used, though in a shortened form. A striking aspect of this project was that the Dutch Bachelors students confidently took the lead and organised the division of labour, even for the English Masters and PhD students.

#### **ACTION RESEARCH:**

##### **JONGE FRIEZEN FOARÚT AND DEURDONDEREN**

Charrettes were not only used for the purpose of design, but also to initiate processes in society. In the project entitled *Jonge Friezen Foarút* (Go Young Frisians - the latter being residents of the Dutch province of Friesland), about 40 students of area

development at Van Hall Larenstein and about 50 students of welfare, social work, communication and event management at the NHL University of Applied Sciences interviewed young people from Friesland. The project was commissioned by the Friesland provincial authorities, who wanted to know how young people feel about living in areas where the population is shrinking, and who also wanted to raise awareness of population shrinkage among these young people. The provincial authorities hoped that it would be easier for the students to communicate with the young target population. The method used in this project differs considerably from the charrette method used in the above projects. First of all, the client's question was reversed. Instead of the usual question 'What can we do about the problem of a shrinking population?', the students decided to ask 'What should be done to prevent young people from leaving?'. This soon resulted in a conclusion: develop an 'agenda for youngsters', which was then created in the form of a booklet produced jointly by the students and the young people who participated in the project. This was in fact a type of action research, with student-researchers actively engaging with the target group.

A comparable project was *Deurdonderen in de Achterhoek* (thundering on in the Achterhoek; the latter being a rural region in the eastern Dutch province of Gelderland). This involved students spending the period from 5 to 9 November 2012 in the village of Varsseveld, where an abandoned shop was used as an operational base. The students were first provided with information about village life in the Achterhoek region and the

problems associated with the shrinking population. This included presentations by the clients, the Vereniging voor Kleine Kernen Gelderland (association of villages in the province of Gelderland) and Achterhoek Agenda 2020. They also took part in a charrette about social media. In the course of their stay, the students interviewed some 70 young people at local societies, sports clubs and schools, as well as in the street. In addition, traditional and social media were used to draw the public's attention to the project. The interviews revealed five major themes: mobility, housing, jobs, going out and volunteer work. At the end of the week, the students presented their ideas about what the municipal authorities could do, as well as what the youngsters themselves could do. These ideas were later elaborated at Van Hall Larenstein in a strategic advisory report .

#### INTERVENTION USING A GREEN CARAVAN

Projects that start small can sometimes grow into something bigger. At Van Hall Larenstein, a project in which groups of students used green elements to alter people's view of their environment, had been operative for some time. One activity was a visitors survey commissioned by the Staatsbosbeheer conservation agency, for which students interviewed visitors of the Staelduinse Bos forest while standing on a cherry picker. Another activity saw students planting trees at locations in the Presikhaaf district of Arnhem where young people would prefer to see them, as a form of *guerrilla gardening*. The element of surprise in these small design interventions tied in

well with the *placemaking* approach that Van Hall Larenstein was developing in the context of the *Lively Cities* project.

An investment of just a few hundred euros made this collection of small student projects grow into a big project, with an even bigger name: *North West European Lively Cities Placemaking Tour*. This process has been described in detail in the book entitled *The Story Behind the Place – Placemaking and Storytelling*. The money was spent on a second-hand caravan which, after being repainted a striking green colour, served as a mobile operational base for the students. From 23 to 27 September 2013 they used it in an international tour covering the cities of Eindhoven, Tournai, Louvain la Neuve and Namur, the partners in the *Lively Cities* project.

This tour had different features in each of the cities. In Eindhoven, the caravan formed the operational base for 16 students of Van Hall Larenstein, who together with four Russian students of architecture organised a charrette at the Saint Joseph monastery site. In each case, the aim was to use fun activities to get users of public spaces to join a charrette about these spaces. At Tournai, the students tried to attract children with all kinds of games, for instance by having them draw pictures on the pavement with coloured chalk and engage in a circuit offering them information on flower bulbs, to show them the value of the greenery at the Place Verte playground. In Louvain la Neuve, the Place des Wallons was turned into a green living room using plants and benches, which were used by the students to interview people passing through the square. At Namur, the students organised playful handicrafts sessions

to try and draw people into the garden adjoining the *Maison de la Culture*, a forgotten site that was only used by people to secretly smoke marihuana, but which could well act as a community garden.

In terms of methodology, the approach used for the North West European Lively Cities Placemaking Tour looked like a combination of the charrette method used as a planning and design tool in Strofylia and Sheffield and the action research approach used in the Achterhoek and Friesland projects to mobilise people. This is also apparent from the results of the interventions organised by the students. In Eindhoven, the students' ideas – whether fully mature or merely nascent – found their way to the city's redevelopment officers. The interventions in the Belgian cities were mostly intended to create awareness and attract the public's attention to their environment.

The Van Hall Larenstein activities were reported in the local media, and the designs that the students produced for the *Place Verte* in Tournai were later implemented by the municipal government.

#### **FLASHMOB**

Once students have gained some experience of the interactive pressure cooker approach used in the charrettes organised by Van Hall Larenstein, they often like to join in other creative initiatives. At the symposium that concluded the Lively Cities project, for instance, students organised a *flashmob* involving a short surprise presentation. At the symposium concluding the F:ACTS! project, six students joined the European scien-

tists on the podium as external experts. They had developed a clever new perspective on dealing with climate change in the course of the project, simply by thinking 150 years ahead rather than just 20. Students can learn a lot even from such small interventions, as it shows them that the interventions they are taught to implement in larger-scale contexts for the purpose of interactive charrettes also work at a micro-level. Having students engage in such interventions is also useful for the teaching staff, as it enables them to let students join in symposia, and to liven up such symposia. And the audiences at the symposia were treated to an unexpected element in the programme that kept them awake.

In other words: *size does not really matter*. The size or duration of a project is not decisive for its outcome. Small charrettes can yield excellent results, while large charrettes may disappoint. What is striking is the huge variety of possible charrettes, whether large or small. What matters is the objective of the project, the place of the charrette within the project, and the roles played by the clients, supervisors and students. This is discussed in a later chapter.

Just as with regard to the magnitude of projects, size does not really matter as regards their funding either. The budget available for charrettes bears no direct relationship to their success or otherwise. Sometimes all that is needed is a room to work in and the occasional cup of coffee or tea. Large, expensive projects require more organising. It means collaborating with various international partners, arranging travel and accommodation and having the project accounts checked by ac-

countants, and such projects usually require a detailed report, a journal publication or a thorough evaluation. This is impossible without effective management.

