

COVER



Future of
Leisure

02	Foreword
03	Introduction
04	Visual report morning conference
06	Science Fiction
09	Expert perspectives
10	The inevitable evolution from a circular to a regenerative society
14	Building on the future of Breda with leisure
16	Mega Sports Events
18	Visual report afternoon conference
20	Technological innovation in the Leisure Society
21	How Artificial Intelligence is Set to Transform Our Free Time
22	New technology and disruptive developments in themed entertainment
24	How big data is going to change the leisure industry
26	House of Esports focuses on positive aspects
28	Game On!
29	Forget about NFTs
30	A research update from Buas' Experience Lab
32	The value of being there
34	Teacher perspectives
36	The theme of Inclusion: Together towards an inclusive society
40	A 'proper' library for Antwerp's youth
42	Working on diversity and inclusion is not a project, but a change process
44	Improving accessibility makes sense
46	From Foxtrot to Freestyle
48	Konekt radically champions a world where everyone can live, learn and work together
51	Industry perspectives
52	Placemaking and experience design
53	The future of Placemaking
56	Is rural the new urban?
58	Students on a placemaking mission in the city of Amsterdam
60	How to make place in and out of the classroom?
62	Collaboration workplace enhances the transformative capacity
64	How do you measure experience and impact in the culture sector
66	Student perspectives
68	Sustainable futures
69	Leisure inspires hope for change
70	Towards a waste-free generation
72	Social impact is the future
74	Sports and Exercise scenario study
76	The trade fair of the future
78	WLO on the future of Leisure
79	Column

General
Technology
Inclusion
Placemaking
Sustainability

Foreword

Strong together

This Uncover offers a good representation of the fruitful collaboration that we as Leisure & Events Management programmes of InHolland University of Applied Sciences (Diemen), Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences, NHL Stenden (Leeuwarden) and Breda University of Applied Sciences (BUAs) have had for years. We have united in the National Leisure Management Consultative Committee (abbreviated in Dutch to LOLM), work together within the HBO Higher Economic Education sector and exchange experiences, knowledge, and data.

Eighteen months ago, the idea arose to organise a conference about the future of Leisure & Events together. This resulted in a successful Future of Leisure Conference on the BUAs campus on 22 March of this year. Industry contacts, lecturers and students were inspired and looked ahead at the future together and the place of leisure and events within the society of that future. At this point, we would like to thank the other three faculties for working together on this as well!

As a follow-up to this conference, this varied Uncover magazine offers a cross-section of contributions from the four Leisure & Events Management faculties and from industry partners, which all touch upon the future and the role of leisure & events in our society. Because it is clear that Leisure & Events fulfil an important role in the lives of individuals and within society at large, which has only become clearer during the Covid-19 pandemic. Without Leisure & Events, life is bare and empty.

By organising the Future of Leisure Conference and publishing Uncover Magazine annually for years, we make a substantial contribution to the sharing of knowledge between researchers, lecturers, industry partners, authorities, and students. We think it is important to share the various insights between ourselves and the outside world, work on the developments of our inspiring sector together, and contribute to solving social issues. Uncover is becoming an increasingly powerful platform.

Authors know where to find us, media platforms, such as NRIT consistently post our content, the views and 'likes' on social media speak volumes and the international network around the World Leisure Organization also appreciates us. It is our ambition to further develop Uncover into a widely supported platform making a continuous and sustainable contribution to the development of the Leisure & Events sector and society at large through various outlets.

The four institutes are currently working together on writing a new National Training Profile. This Profile will be the basis for designing and updating the study programmes for the Leisure & Events manager of today and the future. An important exercise because the value of Leisure & Events and the role that the Leisure & Events manager can play in society are changing along with developments in other areas. We live in a time of great change and societal challenges. Leisure and the Leisure & Events manager can play a positive role in creating awareness, in bringing people together and sharing ideas, in promoting social cohesion, diversity and inclusion, in bringing about change, in creating a more beautiful world together.

The Leisure & Events Management programme not only focuses on the sector or industry, it also explicitly focuses on contributing to society. The Leisure & Events domain is known for creating entertainment and business, but of course it has a lot of potential to have a positive impact on the world. The methodologies, organisational power, social competencies, binding capacity and creativity that characterise our sector and study programmes are pre-eminent resources that can contribute to realising a more beautiful world for everyone.

Leisure for a better society. We look forward to keeping educating this Leisure & Events Manager of the future, keeping collaborating with other faculties, lecturers, researchers, students, and a range of partners and keeping conducting research and reporting on it through the Uncover platform. We hope you continue following us and joining us.

Peter van der Aalst

Research & business innovation manager of Leisure and Events at Breda University of Applied Sciences.

Introduction

We challenge you to design the Future of Leisure!

Peter Horsten
& Simon de Wijs



Peter Horsten & Simon de Wijs are the final editors of Uncover.

We live in turbulent times. Awareness of the threats of war, pandemics, and economic recessions make reconsiderations urgent, also within our leisure field. Which structures are resistant under which conditions? What is important or valuable? The outbreak of the global pandemic and the resulting restrictions on leisure pursuits exposed the impact of our industry on the functioning of society. The lack of the previously seemingly taken-for-granted interpersonal interaction, relaxation, inspiration and entertainment has made impacts whose full implications are yet to be seen. Despite that, the leisure sector remained remarkably quiet for a long time. Beyond practical solutions and the occasional cry for help for the sector's survival, we took the inspirational leader role only to a limited extent. Perhaps overwhelmed by the visibility of this responsibility. Perhaps we did not sufficiently feel the urgency to claim our role in society. A missed opportunity to take a step forward to expand the full potential of leisure for social, environmental and economic impact. The Future of Leisure largely depends on the role leisure manages to claim in the vital issues facing society. Are we sufficiently capable of demanding the role as a testing ground and as connector between the lifeworld and systems world?

This year the four universities in the field of Leisure and Events united to explore these issues and challenges. Breda University of Applied Sciences hosted, together with NHL Stenden (Leeuwarden), Inholland (Diemen) and Willem de Kooning (Rotterdam), the Uncover conference *Future of Leisure*, with more than 300 participants. Students, lecturers, researchers, experts from profit and non-profit organisations, policy-makers and target groups joined to design and shape this future role together. Showcasing leisure as a laboratory.

Using leisure as the engine to create movement to guide society towards potential and desired development directions. It is time for the sector to live up to its potential as a means and context to improve the quality of life and living environment. If we believe leisure carries the core quality of being able to touch and engage people, then let us make it happen.

What will the future look like? Based on technological capabilities, are we going to have more and more processes performed by robots? A bed-making machine for hotels? Or will the desperate need for workers also open our eyes to the fact that there is a large untapped potential and therefore a more inclusive labour market in which everyone participates becomes a reality? In order to become carbon neutral, will we see more cities banning large events or will this sector succeed in becoming fully circular or perhaps even regenerative, creating space to host more events to save our world. Will competition for space put pressure on leisure facilities or will increasing density in cities intensify the need for a 15-minute city? The point is not so much to predict all this but to recognise the circumstances and developments under which this may happen. Which direction is desirable? How should we deal with such developments? What alternatives exist? And how to design our leisure infrastructure from that context?

The conference

The Future of Leisure conference got off to a spectacular start with a cinematic future perspective on leisure outlined by Artificial Intelligence, followed by various keynotes and videos. Professor Ian Yeoman kicked off, explaining how science fiction can offer insight and how we can explore future scenarios. We then looked at potential change through leisure from four perspectives: inclusivity, placemaking, sustainability and technology. Milan Meyberg, drawing on his experiences in the event sector and eco-resort Basecamp, took us through how

we can move from a linear to a regenerative leisure industry. Towards a world where nature is not used but is given a voice and becomes a cooperation partner.

For the other perspectives, the framework was outlined through several videos, including Greg Richards, Professor of Placemaking and Events, who sees leisure as time and space to improve people's quality of life, and Rabin Baldewsingh, National Coordinator against Discrimination and Racism, who argued that within an inclusive society, bonding and bridging are key elements and leisure plays a key role in that.

In the afternoon, in mixed groups, participants explored - from the four perspectives - how the qualities that characterise our leisure sector (playfulness, entertainment, humour, hospitality, social connection, creativity, imagining and storytelling) provide a breeding ground for a suitable context in order to solve the complex issues and challenges we are facing as a society. Throughout this magazine you can read more in-depth stories and results from the conference. We have made a beginning to harness the power and impact of leisure for the future.

You are warmly invited to continue with us on this path!

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It's time to take the stage. Join the movement!

Looking at the conference morning differently

Visual reporting

Artist: Zena-Rae Borst, illustrator, DJ and student at Willem de Kooning Academy Rotterdam.
More information: zenarae.hotglue.me



LEISURE IS TIME AND SPACE TO IMPROVE PEOPLE'S LIVES

LET'S SEE HOW MUCH TIME WE'LL BE SPENDING IN THE METAVERSE

I THINK, IF THE FUTURE PHYSICAL AND DIGITAL WILL BECOME MORE IMPORTANT

CRYPTO CURRENCY & NFT'S

NFT'S AS A TICKET FOR AN EVENT

NFT AS IDENTITY

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ZENA-RAE

INCLUSIVITY

LEISURE CAN BE INTEGRAL FOR BETTER DIVERSITY INCLUSIVITY

KLM WELCOMES TOURISTS WITH TULIPS & CLOGS...

HOW ABOUT THE CARNIVAL IN ROTTERDAM?

BREAK UNTIL 11:10

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ZENA-RAE

SCIENCE FICTION AS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

THEORY IS THE BASIS OF PRACTICE

SCIENCE FICTION IS A STORY FROM SCIENCE = WHAT IF? =

ONTOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE VIEW POINT (BELIEFS)

EPISTEMOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS (FACTS)

HYPER REALITY OF AUTHENTICITY

WHAT IS REAL? WHEN DOES IT BECOME REAL?

DR. IAN YEOMAN

MOST SCIENCE FICTION IS DYSTOPIAN.

LIMINALITY: AMBIGUITY, NO PLACE NO TIME

FUTURE STUDIES NEEDS SCEPTICISM

WHAT IS ETHICAL TODAY?

WHAT IS UNETHICAL TOMORROW?

HOW TO USE SCIENCE FICTION TO CREATE NEW WORLDS

READ HIS BOOK

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ZENA-RAE

JORRIT SNYDER & HILLEGARD ASSIES

WRAPPING UP THE MORNING SESSION

LOOKING FORWARD TO MORE COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE PARTNERS

BREDA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

WILLEM DEKONING

NHL STEVEN UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

IN HOLLAND UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCE

ILLUSTRATION BY ZENA-RAE

MUZIEUM OPENTJE OGEN

MUSEUM WHERE YOU CAN EXPERIENCE WHAT IT'S LIKE TO HAVE A SIGHT IMPAIRMENT

RUNNERS CAFE

RUNNING + PICKING UP TRASH

THE FINAL GUEST...

Science Fiction

Scenario study for Wellington Zoo in 2075

Professor Dr Ian Yeoman



Professor Dr Ian Yeoman is a Professor of Disruption, Innovation and New Phenomena in Hospitality and Tourism at NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences in Leeuwarden, the Netherlands.