### **3 CHARRETTES: CLIENTS AND RESULTS**

In many ways, the charrettes organised by Van Hall Larenstein resemble the future professional setting of the students being trained in them. The introduction of this approach also meant a considerable change for Van Hall Larenstein as an institute, as teaching staff and students now have to deal with real clients, who expect real results.

Each charrette involves a client who expects a particular result. This result may be something tangible, like a design, or it may be a more conceptual product, like creating awareness, and in some cases the charrette itself may be the result. This may sound simple, but the pathway from assignment to result depends on the way the charrette came about, the way it is organised, the client's wishes, and the educational objectives defined by Van Hall Larenstein – and other participating educational institutions – for its students. This means that each charrette involves a search for the right mix of components. This may imply convincing the client that the assignment they have proposed will not yield the intended result, and that it would be better to approach the task in a different way. This may even become evident during the charrette itself.

#### **UNEXPECTED AND EXCITING MOMENTS**

Some charrettes arise quite spontaneously. For instance, a visit by some students from New Zealand resulted in two charrettes. Van Hall Larenstein lecturer Adrian Noortman knew

his colleague Daniel Irving from a conference in New Zealand. When he heard that Irving was visiting the Netherlands with a group of his students, Noortman took the opportunity to organise a joint charrette for the Oerol cultural festival on the island of Terschelling. The students collaborated with land artist Bruno Doedens to experiment with all kinds of unusual shapes and structures made from willow osiers. The task was to find effective and expressive construction methods, and to build structures that could withstand the tide. Later on, students of the Department of Coastal Zone Management of Van Hall Larenstein took over without Noortman's knowledge, and contributed to the final preparations for the Oerol festival.

Usually, however, a charrette is organised as part of a larger project, an international collaboration, an existing network or some other organised system. This means that the charrettes may have to be compatible with the objectives and operational methods of large European projects, and meet the requirements of international partners in such projects. Students and teachers have to adapt to local cultural and other conditions. This gives the charrettes a more defined focus. The F:ACTS! Project, for instance, involved working on a handbook for area-specific climate adaptation, while the VALUE-Added project involved developing and testing methods of participation. In F:ACTS!, students developed scenarios for climate adaptation and liveability in conservation areas and urban settings, working in Lugo (Spain), Alveiro (Portugal) and Strofyliia (Greece). In VALUE-Added, charrettes in Amersfoort (The Netherlands), Sheffield (UK) and Stuttgart (Germany) were used

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 over de plek waar u zich bevindt.















# 70

**het begon allemaal met een gootruite, die in 1970 met water het water op het Staelduinse bos**

**Strijd om het Staelduinse bos**

**Gedruis in Staelduinse Bos komt zeker**

**Rooden Staelduinse bos-legal begonnen**

**Actie tegen gedruis in Staelduinse bos**

**Staelduinse Bos is nu in de hand van West-Europa**





**hier komt Lewan**  
de eerste strowijk van Nederland  
4 sociale huurwoningen op initiatief van de bewoners

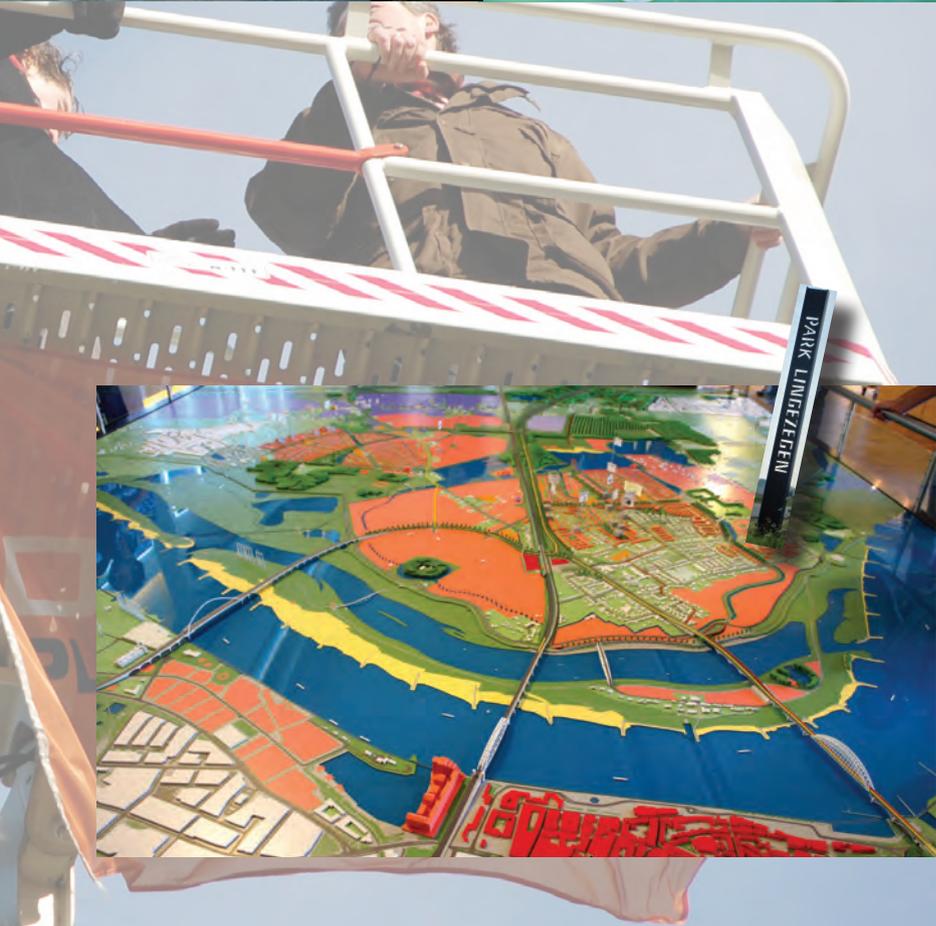
HELIFLYTER  
TALIS

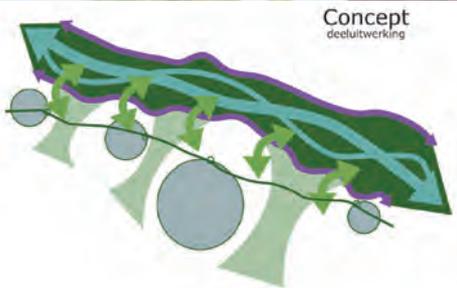
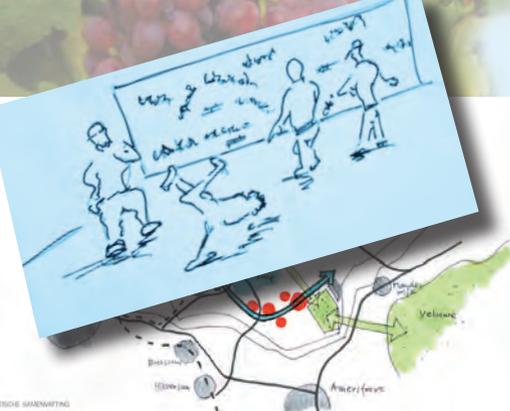
Heloflyterfilter en hergebruik regenwater

Mede mogelijk gemaakt door zelfwerkzaamheid van bewoners en vrijwilligers

Gebouwd met straw, hout en leem

Gesamenlijke ruimte voor buurtbijeenkomsten en sociale activiteiten



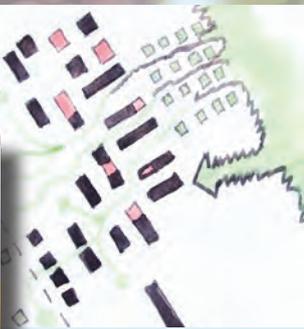
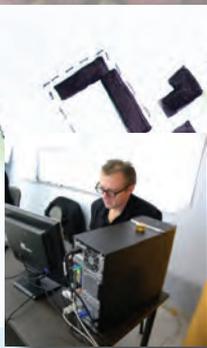
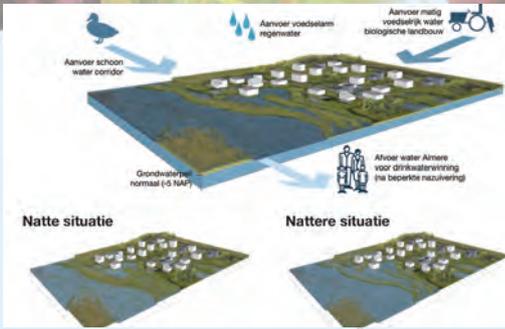


Concept  
deeltuiterwerking

TRIDE SAMENWATING  
2008



Jonge Friezen  
**Foarút**



WATER

HYDRO

INFRA ENERGY

huidig situatie

1° stap

2° stap





	Features of a place
<b>Sociability</b>	
Quantifiable	Diversity, stewardship, cooperation, neighbourliness, pride, friendliness, welcome, feeling.
<b>Use and activities</b>	
Quantifiable	Number of people, social networks, volunteers, use in the evenings, street
<b>Ownership</b>	
Quantifiable	Plasters, access, vitality, special, genuine, stable, indigenous, sustainable.
<b>Access and connections</b>	
Quantifiable	Ownership of local businesses, land use, house prices, rents, shop sales.
<b>Comfort and image</b>	
Quantifiable	Traffic, dust, transport flows, connectivity, readability, suitable for walking in, easy access.
<b>Quality</b>	
Quantifiable	Contiguity, closeness, connectedness, readability, suitable for walking in, spirituous, charming, appealing, history.
<b>Crime statistics</b>	
Quantifiable	Crime statistics, health statistics, condition of the buildings, environmental data.

# erschool Heerlen 20



4. Groenten en fruit  
verlowen

5. Seconde en fruit verlowen  
rebeten...

6. Met het overge  
s fruit en het d  
x lid aan en g  
focot geagincoc  
tabel van  
bouw oeven

20 artistiek en ordnerenveroran





to work on participatory methods to get the public to become involved in green spaces around them. Not only did the charrettes have a clearly defined goal, it was also clear that they had to result in a report to the European umbrella project. This made the way they were organised different from more loosely organised projects like the North West European Lively Cities Placemaking Tour and the joint charrettes with the New Zealand students.

Nevertheless, even such well-organised charrettes have many unexpected and exciting moments. An example was the two visits that the Van Hall Larenstein students got to pay to the Spanish town of Lugo. In the European F:ACTS! project, the Lectoraat Groene Leefomgeving collaborated with the Land Laboratory of the Universidade de Santiago de Compostela. Together with some local NGOs, this partner was trying to put urban agriculture on the Lugo municipal government agenda. This assignment matched the objective of F:ACTS!, which is to develop area-specific adaptation strategies for the consequences of climate change. At the end of 2012, students of the two universities first worked together on ideas for urban agriculture, but only one representative of the Lugo authorities was present at the final presentation.

The report that the students then wrote gave staff at Universidade de Santiago de Compostela an opportunity to organise a second presentation. This time, the municipal authorities were sufficiently impressed to make them want to think some more about urban agriculture in Lugo. That is why Van Hall Larenstein was invited for another charrette in 2014. After

this second charrette, the original goal set by Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, putting urban agriculture on the agenda, had been achieved.

#### **THE CLIENT**

A client enters into a specific relationship with a designer, planner or engineer. One might think that their collaboration starts with the actual assignment, but in fact it starts earlier, with the first meetings or ideas. The same is true for charrettes. The client sets an assignment, and students and their supervisors have to learn that such assignments are not always very clear, and may at times even be unsuitable. It may be useful for both client and participants to take a critical look at the assignment, and to adjust it where necessary, in consultation with the client.

This has actually happened, for instance with the charrette organised in the Belgian town of Menen. The client, Intercommunale Leiedal, wanted to set up a charrette with Van Hall Larenstein to generate ideas for a new master plan to redesign the green spaces and water elements in the town. The occasion was the renovation of the bridge over the river Leie, a major traffic artery. The Intercommunale Leiedal asked the students to examine ways of using green spaces and water to improve problem spots in the town. It involved creating green banks for the river, making unsafe spots safer, solving bottlenecks for bicycles and creating spaces for long-duration parking.

During the charrette, the students put the requested task in a wider perspective: they saw the bridge at Menen as one among

a series of bridges across the Leie, which were a characteristic feature of the surrounding region. The students concluded that the bridge was so important for the town's identity that they took it as the structural point of departure in their search for solutions for the green spaces and water elements in the town. As a result, the design the students came up with made the bridge the heart of the new green space and water structure of the town. They presented the bridge as a Menen icon, doing for the town's image what the Eiffel Tower did for Paris. The students then elaborated these rather wild ideas in a presentation of nearly 90 pages with detailed design drawings, reference images and sketches. Although the client thought the students had given an interesting interpretation to their assignment, this was not what they had intended. Nevertheless, the enthusiasm of the relevant municipal executive officer resulted in a useful discussion about the wider perspective the students had adopted.