As the Scenario Planner at VisitScotland in 2004 (Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie, 2005), I facilitated a team to model and construct a set of scenarios which replicated the present COVID-19 pandemic reality. In the paper by Page et al. (2006) *A case study of best practice - Visit Scotland's prepared response to an influenza pandemic, we predicted a global pandemic which meant international aviation coming to a halt for two to three years, lockdowns and social distancing. When combined, these effects would have a severe impact on Scottish tourism. However, very few believed us at the time and many people treated the scenarios with a degree of scepticism, as if they were from a science fiction film. Nearly twenty years later that science fiction scenario came true and COVID-19 was a reality. This is why science fiction and scepticism are important to me.*

What is Science Fiction?

The word 'science' acquired its modern meaning 'as reliable knowledge which is rooted in the evidence of the senses, carefully sifted by deductive reasoning and the experimental testing of generalisations'. In the 17th century, writers began producing speculative fictions about new discoveries and technologies that the application of scientific methods might bring about, the earliest examples being accommodated rather uncomfortably within

existing genres of literature and narrative frameworks. Thus, science fiction is based upon the narrative of science.

Science fiction started in the pulp magazines invented in 1896 by Frank Munsey (Gunn, 2003). Mostly filled with adventure stories in a variety of locales and periods, they became more specialised beginning in 1915 with the introduction of *Detective Story Monthly* and *the Western Story Magazine* in 1919 and *Love Stories* in 1921. Hugo Gernsback, an immigrant from Luxembourg had published popular science magazines with science fiction stories in them. In 1926 he mustered his resources (and his courage) and founded *Amazing Stories* and a genre was born.

Science Fiction and the Future

This lead editorial in the first issue of the journal *Futures* aspires a utopian focus through science fiction on the creation of a better society, which echoes the history in Plato's (1993) *Republic and More's Utopia* (2016), in that each outlines a particular vision for a better society. Bell (2013) takes this proposition to explore the contributions and warnings of utopia and dystopia through science fiction as mechanisms for innovation, visions and business. Bell notes that science fiction acts as mechanisms for explanations of the future as prototypes. Prototypes act like mechanisms for interpretation or construction of fictional futures through stories of events or products (Johnson, 2011). While prototypes and scenarios are different concepts, both have emancipatory powers in which the future imagined espouses a belief that the future could actually occur, thus an explanatory mechanism (Wyss & Duran, 2001). Science fiction tends to evoke a visualisation of the future, a better future for humankind with some sort of science representation through a fictional account, hence 'science' and 'fiction' as science fiction (Forster et al., 2011).

Literary enthusiast Patrick Parrinder describes science fiction as a *thinking machine* that provides an outlet to visualise *what could be*, and therefore allows both reflection on *what is*, and some idea for planning *what to do next*. Science fiction stitches truths about humanity into the fabric of its unfamiliar worlds: when we imagine ourselves in stories' novel scenarios, it provides good food for thought and the possibility to internalise applicable moral lessons.

Theoretical Base

In *Science Fiction, Tourism and Disruption*, Yeoman et al. (2021) conclude that for science fiction to be enacted as a lens to view the world or as a thinking machine, it needs a theoretical underpinning in order to understand it and use it in practice. Yeoman's propositioned science fiction is based upon explanatory claims through weak signals as a mechanism of how the future could happen, the classic 'what if' question. Yeoman and colleagues identified a number of concepts associated with science fiction research as an underpinning to create a science fiction narrative. First, an *alternative universe or cosmic pluralism*, where the future represents a divergence from one's own perspectives and realities. Second, given the popularity and bias towards dystopian literature in science fiction, the authors have proposed a new word to bridge dystopia and utopia, namely *DysTopia*, the continuum between the concepts. Here, utopia follows dystopia as hope emerges from dystopia as regenerative tourism emerges post COVID-19. Third, *liminality* is the blurring of reality and the unreal, between fact and fiction or the passageway in between. Fourth, *hyperreality of authenticity* is a form of knowledge based upon how we see the world of tourism through science fiction. Fifth, *disruption and transformation* are everywhere in the science fiction literature. Science fiction represents the radical alternatives, the unthinkable, science which has not been invented yet and an opposite to the status quo. Sixth, as science fiction does not represent



reality, is not factual, and appears to be fictitious, many will treat it with *scepticism*. Finally, the seventh concept is *narrative*, as all science fiction, like scenarios, are based around fictional stories.

Wellington Zoo, New Zealand in 2075

Wellington Zoo was the first ever zoo to be established in Aotearoa New Zealand after a group of residents petitioned Wellington City Council to establish a zoo for the people of Wellington. The Zoo is Wellington's oldest conservation organisation, caring for animals since 1906, and is guided by their kaupapa 'Me Tiaki, Kia Ora!' In other words, the zoo aims to look after the environment, so all things flourish and to make sure that collectively, it makes a difference for animals and the wild. However, Wellington Zoo is continually faced with challenges which threaten its values, ethics and its role within Wellington and the wider community every day to the extent that many feel there is no place in modern society for zoos and caged animals. So, using the process of scenario planning and transformational thinking based upon science fiction, the management team at Wellington Zoo wanted to know what the zoo would look like in 2075 – they wanted to use science fiction as a thinking machine to challenge the norms and thoughts about the zoo to push the boundaries and think the unthinkable. A team of researchers from Te Herenga Waka - Victoria University of Wellington constructed four scenarios based upon theoretical proposition (Yeoman et al., 2021). The scenario narratives included:

1. Paradise Lost, the Dystopian scenario

The natural world is in a state of destruction. COVID-29 has brought about a mutation and near destruction of the many species across the world. This mutation has created zoomie and aggressive types of animals which have gone to battle with humans, resulting in wars and destruction. In this scenario, Wellington Zoo has a role in the preservation of animals against the toxic COVID-29 virus and has become a refuge centre for many species. The zoo has a strong science focus and education-wise, the zoo tries to educate the community on how the zoo is responding to climate change

and zoonotic viruses. The zoo uses animals to entertain visitors using a variety of close encounter experiences, generate enough money to continue to protect wildlife, educate people, and try to restore a positive perception of animals. Thus, there is an ethical dilemma in this scenario.

2. An Interconnected World, the Utopian scenario

Society is seamlessly connected with the natural world and seeks to strengthen this connection as well as provide wildlife and the animal kingdom with freedom and safety. In this scenario, the zoo rebrands itself into a centre for natural science, technological development and education - called the Wellington Interactive Conservation Centre (WICC). There are several of these centres of varying sizes and specialisations throughout the wider Wellington region in which animals can roam freely in conservation areas. The animals are monitored and tagged. The areas are protected by ubiquitous, technologically controlled fences. Zookeepers become formally known as 'animal guardians'. The management team of the WICC not only manage the WICC centres, they also form the management body for the development of natural habitats or areas, provide animal care and support, and attend to 'adopted' nests or feeders around the city.

3. Animal Vaults, the Science Fiction Fantasy scenario

The natural world is threatened and on the brink of complete cataclysm. Society seeks to maintain and connect people to the natural world through artificially created animals. In this scenario, the role of Wellington Zoo is threefold: Firstly, it uses cloning and genetic engineering to generate profits for the conservation and species reintroduction efforts. Secondly, the zoo gives back to the community through entertainment and resource provision. Local residents can visit the zoo and see cloned and artificial animals in the interior of climate-controlled enclosures. The zoo has a commercial retail outlet, including a butcher's shop of specialty meat cuts from exotic species, which are supplied to restaurants, both locally and internationally. The zoo's high-class dining experience has two Michelin stars and has

won several accolades for its 'exotic cuisine'. The zoo's REPET scheme can bring dead pets to life again through the process of genetic re-engineering. On the educational front, every student in the region visits the natural reserve as part of their curriculum to learn about the climate catastrophe and its impacts, and how the world looked before. This is a rare opportunity as the only natural reserve is left in New Zealand.

4. Singularity Zoo, the Technological Singularity scenario

Reeling back from a climate catastrophe society, the zoo looks to re-establish harmed ecosystems through technological means. Additionally, the acceptance of technology and desire to preserve the natural world creates an increase in artificially created nature experiences and a separation from interaction with natural wildlife. In this scenario, technology enables the zoo to focus on the roles of educator, entertainer and protector of the natural world. But the scenario raises a number of issues including:

- Technology will shift the role of human workers at the zoo with implications for the people affected as well as for the experience of those who visit and remain employed.
- Cloning and gene editing raise ethical questions about the extent to which science should interfere in evolution, especially if these animals are being used for entertainment to a certain extent.
- The rise of natural order activists who support animal rights raises the issues of using science to save a species.
- The number of animals remaining physically accessible to people visiting the zoo as many species would be replaced by realistic AI images.

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The scenarios were pushed beyond the norm with some really unusual ideas but with a degree of plausibility.

These scenarios certainly prompted a thought-provoking discussion with the management team and board at Wellington Zoo. In the words of Karen Fifield, CEO of the zoo, the scenarios were:

"A timely reminder that change can be radical, transformational and necessary. The scenarios were creative and pushed out the boundaries beyond the norm with some really unusual ideas but with a degree of plausibility. Overall, the scenarios were refreshing, engaging and truly outside the box while maintaining the core element of empathy and connection with other living things. Some of the issues raised in the scenarios we would not want to see, thus it is really important to plan for change, work towards scenarios you prefer and prepare plans that create a better future."

Concluding Thoughts

Using science fiction as a thinking machine or a means to find new ideas and forms of tourism is very important. Realising that the future of tourism is not the same as its past requires new ways of conceptualising the future. Scenario planning is accepted as the main research

methodology in futures studies; however, it is sometimes constrained by plausibility and the political reality of change (Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie, 2005). So, how can we reinvent the future and take a more radical approach to creating the future beyond rational thinking to account for innovation, disruption and the unexpected? How can we think outside, above and beyond the box? This is the role of science fiction.

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You can see cloned and artificial animals in the interior of climate-controlled enclosures.

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How can we think outside, above and beyond the box?



Expert perspectives on the future of leisure

What is your position and how do you view the value of leisure from this perspective?

I am **Menno Stokman**, director of the Centre of Expertise in Leisure, Tourism & Hospitality (CELTH). CELTH is a research collaboration between BUAs, NHL Stenden and HZ, in which we work together with the Dutch and international LTH sector in projects. The value of leisure time is becoming broader and more important. Did you know that the right to leisure time is included as one of the fundamental rights in the Dutch Constitution (article 22)? We try to gain insight into what exactly this broad value means, how we can measure and increase it.

My name is **Stefan Hartman** and I am programme manager of the European Tourism Futures Institute (ETFI) at NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences. As far as I am concerned, the value of leisure lies in its contribution to broad prosperity, i.e., to income but also to well-being, relaxation, health and the liveability of places.

My name is **Tony Blackshaw** and I am a Professor of Leisure Studies and Sociology. Zygmunt Bauman argued that freedom and security are the two most treasured values of modernity, but they are at odds and cross-purposes since we cannot have more of one without the other. What he ignored is leisure is the twenty-first century's primary value sphere (in Max Weber's understanding) because it is here that we find out what movement there is between the two – but without losing sight of either.

What is the biggest challenge the world is facing?

The necessary sustainability is the biggest challenge. We are off course to achieve the Paris climate goals because we do not want to let go of the old structures. We need to make a transition to a new system and change of era.

Responding to changes, which come at society from all sides and in all sizes. From technology to demographics, politics to climate change. It won't stop, it will only grow. We need to prepare for that.

The hegemony of neoliberal ideology. It is now so deep-rooted the market has colonised those domains of human life once considered beyond the reach of market forces. We all know about Nature (think about the Anthropocene) but think too about the Unconscious (e.g. all those five-year-olds stressing about school).

In your opinion, how can the leisure sector respond appropriately to it?