#### **CONCRETE RESULTS**

Students, supervisors and researchers involved in the charrettes over the years have produced numerous designs, plans, reports, publications, presentations, evaluations, etc. The more concrete results of charrettes include design drawings and master plans produced by the students, as they did in Sheffield and Menen. As we saw above, such student plans do not always match the client's intentions. In addition, it is not always clear what the client will do with the designs and plans. In recent years, the Lectoraat Groene Leefomgeving van

Steden has tried to monitor this, in order to prevent student disappointment, to keep clients happy, to ensure that the charrettes fit in with the research agenda, and to use the charrettes to advertise the qualities of Van Hall Larenstein as a university and as a research partner.

Other concrete results include the scenarios developed in the F:ACTS! projects in Greece, Spain and Portugal for ways to cope with the consequences of climate change.

In March 2012, for instance, Van Hall Larenstein and Universidade de Aveiro published a report on the Vouga delta near Aveiro (Portugal), proposing various measures to prevent flooding by rivers or the sea, forest fires and warming up of the urban subclimate, and indicating how these measures interrelate. Comparable scenarios were produced for the Spanish town of Lugo and the Greek conservation area of Strofylia.

#### **ABSTRACT RESULTS**

More conceptual results are produced when charrettes are concerned with target groups and stakeholders. For instance, the Deurdonderen in de Achterhoek and Jonge Friezen Foarút projects mainly aimed to create awareness among young people about the shrinking population and the consequences for the area in which they live, and to find out whether these young people had any suggestions for solutions.

In these cases, the interaction with the target groups and stakeholders, and the communicative strategy used to reach these target groups, were a major part of the results of the charrettes. One of the aims in both projects was to get reported in

the local newspapers, websites and other media.

Charrettes have also often been used to generate rather 'wild' ideas. An example is the abovementioned project in Menen, where students took a wider view than the client. The North West European Lively Cities Placemaking Tour was also mainly aimed at collecting the ideas of people who were drawn by the green caravan. Such ideas did not necessarily have to be practical or feasible. The charrettes encouraged the students to leave their own comfort zone and to think *outside the box*. A good example of such a 'wild' idea was that of using a cherry-picker for interviews, and another was the idea of using tables and chairs and partitions to turn the site around the caravan into a living room.

Sometimes, these wild ideas became part of a very concrete result. The Greenspotting Haaglanden project resulted in an exhibition at the Stroom centre for visual arts and architecture in The Hague in August 2008, as well as a *polemic bike route* through the Haaglanden area. *Greenspotting Haaglanden* was also a good example of a charrette which explicitly tried to involve creative minds. The students interviewed artists, designers, documentary makers, etc., to identify emotions and meanings associated with the Haaglanden landscape. Other projects have also employed artists to stimulate the students' creativity; this discussed in more detail in chapter 4.

## EVALUATION

A careful evaluation of the actual outcomes of the charrettes is important, as it was not always completely clear what

was done with the outcomes, something which is important to the students. Students are much inspired by the collaborative work in charrettes, but they would also like to see their designs and master plans actually being put to good use by the client. The students involved in the Sheffield project were rather disappointed when they were told that eighty percent of the Edward Street Park had already been redesigned, as they thought this would mean that their designs, sketches, maps and photomontages would not be used. They expressed this disappointment at the first evaluation. Later discussions between staff of the Lectoraat Groene Leefomgeving van Steden and local officials in Sheffield showed that the city authorities had actually used the designs to develop a *green route* to the city park from a nearby shopping centre.

It is also necessary to evaluate how the charrettes relate to the other educational objectives defined by Van Hall Larenstein. In some cases, the results of the charrettes tied in with the scientific research being done at Van Hall Larenstein in the context of European projects. The book entitled *De waarden van de groene ruimte in de stad* (values of urban green spaces), published in the series *Planning by Surprise*, which also includes the present book, describes in detail how a student charrette organised in the city of Amersfoort tied in closely with a research project to identify methods to involve citizens in projects concerning urban green spaces. The charrette on the redevelopment of Randenbroek Park explicitly looked into the participatory methods that were being tested by the Van Hall Larenstein researchers and municipal officials in the

context of the VALUE-Added project, and into the method that the Amersfoort local authorities were using to derive greater value from green spaces.

The charrettes also resulted in new international partnerships, which make the programmes offered at Van Hall Larenstein more attractive to new groups of potential students. In 2014, Van Hall Larenstein started a collaborative partnership with Yedetepe Üniversitesi in Istanbul. From 23 November to 1 December 2014, the two institutes jointly organised a charrette for redesigning the Kadeköy Boulevard in the town of Fetiye on the Mediterranean coast. Six Van Hall Larenstein students worked together with nine students of Yedetepe Üniversitesi and three students of the Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam. The didactic aim of the project was mainly to enable Dutch and Turkish students to get to know each other's culture, but the charrette also resulted in several master plans for the tourist potential of a green Kadeköy Boulevard being presented at the end of the week. At the same time, however, the charrette also gave Van Hall Larenstein opportunities to attract students from the Turkish minority in the Netherlands. Several more charrettes will be organised in Turkey.

#### **SOCIAL AND CREATIVE ENERGY**

One important but hard to specify result of the charrettes is the energy that is released in the people involved in them. We have found with every charrette that the supervisors, students, clients, external partners, experts, local authorities and other parties involved praised the creative and social energy

generated by the field trips, design sessions, discussions, etc. All participants in a charrette develop their own dynamics through the interactions that arise. People get to know new people, new cultures and customs, and learn to accept and value each other's views. This generates social and creative processes, and gives rise to new ideas in often unexpected ways. Hence, the most important result of a charrette may in some cases be the release of this social and creative energy. In 2009, students and supervisors of Van Hall Larenstein visited Polis Universiteti in Tirana (Albania). The aim of the charrette organised there was to confront the Albanians with the Dutch approach. This confrontation led to a good deal of intercultural amazement on both sides. The Albanian students were expecting long hours of lectures each day, whose content they would then have to memorise, but instead they were given a practical assignment on the very first day. This led to astonishment but not to any activity. It was only then that the charrette really got started.

The Tirana charrette is a good example of this release of social and creative energy. After the first day, one group of Albanian students, mostly female, did start to work enthusiastically on the assignment, whereas two other groups, mostly consisting of male students, remained inactive. When the groups had to give a presentation after three days, the female group presented such a variety of designs and plans that it seemed as if they had been working on them for two weeks. The male students criticised the women, but when it was their turn to present, it turned out they had produced nothing. They were fiercely cri-

ticised by the women, and when the supervisors left the room during a break, a noisy and angry exchange broke out among the students. This proved a turning point in the atmosphere: afterwards, all students started to work very hard. Thus, an atmosphere of intense activity developed in the second week, with everyone working well into the evenings. At the end of the charrette, the students had produced three designs for the Tirana region. But even more important was the social and creative energy that had been generated.



## **4 HOW TO ASSESS A PROCESS?**

Each of the charrettes had its own division of roles between students and supervisors, partly because of the important role played by outsiders. As the examples discussed in the above two chapters show, learning in the context of charrettes is a social process, which is partly shaped by the practical situation in which supervisors and students get to work, and partly by the way supervisors and students enter this social process together, each with their own responsibilities. This process results in many learning opportunities, subject-related as well as social and cultural, with everyone assessing everyone else's performance. One of the big questions, however, is how these learning opportunities can be rated in the context of the current educational system. This question is addressed in the present chapter, in the context of the learning experiences that teachers and students had during the charrettes organised by Van Hall Larenstein since 2008. This chapter uses quotes from the teaching staff of one of the research groups of the Lectoraat Groene Leefomgeving van Steden and from students, as derived from reports and evaluations, without mentioning any names.

### **LEARNING AS A SOCIAL PROCESS**

In a charrette, students mostly learn from each other, and the supervisor is mostly there to assist the learning process. The Tirana charrette discussed in chapter 3 is a good example of

the way students – and supervisors – actually learn in a social process. To many of the teaching staff, this learning process is the most important aspect of the charrettes. ‘I don’t really care about the outcome very much,’ says one teacher. ‘It’s the process that counts.’ Others think the charrettes are too noncommittal. ‘How can students acquire the competencies through charrettes? How do you control the process to achieve that? It’s fun to have this freedom and to learn from the way others deal with this freedom, but it’s hard to measure what competencies students acquire during a charrette. And they acquire other competencies that are less obvious, like collaborating.’ To ensure a healthy balance between the freedom demanded by this learning process and the competencies that students eventually have to acquire, each supervisor tries to find their own way of organising charrettes. Some give the students a lot of freedom to get them to take responsibility for their own learning, as this is an important aspect of the learning process. As one teacher expressed it: ‘We consult with the partners involved during the preparation stage, but the actual day of the charrette is left blank.’ ‘Students have to come up with their own objective and action programme.’ Other supervisors prepare the charrettes in great detail. ‘We use a detailed programme for each day. It’s OK to deviate from the programme, but at least there’s a programme to deviate from.’ This is an important question: ‘How strictly do you set the rules? How tightly do you organise things?’

The social process takes time, which works better with charrettes lasting more than one day. ‘A charrette lasting more

than one day means that students are involved with their assignment 24 hours a day, including in the evenings when they're having a drink together.' There are definitely ways to organise this social aspect. 'The first day is the formal kick-off by the client, after which we form groups. On the second day we have a field trip, and that provides opportunities for group dynamics to evolve.' There's a limited role for ICT in this process. 'A Blackboard page is a useful tool to address the task. And we always make a Facebook page just for fun.' Sometimes using the computer can even be counterproductive. 'You have to prevent a situation where everyone is sitting behind their own computer. Interaction is important.'

#### **MOMENTS OF CRISIS**

Chapter 3 showed that students have to learn to think 'outside the box', and to adopt a critical approach to the assignment and the questions they have to answer. It is important that the assignment really matters to the client. 'There must be a sense of urgency,' as one teacher described his requirements for assignments and clients. 'But at the same time the assignment should match the subjects of the programme and be suitable for the number of students.' Just as in a real-world setting, an assignment does not always cover the entire problem. That is what emerged in the Menen project, recalls one teacher. 'The clients were really just looking for confirmation of their own plans, but it turned out there were other problems involved.' However, this in itself is also instructive, says another teacher. 'Students learn to ask themselves whether an assignment is

actually relevant, and whether the questions are right.’ While taking part in a charrette, the students also develop an intuition for this social process. This was the main feature of the Tirana charrette, but it also played a role in other projects, in various ways. ‘We had a project in Liège (Belgium) regarding a nineteenth-century fortress, and there was a lot of mistrust between the residents and the local authorities. The aim of that charrette was actually to bring the parties together.’ The learning opportunities experienced by the students in this process usually arise from moments of crisis in the group process, and many teachers by now know pretty well when to expect such moments. ‘In a charrette lasting more than one day, a moment of crisis often arises during the second day.’

#### **ROLES OF STUDENTS AND SUPERVISORS**

Students should be involved as intensively as possible in the charrette learning process, which often implies that supervisors have to maintain a certain distance. This often requires them to exercise a great deal of social and didactic agility. Supervisors are positive about the way the charrettes boost motivation and confidence. ‘Charrettes have a motivating effect, both on students and on supervisors,’ claimed one supervisor. This was confirmed by a student: ‘Working closely together with people from different disciplines to achieve a common goal is very motivating.’

Another supervisor reported: ‘The charrettes give students confidence, because of the competence-oriented learning process.’ A student added: ‘It was great fun and instructive to

work from something that was initially very vague to something concrete.'

The supervisor has to stand back from this learning process. 'It's the students themselves who have to organise things,' one supervisor said. 'The main role for the supervisors is to act as coaches.' A student's evaluation of a charrette also stated that this is true for the external experts and supervisors. 'The professionals had such a large influence that it was hard for us students to come up with constructive ideas during the analysis and the divergence phase.' In the student's opinion, this means that supervisors have to ensure that students have enough freedom to move and that the professionals should limit themselves to providing assistance. 'This gave us more opportunities to address the task as we thought fit, which in the end allowed us to draw up a plan based on our own vision.' Thus, whereas the students are working long hours during the charrette, this is precisely the moment when the supervisor should take a step back. As one supervisor put it: 'The supervisor doesn't actually have a lot to do during the charrette.' The main responsibility of the teaching staff is to create the conditions: ensuring that the assignment matches the students' level of knowledge and that all practical matters have been arranged. 'During the charrette, we supervisors have to be able to let go. It's not only a matter of knowledge transfer, but also of creating trust.' The supervisors also need to start thinking 'outside the box'. 'Teachers have to be prepared to question their own professional knowledge.' This is because students often take a different view of a charrette than the

supervisors. 'Students often tell a completely different story about the charrette than I do.'