For leisure, tourism and hospitality this means that the positive value of the domain and the contribution that the domain can make to social challenges are becoming increasingly important. Digitisation and AI offer opportunities to help change and positively increase the experience of LTH within ecological upper limits. In this respect, it also helps to compensate for the shortage of human capital.

Developing adaptive capacity. The art of responding to change. This is a skill at the level of individuals, of organisations but also entire sectors and destinations.

The leisure sector must support community projects based on a critical community practice model (theoretically informed) which challenges social exclusion, humiliation and disrespect and promotes social inclusion, empowerment, and mutual recognition.

Do you see an innovative example that inspires or can trigger a new direction?

The developments around Van Gogh are a strong example. It is used as a unique leitmotif to develop leisure offerings. See the recent opening of the Van Gogh Village Museum in Nuenen as a new highlight in the Netherlands-wide Van Gogh offerings. With the development of the Van Gogh National Park, a large nature reserve is being created. A wonderful example of leisure development serving various purposes, with offerings that can be experienced by both residents and tourists from far away.

I see great examples in Friesland how a collaborative ecosystem of all kinds of parties (government, organisations, entrepreneurs, education) has emerged and the 'collaboration table' initiated by the Ministry of Economic Affairs that brings together all (!) parties in the hospitality domain. These kinds of initiatives are needed. Connections between parties are needed to find each other quickly and take action as needed.

The universal basic income (UBI) pilot schemes. Should UBI be universally introduced, it would not only replace unemployment and social security benefits, but also lead to a reduction in the need to work (and an increase in leisure time) – if properly funded through a progressive tax system.



The inevitable evolution from a circular to a regenerative society

We must give nature a voice

Peter Horsten
&
Simon de Wijs



Peter Horsten and Simon de Wijs are lecturers and researchers in the domain of Leisure & Events at Breda University of Applied Sciences, editors of *Uncover* and co-organisers of the *Future of Leisure* conference.

Milan Meyberg was one of the keynote speakers at the *Future of Leisure* conference. The *Uncover* editors sat down with him to discuss his experience with and vision for shaping a more sustainable and future-proof world.

We will start with some questions about you. Who are you, where do you come from and what have been some benchmarks in your development?

You know me now as a concept developer and sustainability strategist. But I have made some pretty extraordinary strides in my life's journey so far. I studied medicine in Groningen, but after a request to perform in Bulgaria, I found that I felt much more at home in the creative music world. I became a resident DJ at Pand48 in Groningen and I decided to study at the Academy of Pop Culture, making the conscious decision to focus on music, events and festivals. Through a specialisation within my study programme, I tried to implement sustainability

in all my projects and concepts. During my work placement at Studio 80 in Amsterdam, for example, where I noticed a growing need for sustainability, but also anxiety, among people. Two years after my work placement, I returned to Groningen, where Club Paradigm announced its move to the Suiker Unie grounds. With the Paradigm Shift campaign, management gave me the space I needed to prototype new sustainability ideas. I was fascinated by the idea of implementing circularity in the construction process of a club. That idea started to take hold and I soon wondered if it would be possible to design not just a physical venue, but also a system venue such as a festival in a circular fashion. That is how I ended up at DGTL festival after Paradigm. I applied for the director position. I did not get this, but I was offered the position of Revolution Manager.

Who were actually your sources of inspiration to draw from?

During my time at DGTL I was very much inspired by people who live in an autarkical, self-sufficient manner and thus obtained a degree of freedom that is difficult to achieve in our society. We are bound by the systems we have accepted, and I wondered if that is natural. My ambition is to (someday) live autarkically and be self-sufficient, and I have already taken a few good steps towards that goal. In addition to this ambition on a personal level, at the same time I started looking at what it is like for businesses to be able to be self-sufficient and independent. I noticed that new systems and protocols simply were not there yet, and there I saw the opportunity to make a difference.

From organisations such as DGTL and Paradigm, can you give us some specific examples of things that were innovative at that time?

I was concerned with food production and healthier lifestyles and found out about the impact of our food system. With the sustainable development of the new Paradigm site, I realised that food consumption and food production play a big role in that and in 2014 I developed the 'Symbioculture Farm' concept. Just through the choices we make as consumers, we can already make a huge difference, individually and collectively.

People sometimes ask me what the best way is to become more sustainable. You can then recite the entire list: consume or produce sustainably, put your money in a sustainable

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Just through the choices we make as consumers, we can already make a huge difference, individually and collectively.



“

I think most people are looking for the pursuit of pleasure and the quest for happiness.

bank, or buy organic food, no more meat, et cetera. But one of the best things you can do is to stop going to the supermarket, grow your own food and be in touch with what you eat and what you consume.

The Symbioculture Farm concept exemplifies a paradigm shift from the current linear food system to a future regenerative food system, showing the intermediate steps through various visualisations. I think that is a great example of how I am personally changing in sync with the social and business perspective.

Leisure can also serve as an excellent tool for working towards a better world. However, not everyone is quite ready, or open to it. What makes leisure or more specifically a festival (such as DGTL) suitable to promote this?

I think most people are looking for the pursuit of pleasure and the quest for happiness. Leisure satisfies those two needs and you will find

them at a festival (environment). If you can show that difficult themes or systemic changes do not get in the way of those two needs, then you have a way to communicate with visitors who may not yet be ready for a new definition of leisure, or leisure as an extension of purpose. When they can get this experience in an environment where they are open to new things, realising that leisure can also have a purpose, then we are well on our way. It is precisely through the idea of festivals as a living lab that this becomes clear.

The image that many people still had of festivals ten years ago is that it was just hedonistic. That it is only about drinking, drugs and maximum enjoyment. I am glad this outdated image and narrative is changing. More and more people recognise the great social contribution festivals can make. Sustainable innovation is happening, testing new technologies and even introducing entire circular systems.

Which innovations and technologies have brought most change for you?

Aged 15, I attended my first festival and I was mostly aware of the wonderful images through the TMF and MTV television channels. During this festival, I suddenly realised; "We are actually dancing on a pile of cups and trash. Why does everyone just throw everything away like that? Why does everyone think this is normal?" This is a simple example of system failure which was really in your face, but nothing was done about it for years.

During my work for DGTL, ten years later, we managed to actually change this waste system using a resource plan, deposit cups, and a volunteer system to separate resources and quantify material flows. Just three years after the introduction of our hard cup deposit system, the City of Amsterdam made it mandatory for all festivals (with some exceptions) to use a similar system. With this commitment, the era of 'dancing on a waste dump' is definitely over.

One nice aspect of seeing festivals as a 'living lab', is that when a trial does not work, a lot is learned and then there is room for follow-up. Convincing people of the value of experimentation was a big insight that changed a lot. By enthusing stakeholders about the fact that if something succeeds, they will be the forerunners, I was able to get more and more companies join in. This is also really necessary in order to implement large-scale systemic change. For example, can you make an entire festival circular? If so, the protocols and practices could theoretically be applied to a school, a hospital, an airport or a small village. Using the analogy of festivals as living labs, you then get a shift from what used to be a hedonistic perspective to a constructive form of hedonism. Of course, everyone has to be on board to turn those systems around. After all, you will not get there by making some small tweaks here and there.

In addition, what do you really need to have in place if you want to have a completely circular festival?

First of all, a baseline measurement is required in order to know how your system is put together and what you can do. In addition, from that revolution from linear to circular, it is important not to talk about waste but about resources as raw materials. Thus, leisure can be used as an experiment to bring about improvements in society at the same time. It was not just about a hard cup system, but it was about a whole different mindset. From a waste-based mentality to a resource-based mentality. That is a revolution of the mind. My answer to the sustainability issue of 'waste' was not to place more bins or separate more efficiently, but to ban the word 'waste', and remove all 'bins' from the festival grounds.

Waste became a banned word and bins were removed. Something had to take their place, of course. The new forms of thinking provided new solutions and we introduced resource collection points instead of waste bins and a resource allocation plan instead of a waste plan. No

cleaners but resource managers, which has a completely different connotation than 'garbage man'. We made raw materials important. By changing the mindset, you change the relationship with stakeholders, the public and the environment.

How did you manage to change the visitors' role in the new system?

The next revolution came in creating system transparency and in visitor engagement. We found that support from visitors was crucial to achieving our goals. To put it very simple, the visitor is someone who visits and consumes something. We therefore prefer to talk about participants (as part of a system), rather than 'visitors'. In terms of tone of voice, we also used words such as "contribute, participate in our experiments, and provide a resource".

For example, volunteers were posted at resource collection points thanking people for adding resources to our circular system. This provides us with an immediate opportunity to tell our story to visitors. At each interaction point, we thought about the use of communication, language and examples to help visitors make the transition inside the system. We developed a whole new interaction model with visitors. We thanked them for food scraps and recyclable compostables (thank you for the valuable resources) and within 24 hours processed them into compost to grow next year's food from.

Participants suddenly smile as they walk away having handed in their plate of food scraps. They notice that really everything is sorted and used, even people's urine. The entire experience is different just because the starting point is different. Festivals are great for this kind of thing because you have a few hours to get 10,000s of people used to the idea that circular systems are already a possibility.

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From a waste-based mentality to a resource-based mentality. That is a revolution of the mind.

You often talk about the transition from ego to eco to gaia. From linear to circular to regenerative. Can you take us through the essence of this development?

Often systems focus on the pursuit of pleasure and the quest for happiness. We live in a linear economy. We make things, buy them, consume them, discard them. Everything has to come with as little discomfort as possible. However, that is not sustainable and that is not how nature works. In contrast, there is no waste in nature, everything is reused, systems are complementary. There is circularity there, or if you zoom in even closer you see that there are self-reinforcing and self-healing processes, increasing levels of complexity, making systems stronger. Our bodies work in a similar way. The succession from linear to circular to regenerative is logical in that sense, even when you consider what our society should look like in the future. In short, we have created a big mess in the past. Becoming circular does not solve that mess, which makes the transition from circular to regenerative inevitable.

But how does nature respond to invasive or festering species? Can nature do this without help?

When a system is unbalanced, it can do two things: cease to exist or find a new balance. 'You adapt or you die' is what you see in nature, and those are the only two options we have. Nature does this effortlessly by itself. We can and should do the same from within ourselves. We know this is inherent to nature, but our connection to systems means we do not see how we can make that transition.

When I pitched circularity at DGTL, the first thing I said was "this is an intermediate step, not an end goal". Indeed, the final goal is to change the function of festivals so that a festival causes a regenerative effect. That it does more good than harm, and solves problems, which it used to cause. The direct step from a linear system to a regenerative system is too big. People literally cannot grasp that. The intermediate step via circularity is a necessary step to eventually move to the regenerative format.

Why did you move from festivals to Basecamp, which you describe yourself as a tiny houses eco-retreat where the future of sustainable housing and self-sufficiency is being developed? Regenerative thinking also proved to be catching on at Basecamp. People got it. I lived there myself and tried to minimise my own environmental impact and create systems to this end. And if this happens to take place in

an environment that is pleasant, encouraging, stimulating and fulfilling, people adopt the core values more easily. Again, a strong link to leisure. Perhaps leisure should become something you have to put a lot of effort into, which will make it very fulfilling. Leisure for purpose rather than leisure for pleasure.

Did you have to deal with an awful lot of regulations when you wanted to change systems?

First of all, let me say that Basecamp is a work in progress. It is not completely circular and not regenerative in all areas. Framing it as an experiment (we are going to try this, and this is where we want to get to) already creates some regulatory flexibility. Always include stakeholders in that process, though. Explain that it could be that you do not always follow the rules completely in order to get results.

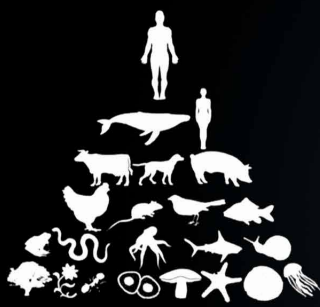
Say you want to get rid of the sewer system, then there are all these rules, how do you deal with faeces, with urine, can you treat that yourself? Festivals do not have treatment plants, but back then we did put up a container which could purify urine and water, which was approved as an experiment in the festival setting. You must dare to claim room for experimentation. For example, placing wind turbines at Basecamp which may not yet have passed all inspections. But together with the government, it might be possible to study what the effect on birds is. Whether they cause noise pollution or not. How people react to it. When a part works, it is also easier to get people to join in for new parts.

Apart from the energy grid, are there any other specific examples where you have made strides with Basecamp?

Ideally, you go to a resort with a net positive impact on the environment. A place that produces more energy than it consumes. Where you pick fruits and vegetables from the garden or greenhouse, and therefore do not have to go to the supermarket. You eat honest and organic food, and you cook using magnetic induction. You participate in an activity such as a beach clean-up, or you create a piece of permaculture. All the small acts and actions you take have a positive effect on the environment and (micro)climate. Breaking it down into small pieces allows people to see that living in a circular system is already possible, and that



WHAT ARE PARADIGM SHIFTS?



EGO-CENTRIC WORLDVIEW

Linear Economy
Individualism

Personhood, Top Down Control, Command, Territoriality, Power Struggles, Self-Interest, Withholding Information, Blaming, Parasitic Relationship: The other is externalised.



Emerging technologies, ideologies, philosophies, socio-economic systems, ethics, designs, power structures challenge the 'Status Quo'

What gives status, pleasure and purpose?



ECO-CENTRIC WORLDVIEW

Circular Economy
Mutualism / Collectivism

Non-human personhood, Influence, Conversation, Partnership, Mutual Empowerment & Support and Accountability, Joint Knowledge, Eco-Socialism, Solarpunk, Collectivist Relationships: The other is part of us. Self actualisation.



Emerging technologies, ideologies, philosophies, socio-economic systems, ethics, designs, power structures challenge the 'Status Quo'

What gives status, pleasure and purpose?



GAIA-CENTRIC WORLDVIEW

Regenerative Economy
Symbiosism / Eudaimonism

Environmental personhood, Empathic Dialogue, Stewardship, Voluntary servitude, Open Systems, Systemic Transparency, Blockchain Accountability, Indigenous sovereignty, Symbiotic Relationships: the other is part of the greater self. Quantum-like framework of decision making. Self actualisation as the other.

Illustration: paradigm shifts

the step to regenerative life may not be as big as people think. I believe that small communities, of 15 to 20 'like-minded individuals' in a collective setting, can live regeneratively.

If we are talking about getting everyone on board then you are also talking about nature. Environmental personhood, the tree as a stakeholder at the table. Can you explain to us how it works?

Every person sees that nature is part of our systems and society, but nature has no voice and cannot give feedback. There is no method to interact with nature. But what if it were possible to personify nature, and you could ask nature how best to create systems which are sustainable, circular or regenerative?

People are able to communicate with each other and form personal connections. With nature this is impossible. For example: Suppose I sit at a table, and opposite me 'sits' a stone. When I would talk to the stone, asking it questions like "How can we optimise our recycling system for this area?" everyone would think "this Milan guy is nuts". But if that stone were a person with a face, a voice and a character, visualised in a digital avatar providing geological features



Becoming circular does not solve that, which makes the transition from circular to regenerative inevitable.

of a natural area, then 'that stone' could literally tell us what is happening under your feet. Personifying nature enables us to include nature as a stakeholder in decision-making processes and models. I think this way of thinking is a logical next step in the transition from a circular to regenerative society.

Can you talk a little more about the prototype which gives nature a voice?

With the rapid development of AI, large-language models and generative AI, the world is about to change on a scale that is unprecedented. If you look at current developments, with ChatGPT and AI such as Midjourney, we see that knowledge and creativity which was previously unattainable is now available to everyone. By combining multiple AIs, we can solve problems in a very different manner. And in this context, I started exploring whether we can have questions answered from the perspective of nature. Most of the questions we ask are anthropocentric. Our failure to solve the major climate issues over the past 50 years stems from our urge to always want to solve problems from a human perspective. However, our problems have become so large and complex that we may have to conclude that we are simply unable to solve them.

This is how I arrived at my GAIA concept, of which I already gave a small sneak preview at the conference. With a development team from different companies, we are working to create an early prototype which can be replicated for nature around the world. With the GAIA project, forests, rivers, mountains, jungles or oceans get a face, a persona and a voice. By interacting with personifications of nature, the notion arises that we are part of a larger system which is in a very intense period of transition. A transition with only two options; either the system ceases to exist (you die) or it finds a new balance (you adapt). I am very curious to see how the first test users will react to the various ENVAI (Environmental



With the GAIA project, forests, rivers, mountains, jungles or oceans get a face, a persona and a voice.

Artificial Intelligence) models. By the way, maybe we should change the term 'test users'. Test users are more the 'sparring partners' or 'guardians' of AI.

It is very important for us humans to realise what our role is in relation to the development of AI and nature. Western people generally have a world view in which they are 'users' of nature. Indigenous peoples had a very different world view, being instead 'protectors, representatives or mediators' of nature. Many indigenous peoples never had the delusion of being the owners of nature, or 'possessors' of a piece of land. I think many of our problems can be solved if we can reintroduce this indigenous world view to the West. Hopefully it will help to (be able to) bring nature to the table and have a conversation about this.

Building on the future of Breda with leisure

In conversation with Hildegard Winnubst-Assies, director of Breda Marketing

Peter van der Aalst



Peter van der Aalst is degree programme manager and lecturer of Leisure and Events Management at Breda University of Applied Sciences.



With its more than 186,000 residents, Breda is the ninth largest city in the Netherlands. A beautiful city with a rich past. People from Breda are generally known as bon vivants, who are proud of their historic city. But Breda does not stand still and has the ambition to move forward. Breda as a historic and liveable city, where life is wonderful and where dynamism has no boundaries. A vibrant meeting place where creatives, entrepreneurs and innovators have the space to pioneer. Their ambition is to build a city for future generations. Leisure, technology and creativity play an important role in this.

Since 2019, it has been up to Hildegard Winnubst-Assies, director of Breda Marketing, to give direction to the branding of Breda and to channel the pride and drive of the city, its inhabitants and administrators in a clear and appealing story for residents, visitors, companies, and talents.

That seems like quite a job to me. How do you reduce so many ideas and enthusiasm to a clearly communicable positioning that is understood and supported?

By choosing direction together with the city and connect and shape that direction in policy, content and marketing. Preferably, in a joint strategic agenda. In 2016, the city expressed its ambitions; Breda is a city where quality of life is paramount, an open and hospitable city where we celebrate life. Cordiality and fun are important values. We cherish that, as well as its location, the historic scene, and the green living environment. Economically speaking, Breda has a strong SME profile. To put Breda on the map as a business and student city in the future, the city chose to strengthen its international profile and build on applied technology and creativity.

Not an illogical choice in view of its history, the growing number of tech start-ups and quality education in Breda.

In 2022, Breda Marketing took a more in-depth approach on the basis of many conversations with a wide variety of city partners. To build a solid basis for the city, with one sustainable story and clear identity. We developed the visual identity together with the Design Team, an open collective of Breda designers. We launched the honed brand in 2022. Anyone can use that brand. In this way, we are building an unambiguous positioning of the city together with partners.

That is quite a lot; that goes far beyond launching a marketing campaign.

Our challenge is to build a strong brand. That is what we are taking control of, and we manifest it, among other things, through our own channels, such as explorebreda.com and in the city. The Breda Marketing team builds on this every day. We retrieve local Breda stories; they make the city. Together with several partners, we spread the brand to various target groups and inform, inspire and activate them with the right resources at the right time. Finally, we also encourage innovation and new pride. So we are literally 'making a city'. Think of product and programme development, new events, interventions in public space, and strengthening area profiles.

Breda is on the eve of a metropolitan challenge and will grow to some 230,000 inhabitants in the coming years. That transition will face complex social challenges and have a major impact on the city. A leap in scale offering opportunities to create new icons, increase the pride of residents, increase the attractiveness of the city for new residents, visitors, entrepreneurs and students, and put Breda on the map even more strongly. If Breda wants to be meaningful



We retrieve stories about Breda; they make the city.



Hildegard Winnubst-Assies

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Leisure is one of the preconditions for a good balance between living, working and relaxing.

in the future, we must get to work and think and act differently. Therefore, Breda Marketing has honed the brand story and added the Breda mentality. To be able to work on the urban challenges in a more creative and intensive way and thus the image of the city. What role do you see for leisure in this process? Growth is not a goal in itself, but it is an opportunity to innovate and improve quality and at the same time safeguard the city's identity. Leisure is one of the preconditions for a good balance between living, working and relaxing. It contributes to the Quality of Life that is so praised inside and outside Breda. We can use the expertise and imagination of leisure to engage residents in complex social challenges, so they can contribute to a better world in their own direct living environment. In this way, we set a valuable movement in motion together, and increase the attractiveness of Breda. After all, a nice city to live in is also a nice city to visit, work or study in. Look at cities such as Oslo, Hamburg or Helsinki, the happiest city in the world. They are really at the forefront in a number of areas.

Leisure is a part of the local economy not to be underestimated, in which mostly events play an important role. The professionalism of organisational agencies, a rich variety of suppliers, and certainly important, targeted education at both mbo (senior secondary vocational education) and hbo (higher professional education) level; it is all there in Breda. Furthermore, there is an opportunity ahead of us to make the city better known as a multiday travel destination.

Breda has it all, even a beautiful history. Creativity connects this history with the present and future and makes it attractive to a wide audience.

Breda has always been a leisure city and that offers a lot of potential. This profile, which has a strong history, could be manifested more strongly. Breda can become more playful, and can make better use of public space in a more creative way, as if it were a playground. That fits Breda perfectly. Through storytelling, events or sustainable forms of leisure, such as cycling, boating and walking. And think of course of new technologies, such as virtual and augmented reality and artificial intelligence. For example, a project like the Mark, bringing back water into the city, can be made accessible and more meaningful. If you tackle things well, you will foster engagement, increase the pride of inhabitants and create a surprising experience for visitors. In addition, leisure, technology and greening can strengthen each other well conceptually. Developments in the field of data analytics and AI enable us to create more personalised leisure experiences and stimulate social interaction. Finally, leisure can play an important role in promoting people's health and well-being. In a world in which people move less and less, offerings of more physical and challenging leisure activities can make a positive contribution. So, plenty of opportunities.

Do you see an important role for leisure in the transition to a more beautiful world and a future-proof and attractive Breda. What will Breda look like shortly if your dreams come true?

Leisure will have been entrenched in the major development projects and public space. It will have a vibrant network of young, international talents, incubators, start-ups and companies that will make optimal use of the participation of Breda residents. A city that will have made a leap in scale and will be considered an international, creative and innovative city. It will have a recognisable profile, attracting young talents within the serious gaming and robotisation domains. Those who believe in a better future consciously avoid the rat race in big cities and go for a life full of quality. The city will feel and move like a big 'playground' and 'living lab', where technology, creativity and leisure will have been integrated into public space. A playground and a stage where working together on social challenges will be the standard. Old and new pride and icons will go side by side.