It may thus seem that the supervisors can do very little during the charrettes. 'There are many things that you can't control,' said one supervisor. Some supervisors would prefer to streamline the charrettes. 'We have strict requirements for a charrette: it should challenge the residents involved in the charrette, stimulate the debate and contribute to a widely supported solution.' Others have been looking into didactic methods and techniques and the roles these play in charrettes. 'Working methods (lectures, debates, presentations, learning environment, whether free, anticipating or prepared) lead to techniques.' For many of the teaching staff, the use of charrettes since 2008 has meant a search for new didactic methods and techniques. And these methods and techniques also have to suit the way supervisors want to organise their charrettes. Foreign students often consider the charrettes an extraordinary learning experience. As one Brazilian student said: 'We didn't get information, we had to compile it ourselves. It was amazing!'

#### **STUDENTS SPEAK THEIR MIND**

Some may fear that charrettes do not guarantee sufficient student commitment. 'How do you acquire the competencies through charrettes?' one teacher wondered. 'How can you control this? It's fun to have such freedom and that you can learn from each other's creativity, but it's hard to assess what competencies a student actually acquires during a charrette.'

At the same time, they're learning different competencies, which are implicit, such as cooperating.' Some of the teaching staff would therefore prefer to specify and professionalise the charrette process. 'We have to define *terms of reference*.'

Supervisors have noticed that the students have a major and distinctive role to play in the charrettes. 'Students can say things to clients that professional agencies or we as teachers can't,' commented one supervisor. 'Students have no vested interests, and they freely speak their mind.' Teachers regard charrettes as a valuable addition to the teaching programme, and not only for didactic reasons. 'Financial cutbacks will mean we'll have to make do with fewer teaching staff. The question is therefore how we can make the students themselves do the things that their teachers now do.' 'Only the highly motivated students currently participate. They have the capacity to deal with freedom. What will happen if Van Hall Larenstein makes charrettes compulsory? The results will become more variable, unless you exercise greater control, coach them more intensively, predefine things more, etc. Every student should get such a valuable experience.'

#### **LOCATION AND CULTURE SHOCK**

The setting in which the charrettes are organised proved to have a decisive influence. In various ways, such charrettes constitute a culture shock to both students and supervisors. In the Tirana case, the charrette was intended as a culture shock for the Albanian participants, but other charrettes also brought to light major cultural differences between the Dutch

participants and their hosts, especially in the early stages of a charrette. For instance, the Albanian participants of the Tirana charrette, as well as the Spanish participants in Lugo, were highly focused on the specific content of the task addressed in the charrette, whereas the Dutch participants tended to concentrate on 'doing things together', as it was often referred to. The Dutch students were more direct and often lacked a certain social tact, whereas the Albanians and Spaniards adopted a more reticent approach. One supervisor concluded: 'It took a lot of diplomacy to reconcile the cultural differences.' These cultural differences were usually only a problem in the early stages of the charrettes, however, and some tactical interventions by the supervisors always managed to ameliorate them. In fact, in many cases the cultural differences actually led to a more intensive collaboration.

Students very much enjoy the opportunity to work on location. In Menen, the students were lodged with local host families, which they appreciated very much. In Lugo, the students found out that Spaniards have a very different attitude towards the countryside than they. 'Teachers as well as students tend to have grandparents or uncles and aunts who still grow their own food. They go to the country every weekend.' A certain command of English is a necessity, as there are definitely language barriers to overcome. One Spanish student thought for a long time that the Dutch were talking about a 'festival garden' instead of a 'vegetable garden'.

## EVALUATION

One of the main questions asked by the teaching staff is how they should assess a charrette. The problem is that charrettes can be assessed in terms of many aspects: as a learning process, as research, as a spatial intervention and as a social process. As we showed in chapter 3, a charrette always delivers a result, and this is also found by the supervisors. As one supervisor put it: 'There has never been a charrette that produced no results whatsoever. You're guaranteed to get a result.' 'It always produces something,' added another supervisor. 'The quality level depends on the circumstances, the assignment, the time and the location.'

The evaluation session at the end of a charrette is an important moment, according to the supervisors. 'The evaluation is where you get your didactic result. This involves two aspects: what have they learned, and what have the stakeholders got out of it.' Until recently, these evaluations hardly looked at the actual outcome of the charrettes, that is, what the client got out of it. That was wrong, argued one supervisor. 'The outcome of the charrette is often not monitored, whereas it is important to know about it. It's easier to attract new clients for charrettes if you can prove that they are effective. And it allows you to guide the process in terms of effectiveness or of interventions.' Another supervisor would prefer to ask students to do this. 'You can ask students to reflect on the process afterwards, both in terms of content and as a social-communicative process, checking against the core competencies defined for the programme, or even against the general compe-

tencies defined for universities of applied science. This is not yet being done systematically, and it can yield unexpected and highly personal results, as well as useful information for the teaching staff and growing confidence for the students.'

By now, we have started to monitor the outcomes of charrettes, with the help of the students. An exciting evaluation was that held by fifteen students of the Minor programme on Area Development regarding five charrettes held in Liège, Sheffield, Amersfoort, Stuttgart and Menen. These projects were carried out in the context of the European VALUE-Added project. At the semi-annual partner meeting of VALUE-Added in the Dutch town of Velp, the students presented themselves by storming into the room, and taking the partners to the country estate where Van Hall Larenstein is located, where they introduced themselves in video clips. They then made arrangements with the partners to visit their cities and discuss the outcomes of the charrettes with the relevant officials and the students of the local universities who had taken part in the charrettes. The Dutch partners were interviewed in Velp. The students wrote reports on these evaluations, and later presented the results to the international partners at subsequent partner meetings.

The ensuing discussions with the partners showed that the students had misunderstood some aspects during their evaluation. For instance, the evaluation of the Sheffield charrette had to be adjusted by the teaching staff later, as its impact had been more positive than the students had described in their evaluation.

In a way, therefore, the evaluations of the charrettes become a kind of charrettes themselves. They are also characterised by the curious phenomenon of educational projects that affect the real world. The students carrying out these evaluations also need supervision, just like the students participating in the original charrettes. Together with teaching staff and students, the Lectoraat Groene Leefomgeving van Steden intends to study how this system can be integrated into the Van Hall Larenstein programmes, just as it has done with the charrette system itself over the past six years.