These are very wonderful dreams, but what are you already proud of from the perspective of Breda Marketing?

Our brand essence is 'Breda Brings it Together'. The Together concept is at the core and heart of our brand. The number of surprising partnerships is rapidly increasing, offering us many valuable initiatives which set the city in motion. The water, the Mark, is coming back to the city again; an unprecedented ambitious development perspective has been developed for 't Zoet; heritage is being given a new meaning; the city becomes greener and more accessible for everybody and inhabitants every day; education and businesses are getting more and more engaged in social and sustainable initiatives.

With BUAs, Breda has the institute of the Netherlands in the field of leisure and the third best game programme of the world within its city boundaries. This has resulted in impactful events and initiatives such as Breda Game Hub and Breda Robotics, and the World Leisure Congress will take place in Breda and Rotterdam in 2025.

We are already building on the future of the city together step by step. So, our slogan 'Breda Brings it Together' is anything but an empty promise. Breda is on the move and a very interesting city to keep an eye on, now and in the future.

Photography

• *Ruben Klink (page 15 right)*

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The city feels and moves like a big 'playground' and 'living lab', where technology, creativity and leisure are integrated into public space.



Mega Sports Events

A lasting legacy or non-justifiable, sustainable catastrophe?

Lorena Mahle



Lorena Mahle is a student of Leisure and Event Management in the Social Innovation specialisation and a volunteer at the Football World Cup in Qatar.

Qatar 2022 – The biggest sports tournament, the FIFA World Cup took place in a unique setting. It was the first World Cup to be held in winter, the first football event with participating teams from all continents, and the most compact tournament in the history of football. The FIFA World Cup is not only a global celebration of football but also an opportunity for host nations to showcase their capabilities and leave a lasting legacy. In this regard, Qatar, the first Middle Eastern World Cup, has redefined the standards of conducting mega sporting events. Qatar marked its ambition by hosting the most expensive World Cup in history and aiming at setting new benchmarks in sustainability, carbon neutrality, and inclusivity.

Qatar's ascent to a global player

Over the past few decades, Qatar has transformed from a fishing and pearl diving nation into a global player. Despite being a relatively small country on the Arabian Peninsula, Qatar has made significant strides to position itself as a hub of innovation, investment, cultural exchange, and geopolitical diplomacy. The country's journey toward becoming a global player can be attributed to its vast reserves of natural gas, which have fuelled Qatar's economic growth. In addition to economic prosperity, Qatar has actively pursued cultural exchange and diplomacy by

investing in research, education, and cultural institutions. The Education City district is home to some of the world's most renowned international educational institutions, start-up incubators, technology pioneers, and is an attractive destination for foreign businesses.

Besides being an energy provider, geopolitical mediator, and hub of logistics and technology, becoming an irreplaceable actor in the global sports scene is part of the country's long-term modernisation and branding strategy. Hosting the FIFA World Cup, therefore, is a tool for Qatar to showcase its economic power, reinforce its position in geopolitical diplomacy and blunt the reality of human rights violations and other questionable policies. Other elements of Qatar's strategy are the ownership of clubs and cooperation with well-known athletes. Qatar took these steps by purchasing the football club Paris St. Germain as well as contracting David Beckham as the country's sports ambassador (Arbuniès, 2022).

The price for transforming the desert into urban landscapes

Qatar has taken advantage of the World Cup to accelerate the country's modernisation. Parts of the total investment of 230 billion dollars were used to finance a world-class transportation system, including the Hamad International Airport, a new metro system, accommodation infrastructure, and urban landscapes (Arbuniès, 2022). Lusail City, the location of the World Cup Final is an example of future placemaking. Designed as a smart and sustainable city, the construction of parks, cycling tracks, walkways, and shopping malls is supposed to serve as a blueprint for future urban development in Qatar. Besides, the country has established itself as an impressive retail destination that caters to both residents and tourists. Malls such as the Mall of Qatar, with their stunning interiors and premium

dining, have become representative of Qatar's ambition to provide a luxurious lifestyle experience. In contrast, the human costs of the World Cup are one of the aspects that has caused heavy international criticism. The preparation and execution of the World Cup created a thousand new jobs. Especially for people coming from India, Nepal, and Bangladesh the working and living conditions in Qatar were a promising chance to escape poverty and unemployment in their home countries. However, the Kafala system, which gave employers the power to take ownership of their workers, contributed to the disastrous working conditions resulting in the death of many workers. According to research conducted by The Guardian, 6,500 workers had died in the country since the host country announcement in 2010. Although the Kafala system has been officially abolished, other rules and legislations still enable the existence of this concept (Amnesty International, 2023).

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The reconstruction and reutilisation of the stadiums leave an enormous carbon footprint.



Fans and teams supporting the LGBTQ community faced restrictions and refusal when wearing Pride and rainbow accessories.



Qatar's carbon neutrality strategy

Qatar has made significant strides in creating a fully carbon-neutral event and in promoting sustainability throughout the World Cup. The innovative centrepiece of these efforts is the eight state-of-the-art stadiums. Powered by renewable energy sources, innovative technologies, and waste management, these venues should demonstrate and ensure long-term sustainability. The prospect of neutralising the carbon-dioxide emissions of an event attended by hundreds of thousands of fans accommodated in newly constructed infrastructure in a desert state seems fanciful. In addition to the building of new stadiums, about 1,300 flights landed and departed from Qatar every day. The grass for the eight stadiums and 136 training pitches has partly been imported from North America and the water to maintain the grass condition comes from energy-intensive desalination plants (Boykoff, 2022). Nonetheless, Qatar's Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy has committed to a lasting legacy strategy, ensuring that no 'white elephants' are left behind. Some of the stadiums will be used for upcoming sports events, such as the 2024 Asian Football Cup. The Ras Abu Aboud Stadium 974, built from 974 containers, will be dismantled and recycled. Others, such as Lusail Stadium and Al Bayt Stadium will be downsized and converted into community centres with shopping malls, hotels, and educational and medical facilities (Baker, 2022). Even though Qatar attempts to prevent the scenario of abandoned stadiums as has happened in many preceding host countries, the reconstruction and reutilisation of the stadiums leave an enormous carbon footprint.

'A tournament for everyone'

Besides carbon neutrality, Qatar promoted hosting a 'tournament for everyone' (FIFA, 2022). Aiming at new benchmarks, the world's biggest football tournament should be the most inclusive and people-focused edition ever being held'. This is despite the country's laws prosecuting homosexuality and restricting female rights. Qatar made big efforts to foster a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere. All sites not only guaranteed accessibility but also offered innovative facilities and services, such as sensory rooms for people with special needs. Nevertheless, Qatar's desire to create a World Cup without discrimination failed. Fans and teams supporting the LGBTQ community faced restrictions and refusal when wearing Pride and rainbow accessories. A Qatar World Cup ambassador described 'homosexuality as haram (forbidden) as it is a damage in the mind' (Whittington, 2022). Even though FIFA and the Qatar government publicly took a stand and



re-emphasised their focus on inclusion, these incidents showed their resistance to fully embracing all communities on the largest stage.

What's next?

Qatar's goal of bringing the country into the world's focus was undoubtedly successful. The implementation of innovative technologies and practices, coupled with the dedication to setting new standards for mega sports events, represents a significant step in the pursuit of sustainability and modernisation. The country accomplished to showcase its impressive development as a global player while still maintaining the connection to its cultural and traditional roots. Yet, the tournament was tinged with the practice of greenwashing. Ambitions to exceed predecessors and the ever-expanding size of events like this make sustainability claims more aspirational than verifiable. Greenwashing changes the image of mega sports events from carbon disasters into drivers of change that leave lasting imprints on cities, ecosystems, and our shared destiny. Taking Qatar as an example when looking at the upcoming sports events, such as the 2023 Women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand and the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris, we should raise the question: 'Are these mega sports events still justifiable in times where we are urged to reduce our carbon footprint to limit the impacts of climate change?'

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Looking at the conference afternoon differently

Visual reporting

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SUSTAINABILITY

DG SUPPORT HUB

BREDA
UNIVERSITY
GREEN OFFICE

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ZENA-RAE



PLACE

EVA JAMES & BABET DE HOON



ILLUSTRATIONS BY ZENA-RAE

TECHNOLOGY

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ZENA-RAE



Technological innovation in the Leisure Society

Designing from high-tech inspiration

Marieke van Voornveld

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It was already predicted in the middle of the 20th century; we are moving towards a Leisure Society. Technological innovation ensured that we had more time for a good conversation or a nice hobby. The trend did indeed develop as predicted, but leisure activities have also changed. We are currently experiencing a revival of the Leisure Society, now powered by robotics and machine learning. Artificial Intelligence is even taking over knowledge-intensive jobs. As human beings, we end up on the sidelines of the labour market. Who will have a job and who will not? And shouldn't we introduce a Basic Income so that we can all continue to participate in this leisure economy? In the meantime, we are having a great time with new gadgets and tech-driven services and experiences.

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Do we want an 'Era of Change', or do we need a 'Change of Era'?

Parallel to this Leisure Society, various metaverses are developing, new parallel living worlds that are experienced from hobby level to performative leisure in gaming and entertainment, among other things. The working environment is also becoming increasingly hybrid. Will Liquid Leisure soon be intertwined with mixed reality?

The technology programme

One of the afternoon programmes of the conference focused on the technology perspective of the Future of Leisure. Technology can make societal changes easier, more efficient, more experiential. But is technology only enabling, providing opportunities or is it also disturbing? Leisure Industry is a human-intensive industry; can humans easily be replaced by robots? When we look at technology; do we want an 'Era of Change', or do we need a 'Change of Era'?

The main goal of the programme was to think and talk about these questions with each other through the lens of technology. As we had all heard a lot of interesting insights that morning we were already inspired, but we had some more inspiration planned for the participants.

To begin with, our location was very inspiring; it was the big XR stage, the eXtended Reality screen. Ella Bats, the XR stage manager of BUAs, gave us a visual presentation of the possibilities in leisure with this special screen. It gave us insights into creating a much better experience and also the sustainability features of it; for example no more travelling necessary to shoot films.

Subsequently, Jeroen Steenbakkers, CEO at Argaleo, told us all about the way data can contribute to better insights into leisure behaviour. He gave us multiple examples where the use of technology could help with a better customer experience. Martijn Mulder, POPLIVE researcher, told us all about the leisure experience of music; the difference between live and digital music experiences.

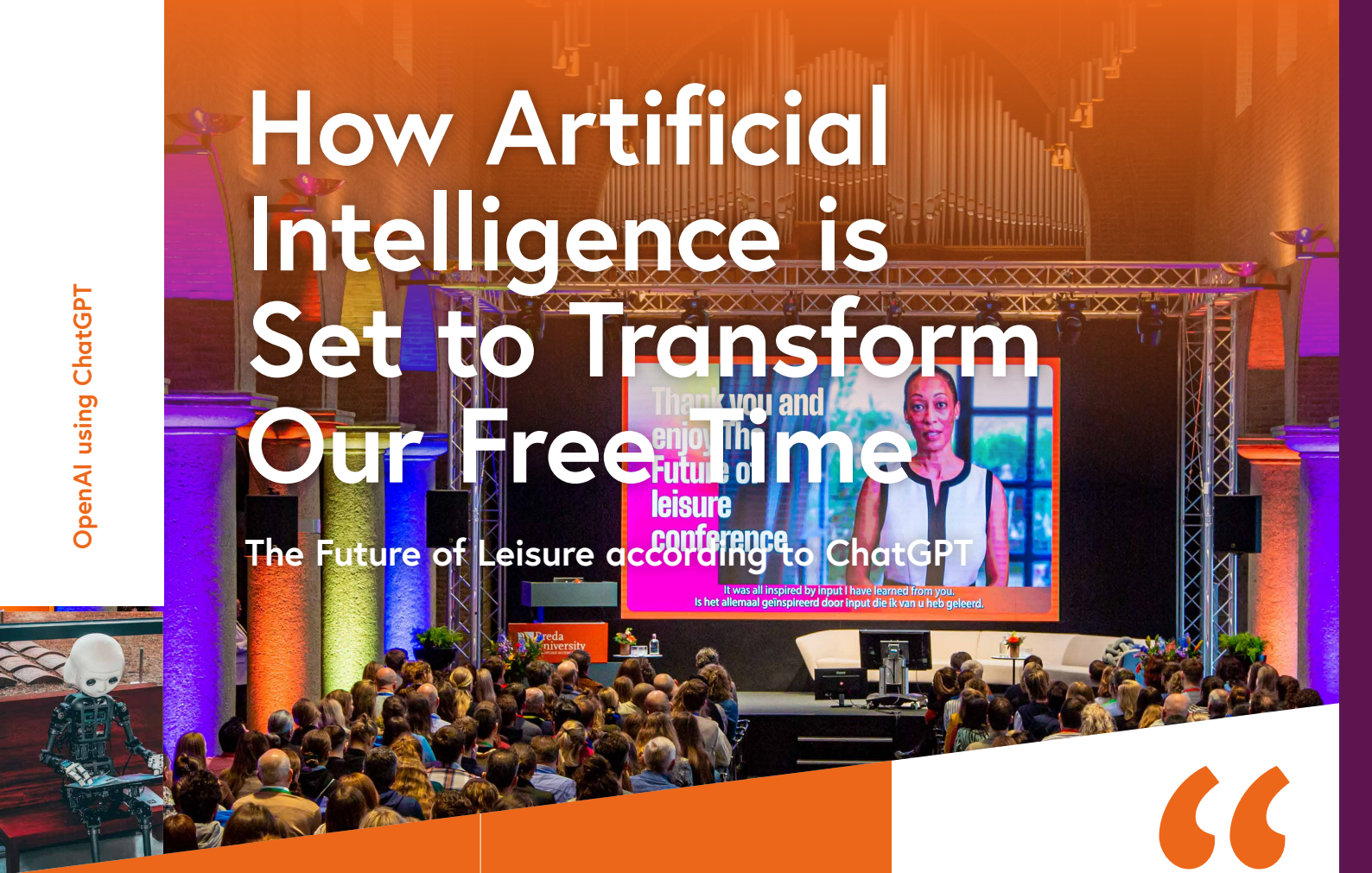
Create Future Cities

In between the inspirational talks, the participants were divided into groups to create their shared vision of the future leisure city. Some of them created a Future City in Minecraft. House of E-sports (Rotterdam) created a base city from where we could build. Some appealing futuristic leisure cities were created here. House of E-sports also offered several VR experiences; when the participants wanted to step out of the programme for a moment, they could play some virtual games. This is also a technology which we can rely on in the future.

At the end of the day, we had some creative and interesting things to expose. The main obstacle that most of us came across, was the fact that it is very difficult to look 30 years into the future when it comes to technological innovation. We created virtual cities in 2050 where 70% of the world's population live in cities, where virtual reality and platform algorithms are used. In these cities of the future, we are not only served and operated by robots, but we can also marry them. Fortunately, thanks to hologram technology, we can also meet with family and friends all over the world. We eat jellyfish and cultured meat. And the pressure in the city keeps increasing; will technology save our cities? Only the future can tell.

How Artificial Intelligence is Set to Transform Our Free Time

The Future of Leisure according to ChatGPT



This article was written by AI (April 2023), or artificial intelligence, a technology that is rapidly transforming the world we live in. As an AI language model, I have been programmed to understand and analyze vast amounts of data, and to use this knowledge to generate written content that is informative, engaging, and thought-provoking. In this article, I will explore the future of leisure and how AI is likely to shape and transform this important aspect of our lives.

As AI continues to evolve, it is set to have a significant impact on our leisure time. In the future, AI will create new and exciting leisure activities that we never thought possible and improve existing ones.

The gaming industry

One area where AI is already transforming leisure is in the gaming industry. AI-powered games are becoming increasingly sophisticated, providing players with immersive and realistic experiences. Virtual reality (VR) is a prime example of how AI is changing gaming, allowing players to experience games in a whole new way. With the development of AI, the gaming industry will continue to grow, providing players with even more exciting experiences.

Streaming services

Another way AI is set to revolutionize leisure is through personalized recommendations. By analyzing vast amounts of data, AI algorithms can provide recommendations for TV shows, movies, and music tailored to our individual preferences. This technology is already used by streaming services like Netflix and Spotify, but as AI advances, the recommendations will become even more accurate.

Travel industry

AI is also set to have a major impact on

the travel industry. With AI, travel agents can provide personalized travel recommendations based on a person's interests and travel history. AI can also help travelers to discover new destinations they may not have considered before. With AI-powered virtual reality, travelers can explore destinations before booking a trip. As AI continues to evolve, it will make travel easier and more personalized.

Sports

In sports, AI is being used to improve performance. By analyzing player data, AI can provide feedback and suggest changes to improve technique. In the future, AI will become even more sophisticated, providing athletes with even more personalized feedback to help them achieve their goals. This also works in gyms by analyzing a person's fitness level, AI can create personalized fitness plans that are tailored to their goals. With AI-powered virtual reality, exercising can become a fun and interactive experience. This technology will continue to evolve, making fitness more accessible and enjoyable for everyone.

As AI continues to evolve, it will create new leisure experiences that were previously impossible. With AI-powered robots and automation, leisure activities can become more efficient and cost-effective. For example, AI-powered machines could be used to clean and maintain swimming pools, allowing people to spend more time swimming and relaxing. In the future, we may see AI-powered leisure activities that are completely immersive, providing people with new and exciting experiences.

Concerns

However, there are concerns about the impact of AI on leisure. One concern is that AI could make leisure experiences too



AI will create new and exciting leisure activities that we never thought possible and improve existing ones.

predictable, removing the element of surprise and excitement. If AI algorithms are used to personalize recommendations too much, people may never discover new and unexpected experiences that they would have never thought to try.

Another concern is the impact on employment in the leisure industry. With AI-powered automation, many leisure activities may become more cost-effective and efficient, potentially leading to job losses. As AI continues to evolve, it is important that we consider the potential impact on employment and take steps to mitigate any negative effects.

In conclusion

AI is set to revolutionize leisure in many ways. From gaming to travel and sports, AI will create new and exciting leisure experiences that we never thought possible. However, we must also consider the potential downsides of AI on leisure, such as the impact on employment and the potential for predictable experiences. As AI continues to evolve, it is important that we take steps to ensure that it benefits everyone and creates a more enjoyable and fulfilling leisure time.

New technology and disruptive developments in themed entertainment

From generative AI to mitigating staff shortage through new technologies

Bart Stadhouders
& Wim Strijbosch

Bart Stadhouders and Wim Strijbosch are lecturers within the Attraction & Theme Parks Management track at Breda University of Applied Sciences.



The field of themed entertainment is often regarded as one of the most innovative sectors in the field of leisure when it comes to new technologies. Not only does the content of themed entertainment heavily rely on new technologies that raise the bar of bringing fictional worlds to life (e.g. the highly advanced robotic figures that populate recent additions to various theme parks worldwide), also, new technologies are constantly being implemented to better facilitate guest experiences by taking hassles of all kinds and sorts away (e.g. mobile apps which can turn a smartphone into a theme park ticket, into a key to a hotel room and into a personalised recommendation system to avoid long queues). Recently, there have been two disruptive developments in society that challenge the themed entertainment industry to reconsider its use of technology in these domains: the rapid emergence of generative artificial intelligence (AI) applications and staffing shortage.

The emergence of generative AI applications

Generative AI involves those types of AI applications that generate text, images or other media in response to prompts: carefully written tasks that the AI application is supposed to perform. Although generative AI applications have been emerging for quite some time already, there has been a recent increase in popularity of generative AI applications such as ChatGPT, DALL-E and Midjourney. The apparent quality of the output of these applications seems to be unprecedented. With rapidly growing user bases as a result, recently, a petition has even been signed by big names in the field of technology to call for a pause to the development of more powerful AI systems (Marr, 2023). Apparently, things went too fast to properly digest.

Recently (4-6 May 2023), the Themed Entertainment Association held its annual SATE Europe conference at the Europa-Park Resort in Germany. With "Revolution!" being the theme of the conference, it was no surprise that there were several talks about how themed entertainment could deal with generative AI. Fabien Manuel, creative development manager at Compagnie des Alpes, talked about the opportunities of generative AI by referring to the emergence of these applications as the industrial revolution of our times. He suggested that we can adapt to that. Backing up this claim, Geoff and Zoe Thatcher from Creative Principals and Yael Coifman from Leisure Development Partners strikingly demonstrated the use of AI in the blue sky phase of developing new themed entertainment products. In an interactive session, realistic yet dystopian mood boards were generated in no time by asking Midjourney to provide concept arts for a The Lord of the Rings merry-go-round, a The Fast & The Furious churro stand, and a The Godfather thrill ride. The speakers suggested that by making use of generative AI, the conceptualisation process in developing new products could be speeded up significantly, thus saving time and money and staying close to the working principles of spontaneous creative ideas.

At the same time, there were critical remarks about generative AI potentially making the creative process superficial. With everybody being able to easily generate visualisations, the field of theme park design with its own specific nuances, considerations and embedded knowledge could easily be disregarded. Additionally, concerns were raised with regard to intellectual property of AI-generated footage. In sum, while generative AI seems to provide a plethora of opportunities, riding the generative AI wave should also be done with caution.





Technological solutions to staffing shortage

Another development in the field of themed entertainment is that of staffing shortage, which was highlighted at the same SATE Europe conference by Margreet Papamichael from CLEAR Associates. Apart from the fact that new technologies can speed up operational processes, new technologies can also lower the demand for staff members by introducing automatization into operational processes. For example, self-service facilities are popping up in many leisure locations. Recent examples include self-service turnstiles, such as the ones at Disneyland Paris. This could speed up the process at the entrance gates requiring less staff at the same time. Similarly, self-service checkout facilities have recently been introduced to Efteling's flagship merchandise location. Another example is that of sticking QR codes to the tables of restaurants through which guests can not only order but also pay for their food, as has been conducted at Diergaard Blijdorp's Terraszaal restaurant.

Self-service checkout facilities have been familiar in the retail industry for quite some time now, yet themed entertainment seems to be relatively new to the club. Potentially, this might be related to self-service checkout facilities being related to shoplifting, as recently highlighted in the Dutch national

media (Marshoek, 2023). As a result, retail stores have therefore even begun to remove self-service checkout facilities (e.g. the Action stores). Another argument which might be on the table is that in the guest journey of theme park visitors, employees still play a vital role in the overall guest experience (Ali, Kim, Li & Jeon, 2018). Employees can make or break the experience and can be the deciding factor in going from an ordinary guest experience to an extraordinary one, with the latter being the most impactful (Duerden et al., 2015). Especially with turnstile services, the entrance is a first and very important touchpoint where theme parks welcome their guests to their parks and set the tone for the remainder of the day. Recent research from Attractions & Theme Parks Management students at entrance areas of theme parks showed that parks want to have their visitors in as quickly as possible. All extra actions (scanning tickets, buying parking tickets, park maps, etc.) are therefore eliminated from entrance areas, but staff-guest interaction remains an important facet in steering the guest experience then and there.