## 5 MAGIC TOOLBOX

What we have tried to show in this book is that there is no blueprint or manual available that will ensure the success of future charrettes. In organising these charrettes, Van Hall Larenstein has moved into new territory, which involves a completely different division of roles between teaching staff, students and the university as a whole. In these charrettes, supervisors simultaneously act as subject experts, coaches, organisers, educationalists and examiners, while students are experts, thinkers outside-the-box, honest advisors and evaluators. At the same time, Van Hall Larenstein has to deal with a different type of clients, and with results that at first sight seem unconnected to teaching. It is our hope that this book can serve as a *Magic Toolbox*, where everyone can find the instruments that suit their particular role. For what is clear to us is that further charrettes will need to be organised.

This book has provided a general overview of the way in which Van Hall Larenstein uses charrettes. Chapter 2 showed that there is no fixed approach to organising or funding charrettes. Charrettes may be large or small, but in any case each charrette needs to be made to measure. This means that organising a charrette involves a constant search for didactic methods, new partnerships, creative assignments, the right kind of clients, sufficient administrative support, etc.

What is new about the charrettes is that Van Hall Larenstein gets assignments from real-world clients, who actually want

to use the results of the students' work. This leads to new partnerships with new Dutch and international partners, focusing on educational goals but also on the actual outcomes of the charrettes. Chapter 3 discussed that charrettes can be spontaneous or highly organised, that it is important to build up a good working relationship with the client, and that the outcome of the charrette can take the form of a concrete design as well as something rather more vague, like increased awareness. It also discussed, however, that the most important outcome was actually the social and creative energy generated in the charrette. This is reflected in the enthusiasm of students and supervisors during charrettes, and in the effects they have on other teaching programmes at Van Hall Larenstein.

Chapter 4 showed how difficult it is to assess charrettes. Although supervisors and students may be enthusiastic about them, the search for ways to organise, assess and evaluate charrettes is far from over. This is also caused by the made-to-measure character that we mentioned above. Nevertheless, a solid basis has been constructed. Much experience has been gained as regards organising charrettes, cooperating with international partners, dealing with clients and stakeholders, reporting and the use of didactic methods. Supervisors have had a taste of their new role as coaches who mainly guide and intervene rather than teach, who are sensitive to the social process that takes place in a charrette, involving all kinds of cultural differences and language barriers, and who are not afraid to question their own expertise. Students are not only tested in terms of their specialist knowledge in these char-

rettes, but also in terms of creativity, their willingness to take risks and their ability to collaborate, and just like their supervisors, they contribute to the evaluation of their own learning process.

The charrettes fit in perfectly with the prevailing educational vision at Van Hall Larenstein, as is evident from the following three quotes from the university's vision statement:

*How a student learns depends on personal elements like their style of learning, their needs and interests.*

*Anyone who enters a learning process comes with their own knowledge, based on previous learning processes and the environment - in terms of context and culture - in which they grow up and live.*

*From year one, the programme features authentic assignments as much as possible, bringing the students into direct contact with the professional setting. This also introduces the student to 21st-century skills, like entrepreneurial skills and multidisciplinary collaboration.*

*Freedom of choice offers students an opportunity to take responsibility for their own studies, based on their own knowledge, style of learning, needs and interests.*

#### **WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?**

This concluding chapter could present a long, and probably boring, story about the way Van Hall Larenstein should orga-

nise charrettes in the future, what students and teaching staff should do, what support should be provided, how funding can be secured, how best to evaluate the charrette, etc. We decided not to do this, precisely because every charrette is different and made to measure. What we want to achieve with this book is to get everyone at Van Hall Larenstein, as well as its Dutch and international partners, old and new clients, future students and all others who may be interested, enthusiastic about the approach that has been developed by, and will continue to be developed by, the research group of the Lectoraat Groene Leefomgeving van Steden.

What seems to us to be important for the future is that we build on the social and creative energy generated in all charrettes. In our view, this can only be done by organising new charrettes and by learning from the charrettes we have organised so far. That is why we want to conclude this book with an anecdote about students who shaped new charrettes with the aim of evaluating previous charrettes.

Five charrettes were organised in the context of the VALUE-Added project, in the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany. Staff at the Lectoraat Groene Leefomgeving van Steden then came up with the idea to invite students of are adevelopment to perform an evaluation of these five charrettes. In the first instance, the students produced a list of questions they wanted to ask the municipal officials and students involved in the charrettes. The teaching staff considered this a rather uninteresting approach; they preferred something a bit more spectacular. They gave the group of students a mere ten minutes

to come up with 'wild ideas'. After a preliminary presentation of these ideas, they were given another ten minutes to choose the best ideas. To their amazement, they were then told that they would actually have to carry out these wild ideas, and that they had to give a presentation at the meeting of all VALUE-Added partners in Velp in seven days' time.

These VALUE-Added partners were literally shaken up at the meeting in Velp. The students stormed into the room all dressed up, while confetti guns blew confetti into the air with loud bangs. The partners literally jumped out of their chairs. The students then took them outside, to the Van Hall Larenstein country estate, where they had set up five stalls, one for each partner. The partners were shown three-minute video clips in which the students who were going to visit them for the evaluation introduced themselves. This broke the ice and set the tone for the two packed days that the students were going to spend in Amersfoort, Sheffield, Stuttgart, Liège and Menen to interview all persons involved in the previous charrettes.

#### **LECTORAAAT GROENE LEEFOMGEVING VAN STEDEN**

During the discussions that led to his book, the question often arose whether the educational approach described here was not something that was only useful for the Lectoraat Groene Leefomgeving van Steden (Green Cities Lectorate). Lector Wim Timmermans thinks it is not. In his view, any lectorate could organise similar projects, but the approach does impose certain requirements on the lector, the teaching staff, the stu-

dents, the administrative staff, etc., in other words, on Van Hall Larenstein itself. These requirements are as follows:

*You need to have the right international network, so that you will be asked to take part in in projects. You need to have a good story that matches the goal of the project as well as the teaching programme at Van Hall Larenstein. You need an excellent administrative staff. You need at least one teacher who likes to take part in international projects, who likes to attend all those partner meetings abroad, who has the courage to go his own way within the framework of such a project, and who feels comfortable with the cultural differences that are inherent in such projects. You need an institute that accepts and encourages students being temporarily exempt from their normal schedule of classes to join a charrette. You need a researcher with the same competencies as the above teacher. You have to be able to always deliver on time. The lector must be able to keep track of everything that is going on and to effectively manage everything – both within the project and at Van Hall Larenstein.*

ONE GROUP OF ALBANIAN STUDENTS, MOSTLY FEMALE, DID START TO WORK ENTHUSIASTICALLY ON THE ASSIGNMENT, WHEREAS TWO OTHER GROUPS, MOSTLY CONSISTING OF MALE STUDENTS, REMAINED INACTIVE. AFTER THREE DAYS, THE FEMALE GROUP PRESENTED SUCH A VARIETY OF DESIGNS AND PLANS THAT IT SEEMED AS IF THEY HAD BEEN WORKING ON THEM FOR TWO WEEKS. THE MALE STUDENTS CRITICISED THE WOMEN, BUT WHEN IT WAS THEIR TURN TO PRESENT, IT TURNED OUT THEY HAD PRODUCED NOTHING. THEY WERE FIERCELY CRITICISED BY THE WOMEN, AND WHEN THE SUPERVISORS LEFT THE ROOM DURING A BREAK, A NOISY AND ANGRY EXCHANGE BROKE OUT AMONG THE STUDENTS. THIS PROVED A TURNING POINT IN THE ATMOSPHERE: AFTERWARDS, ALL STUDENTS STARTED TO WORK VERY HARD.

# APPENDIX: CHARRETTES AND

YEAR	PARTICIPANTS	ASSIGNMENT	PROJECT
2007 Borkum Germany, 1 week	30: VHL, FH Osnabrück	Summer school, Redevelopment of Borkum boulevard	
2008 Arnhem-Nijmegen, 1 week	6: VHL, Artez, FH Hamburg	Summer school Lingezegeen, identity for Park of the 21st Century	
2008 Kootwijk, 2 days,	VHL, University of Warschau	Landscape identity, Kootwijk, Triennale Apeldoorn	PLUREL
2008 Haaglanden, 3 month	12: VHL	Landscape identity	PLUREL
2008, Den Haag	5: VHL	Landscape identity, exhibition and debate centre for architecture, art	PLUREL
2009 Straatsburg, 2 days	Université de Strasbourg	Landscape identity, art	PLUREL
2009 Tirana , 2 weeks	10: POLIS University Tirana	Sustainable development	
2009 Arnhem-Nijmegen 1 week,	15: VHL, Artez, FH Hamburg	Summer school Lingezegeen, identity for Park of the 21st Century	
2009 Amersfoort 1 week	20: VHL, Hanzehogeschool and Groningen University, HRO Rotterdam	Urban green spaces, value of green spaces	VALUE
St Annaparochie, 1 week	20: VHL, NHL	Shrinking population	JFF
2010, Bennekom, 1 week	35: VHL	Scaling and governance	IP/OP WUR
2010 Aldeboarn, 1 week	15: VHL, SAXION	Shrinking population	JFF
2010 Arnhem-Nijmegen, 1 week	15: VHL, Artez, FH Hamburg students	Summer school Lingezegeen, Identity for Park of the 21st century	
2010 Aveiro, Portugal, 2 weeks	60: VHL, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, Universidade de Aveiro, Technical Univ. of Varna	Climate adaptation	Erasmus, F:ACTS!
2010 De Wijers, Belgium, 1 week	15: VHL, Universiteit Gent	Climate	F:ACTS!
2010 Arnhem	15: VHL	Urban green spaces, stakeholder involvement	KIGO
2011 Liège, Belgium	30: VHL, Universiteit Gent	Recreation	
2011 Heerlen, 4 days	10: VHL, SAXION	Summer school on shrink population	
2011 Aveiro, Portugal, 2 weeks	60: VHL, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, Universidade de Aveiro, Technical Univ. of Varna	Climate adaptation	Erasmus, F:ACTS!

# S U M M E R S C H O O L S

YEAR	PARTICIPANTS	ASSIGNMENT	PROJECT
<b>2011</b> Tirana, Albania, 2 weeks	11: VHL, Polis Universiteti	Sustainable development	
<b>2012</b> Antwerp, Belgium	15: VHL	Plan for brook restoration	
<b>2012</b> Patras, Greece, 1 week	25: VHL, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, Business school Tirana, University of Patras	Climate adaptation	F:ACTS!
<b>2012</b> Lugo, Spain, 1 week	25: VHL, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela	Stakeholder involvement	F:ACTS!
<b>2012</b> Almere 2 weken	60: VHL, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, Universidade de Aveiro, Technical Univ. of Varna	Climate adaptation	Erasmus, F:ACTS!
<b>2012</b> Lille 1 week	10: Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture et du Paysage	Groen in de stad: Placemaking	LICI
<b>2012</b> Brussels, 4 days	6: VHL, USC	Climate, Young experts on final F:ACTS! symposium	F:ACTS!
<b>2013</b> Liège, Belgium, 4 days	6: VHL	Stakeholder involvement	VALUE ADDED
<b>2013</b> Amersfoort, 6 weeks	6: VHL	Stakeholder involvement	VALUE ADDED
<b>2013, Sheffield, Engeland,</b> 1 week	6: VHL, 5 University of Manchester, 5 University of Sheffield	Stakeholder involvement	VALUE ADDED
<b>2013</b> Fethye, Turkey, 1 week	18: VHL, STOAS, Ege University	Redevelopment of Fethye boulevard	Erasmus
<b>2013</b> Wallonia, 1 week	20: VHL	Urban green spaces , Placemaking: North West European Lively Cities Placemaking Tour	LICI
<b>2014</b> Lugo, Spain, 1 week	15: VHL, USC	Stakeholder involvement	F:ACTS!
<b>2014</b> Menen, Belgium, 1 week	7: VHL   T+L, 1 University College Ghent	Stakeholder involvement	VALUE+
<b>2014</b> Stuttgart, 1 week	8: VHL   T+L	Stakeholder involvement	VALUE+
<b>2014</b> Ulrum, 1 week	16: VHL,	Shrinking population	
<b>2014</b> Istanbul, Turkey, 1 week	18: VHL, Rietveld Academie, Yeditepe University	Redevelopment of Kadeköy boulevard	Erasmus
<b>2014</b> Liège, 3 days	20: VHL	Urban green spaces, Placemaking: flashmob and workshop at LICI conference	LICI
<b>2009 – 2014</b> Netherlands Belgium Various cities	20 x 4 students	Urban green spaces: Placemaking	KIGO, LICI