Other important touchpoints in the guest journey where technological innovations could help out are the attractions and shows in the parks. Papamichael suggests, for example, to enhance ride vehicles with self-closing shoulder bars and checks, where no additional staff member is needed to visually check restraints. Mack Rides has already implemented such a system in their Tomorrowland: The Ride to Happiness coaster at Plopsaland De Panne. Yet, with safety being the number one priority in theme parks, outsourcing safety checks to technology alone is done with serious caution.

One of the last important points is the exit of the park, with endings being known to significantly impact how guests remember a leisure experience (see, for instance, Strijbosch et al., 2019). Here technology could also help to speed up the process of leaving the park, thus mitigating any hassles that might hamper a smooth exiting procedure. Think about license plate scanning instead of the traditional exiting gates, using light technology to guide people

home safely and a separate pick-up point for the merchandise bought in the park. Yet again, it is the people that make the experience more impactful, so technology could help to speed up processes in themed entertainment, but you need good and motivated people who go the extra mile to make the experience a special one.

Conclusion

In sum, new technologies could significantly help the field of themed entertainment. Generative AI could strongly speed up the conceptualisation process of new products for the themed entertainment industry, thus saving time and money and staying close to the working principles of spontaneous creative ideas. Various technologies can be used to solve the issue of staff shortage by offering automatised aspects of operational processes along the guest journey throughout themed entertainment venues. Yet, both uses of new technologies should be thoroughly considered with caution, as these new developments might take away from processes in both design and operations that in its current form are some of the core determinants of its success in providing excellent experiences.



New technologies can also lower the demand for staff members by introducing automatisation into operational processes.

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Realistic yet dystopian mood boards were generated in no time.

How Big Data is going to change the leisure industry

From insight to experience with Digitwin

Hugo Braun



Hugo Braun is a freelance copywriter with a background in leisure, urbanism and (city) marketing.

We know more and more about what people do in their free time. Not only through surveys or time-use studies, but also thanks to (public) data on, for example, length of visits and facility use, which is being made increasingly insightful and accessible. Using an online tool or data dashboard such as Digitwin, the next step is to structure data for policy-makers or managers who do not specialise in dealing with this data.

Big data made clear

Jeroen Steenbakkens, CEO of Argaleo, saw on the one hand an increase in (publicly) available data and an increase in ways to link this information. On the other hand, he noticed that the public space was coming under increased pressure from many and often conflicting interests of users, residents or commercial parties. In addition, it was his experience that the people who have to make decisions about those public spaces did not always have the correct or most complete information available. Digitwin was their way of filling this gap. This tool combines fragmented data about a city or region into a complete and integrated story.

These data are collected from a variety of sources, some of which are publicly available. These include, for instance, data on traffic

volumes, parking garage occupancy and the location of different shops. Data is also purchased, from partners such as Infoplaza for example. A third data source is data from customers themselves. These could be the number of hotel bookings, but also, which is often the case in city centres, crowd shots generated when visitors indicate that location data from their mobile app may be shared.

The smart snapshot

This tool gives policy-makers or managers insight into how visitors use their city centre, natural area or event. As such, it is a digital copy of the public space. This information includes not only 'hard' information such as parking spaces, the number of visitors at a given time or the number of vacant properties in a shopping street, but it also provides information about, for example, the weather and its impact on the visitor. This smart snapshot allows non-data professionals to proactively manage events in the public space, develop and evaluate (marketing) policy while making faster and better decisions without the intervention of a consultant's report. So, Digitwin explicitly does not provide guidance: it presents the data as is.

Mobility, safety and city centre management

The smart snapshot is currently being used particularly in the fields of sustainable mobility, public safety and city centre management. The insights provided by the combined data allow officials, for example, to improve the bicycle accessibility of cities or areas. This would probably concern information regarding travel time, but the safety of various bicycle routes is also considered. For example, are there separate bike lanes or are there dangerous

intersections where accidents are more common? But it is also valuable for policy evaluation, answering questions such as "is a high-speed cycling route being used (as intensively) as expected when it was built?"

Crowd imaging and expectation management is a capability often used by event managers and public safety administrators, for example. Data on expected crowds (and especially: expected crowded points), can provide guidance on how to design a city centre or event. On the (busy) day itself, through enforcement and traffic controllers, but also in advance in terms of targeted communication towards potential visitors. Events that took advantage of this include the start of the Vuelta in 2022, King Willem Alexander's visit to Rotterdam on King's Day, or the Carnival or the Jazz Festival in Breda.



Jeroen Steenbakkens
CEO of Argaleo

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Digitwin combines fragmented data about a city or region into a complete and integrated story.

House of Esports focuses on positive aspects

Esports, Gaming and Gamification

House of Esports

Wim Noordzij



Wim Noordzij is chairman of the Foundation House of Esports.



Gaming has become an integral part of children's leisure activities. Thanks to tablets, smartphones, game computers and because almost every family in the Netherlands has access to the internet, the current generation of children (born after 2000) is totally familiar with playing (online) games. Gaming has become an accepted part of leisure activities. Eighty-one per cent of all children play games regularly, half of them more than three times a week.

It is this generation that deals with technology more interactively than any previous generation. Therefore, learning how to handle gaming, exercise and daily schedules properly deserves a place in society. We distinguish between esports, gaming and gamification. Esports (top-class sports), gaming (recreational play) and gamification (using games in a non-game setting) have become indispensable in our society. So gaming is here to stay and is an inseparable part of our society, which – as it happens - has many more positive than negative aspects to it.

New developments

VR, AR and AI will be booming in the coming years in the fields of education, sports as well as entertainment. Hado, Esports Tennis, and Cops and Robbers are a few appealing examples in different disciplines that have physical movement as a component in particular. But there is also the combination with Urban Sports which, together with Esports, are the New Sports and the New Kids on the Block.

Growth of Esports

Esports is developing at breakneck speed and will become one of the biggest spectator sports within five years. There is already the third generation of gamers who have embraced

esports as one of the sports they play – both recreationally, at amateur level, and at professional level. Compared to the rest of the world, top-level esports in the Netherlands is still in its infancy. In the Netherlands, there is no structure nor a sports pyramid yet. However, FIFA 22's e-league competition of premier league clubs has given a huge boost to esports.

House of Esports

House of Esports is a social organisation that operates at the intersection of sport, education and welfare. In this process, they focus on social cohesion, education, talent, cognitive development, solidarity and health. Moreover, by doing so, they remove the negative stigmas of esports and gaming.

The popularity of gaming is used to reach children and young people in a contemporary way that resonates and connects with their own experiences. House of Esports aims to develop and offer new forms of education, sport and meeting to youth, in order to positively influence their development as children through this programme of activities. A core value is the promotion of balance in young people's lives.

The digital disc of five

The basis of the programme of House of Esports is the digital disc of five, which ensures balance in the five elements below:

- **Education:** You develop important skills and enrich your knowledge
- **Sport:** It encourages you to move, so you keep your body in shape
- **Health:** The basis of a healthy lifestyle is good sleep and healthy food
- **Welfare:** It makes you mentally stronger and happier
- **Gaming:** It is fun, challenging, competitive and sociable

When you have found a good balance between living, working and recreation, you are more



A core value is the promotion of balance in the lives of young people.



comfortable in your skin and perform better in life as well as at school. This can be achieved through the chapters in our Gaming in Society method.

Gaming in Society

Gaming in Society is our programme that combines the basics of gaming and esports with teaching a healthy lifestyle. Now that gaming has become an integral part of society, it is time to teach children a good balance between gaming and other activities. In addition, it provides fun content for extended school days, sports days and theme weeks.

VR Experience

Virtual Reality is an online environment that simulates a realistic situation. By engaging different senses, the environment comes across as 'real'. Virtual Reality lends itself perfectly to educational purposes. The VR Experience offers participants an educational adventure under the guidance of an experienced instructor. A VR Experience is experienced with glasses and a headset. The image or programme inside the glasses can be either a real video or an animation. The Virtual Reality Experience challenges you to move. The only way to go on an adventure in this world is through physical movement.



Gaming can offer a solution for all target groups and to every social problem.

Augmented Reality

Augmented Reality is a projected 'layer' over reality. One of the best-known games is Pokémon GO, where real-world Pokémon seem to appear on your phone.

Mixed Reality

Mixed Reality is the technology that blurs the boundary between the physical and the virtual world. The environment and everything in it are mapped. Digital objects are then projected into the environment. These digital objects interact not only with the environment, but also with each other. Mixed Reality produces a 100% digital experience.

Minecraft Education

Minecraft is a sandbox game. You could call it virtual Lego with inexhaustible possibilities. The five game modes in Minecraft are Survival, Creative, Adventure, Spectator and Hardcore. Minecraft has sold around 180 million copies in total. This makes it the best-selling computer game in the world.

Minecraft Education edition is a game-based learning platform that develops STEM (science, technology, engineering & mathematics) skills, unleashes creativity, and engages students in collaboration and problem-solving. Its only limitation is the user's own creativity and imagination. There are many possibilities in terms of theming and players can develop and build their own worlds. For example, we have put the 1953 North Sea Flood commemoration into a game, but also climate change, the Port of Rotterdam, the Bombardment of Rotterdam, and many other themes such as the Leisure City of the Future.

GameGym

The GameGym is the physical education class of the future. It combines gaming, gamification and physical exercise. It incorporates all the learning objectives of physical education lessons. It is important to move in order to stay healthy and fit. We do more sedentary work and get out less. Also, not everyone has the inner drive to do sports or be active. Everyone plays games for fun and relaxation.

To motivate young people to exercise more, House of Esports has transformed the most popular games into game formats for school gyms, playgrounds, sports parks and community centres. Using different components and terminology from games, activities are created that have great appeal to participants.

GameEvents

Our GameEvents are a unique experience where sport, esports, fiction and reality come together. Gaming and real-time movement activities are combined to form the basis of our GameEvents. Our GameEvents are available both online and offline. We also organise tournaments and competitions in various games. The GameEvents are used at events, day programming, school outings, extracurricular activities, birthday parties, out-of-school care facilities, welfare work, drop-in hours, extended school days, sports days, school activities or company outings.

E Zone

The E Zone is a pop-up gaming venue for festivals and (sports) events. There is also a permanent variant in community centres, youth hubs, sports facilities, and sports clubs. In terms of surface area, we adapt the E Zone to the available space. The E Zone is a place for participants and visitors to get together, play games, and exercise. The E Zone is also used for demonstrations, workshops on gaming, and parent-child tournaments.



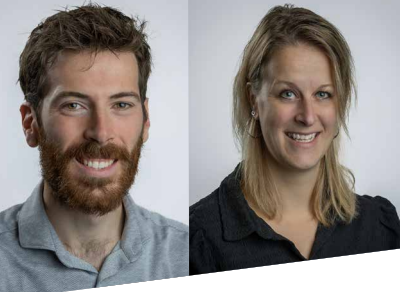
House of Esports has transformed the most popular games into game formats for school gyms, playgrounds, sports parks and community centres.

From prejudice to solution

Gaming has long faced stigma and prejudice. By looking at and focusing on the positive aspects, that image has disappeared. After five years of House of Esports, we dare to say that gaming can offer a solution for all target groups and to every social issue. From inclusion, diversity, loneliness, lack of exercise, 21st-century skills, to the SDG Sustainable Development Goals.

Game On!

The BUAs Approach to Esports Education



Jur van de Graaf and Liedewei Ratgers are both lecturers at the Academy for Leisure & Events involved in the Sports and Esports specialisation and the Esports Event and Media Management minor.

Breda University of Applied Sciences (BUAs) is a pioneer in esports education. Gaming is a digital form of leisure and a huge industry. There are approximately three billion gamers on this planet (Newzoo, 2021). Some people play casual games after a hard day's work to relax, whereas for others it is a lifestyle. Creative Media and Game Technologies educates students to design and develop these games. Esports is the pillar of gaming that goes beyond its digital environment. These are titles played competitively in an organised way with official teams, tournaments and competitions. In esports it is quite common that fans watch tournaments and cheer for their favourite players and team, sometimes without actively playing the games themselves.

Developing a local esports ecosystem

International elite tournaments attract millions of online spectators and thousands of onsite fans. Esports is interactive and dynamic. This makes it an attractive platform for brand activations to reach younger generations with a short attention span (Singer, 2017). However, there is an enormous gap between these elite tournaments and the lower-tier tournaments. With the municipality of Breda, BUAs is working on developing a local esports ecosystem to take a step towards bridging this gap.

The cornerstone of a successful local esports ecosystem is the gaming culture. It is a social phenomenon

that is both online and offline. Events such as ComicCon and GameForce attract thousands of gaming enthusiasts because they want to meet like-minded people in person. A local esports ecosystem requires online but also physical locations where these enthusiasts feel at home, a place where they can safely express their identity. This can only be done in one way: taking the esports fans seriously as who they are and acknowledging without prejudice what moves them. In the Leisure and Events programme, BUAs offers a specialisation focused on sports and esports communities, spectators and fans. With courses on fan experience and businesses in sports and esports, and projects in sports experience production and live-stream production.

Opening of The Hive

BUAs recently opened The Hive on its campus. The Hive is a location where esports and gaming enthusiasts can meet, socialise, train and compete. It is also the home to Breda Guardians, BUAs' very own esports team that already has some great achievements in Valorant, Rocket League and CS:GO. The community members are from different BUAs academies and even different educational institutes in Breda, such as De Rooi Pannen and Avans University of Applied Sciences.

In the short period since The Hive has opened, the results have exceeded expectations. The community has already truly transcended the individual student programmes. It is run and carried by and for students under the supervision of lecturers. Placement students are

responsible for the daily operations of community and event management. Their efforts are part of the bigger dream to host large, recurring esports events in Breda.

The Hive also serves as an extension of esports education and research. Like a hotel school has a restaurant, esports education requires a physical esports location. Students from the Sports & Esports specialisation and the Esports Event and Media Management minor have organised a series of events where theory and practice come together. Esports is a dynamic industry, so education programmes need to be continuously adapted to the changing needs of the industry, community and students.

The future of esports is exciting with endless opportunities. Feel free to contact us to explore and further develop the community. You can find us in The Hive on the BUAs campus (Fe0.032) and on Discord <https://discord.gg/Ar7YhzR257>.

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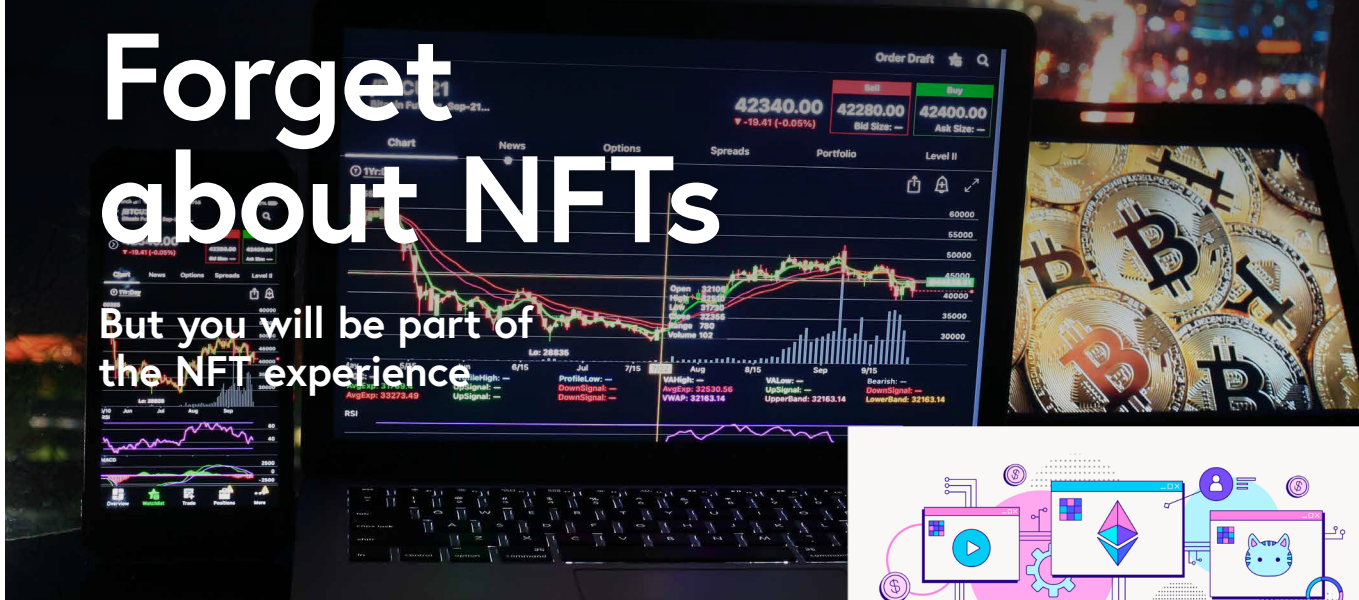
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The cornerstone of a successful local esports ecosystem is the gaming culture.

Forget about NFTs

But you will be part of the NFT experience



Maarten Jan van 't Oever has a position as a teacher and course leader of Leisure & Events Management at the Willem de Kooning Academy in Rotterdam.

Chances are that you have heard about NFTs the last couple of years. People were restricted to their homes looking for leisure in new places. The pandemic gave us all infinite time behind our laptops. We started to appreciate digital experiences as it was the only alternative. NFT activity grew as CryptoKitties, CryptoPunks and NBA Top Shots were minted, traded and sold. Interest soared to a full-fledged hype in March 2021 when practically all media outlets worldwide reported on the sale of *The First 5,000 Days*. Mike Winkelman, better known by his artist's name Beeple, sold this artwork as an NFT for 69 million dollars. Soon after Yugalabs minted their Bored Ape Yacht Club collection of 10,000 unique illustrations of monkeys. They promised to "shape the future of web3 through storytelling, experiences and community." More skeptical people thought they were just overpriced 'jpegs' of monkey cartoons.

Every day a new project

Irrespective of opinions these events undeniably marked the start of a one-year bull market in which cryptocurrency values soared and every day a new NFT project was started. It was also a time of scams and opportunistic behaviour. Projects were hyped and on a wave of FOMO NFT collectors, investors and 'degens' bought practically every next NFT hoping it would bring them riches. Around the spring of 2022 most lockdowns were gone. Simultaneously the novelty of NFTs wore off. Mainstream interest started to wane. The final blow came when the FTX crypto exchange lost billions of dollars and went bankrupt.

Say goodbye

Now the time has arrived to say goodbye to NFTs. The naysayers got their way because crypto is definitely fake money and NFTs turn out to be meaningless digital pictures that everyone can just 'right-click-save'. Still, appearances can be deceptive. Even though financial value has plummeted, transaction volume has been stable. The number of people holding wallets is growing as well.

Nike's new initiative shows what is happening. Nike chose to ignore the term NFT and came up with their own term: dot Swoosh. By signing up, users get a .Swoosh ID, which gives access to community experiences and virtual creations. At the time of writing this article, over 350,000 users have been onboarded, as can be seen on the blockchain backend through PolygonScan. But why bother users with blockchain tech and NFT prejudices?

Easy access and participation

The same holds true for one of the most successful NFT projects from the boom. NBA Top Shot started three years ago, but from its inception they never talked about NFTs. They are creating "a revolutionary new game in which jaw-dropping plays and unforgettable highlights become collectibles that you can own forever." Even though these basketball videos are registered to the Flow blockchain, they always went with the term "digital collectibles" instead of NFTs.

The success of both approaches is that these companies make participation easy and accessible. For instance, both Nike and NBA Top Shot offer credit card payments instead of having to use a crypto wallet. More importantly, they implement the innovative tech in the backend. The actual customer experience is designed around participating in the lifestyle. The NFTs have been rebranded and serve as entry points into their worlds. The tech then allows for further utility, like giving out surprise gifts, tracking fan engagement, creating personalised status symbols or connecting digital to physical manifestations to name a few. The NFT becomes the connection point to the community.

Get ready to experience leisure in a brand-new way using blockchain technology that will definitely not be NFTs while building a steady collection of... NFTs. Our leisure experiences will be registered, tracked and enhanced in the coming years. You will be part of the NFT experience. Just forget about the term.

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Crypto is definitely fake money and NFTs turn out to be meaningless digital pictures.

A research update from the BUas Experience Lab

Measuring memorable experiences

Prof. dr Marcel Bastiaansen
& Dr Wim Strijbosch



Prof. dr Marcel Bastiaansen is a full professor of Leisure and Tourism, and director of the BUas Experience Lab. Dr Wim Strijbosch is a senior researcher at the Experience Lab.

Over the past few years, the Experience Lab has evolved into a truly BUas-wide platform for BUas R&D staff, and projects have been initiated and completed in all of BUas' knowledge domains: leisure, tourism, hospitality, hotel and facility, mobility, games and media. The basis for all of the measurement tools used at the Experience Lab (neuroscience tools and more traditional quantitative and qualitative research tools) is formed by the notion that emotions are crucial in shaping memorable experiences. Therefore, in order to objectively measure whether an experience is memorable, researchers in the Experience Lab track emotions in (real) time as people are engaging in leisure, tourism, mobility, hospitality, media or game experiences. The outcomes of those measurements provide a wealth of information for industry partners, academics, and in-house, BUas-based experience designers, about when exactly in time emotions are experienced, and about how to create new experiences, or about how to modify or improve existing experience designs so as to create more impact on visitors. Here we give a brief description of a few research projects that have involved researchers from these different domains. As you will see, these research projects feature recent technological developments in both the design and the measurement of experiences. We anticipate that those developments will dictate part of the knowledge development agenda for the BUas Experience Lab in the years to come.

TheARter: experiencing augmented reality in staged entertainment

One such project nicely exemplifies how starting up a collaboration across different knowledge domains leads to innovation for the leisure industry. In this project, funded by click.nl, the Academy for Leisure & Events collaborated with the Academy for Games & Media on establishing whether Augmented Reality can be effectively used as an experience design tool to improve the experience of a contemporary dance performance. External partners for this project were Dutch Rose Media, specialising in developing AR/VR applications, pop music venue The Effenaar in Eindhoven, and two professional dancers who developed a ten-minute contemporary dance specifically for this project.

The narrative that was contained in the dance performance was analysed by the dancers, by a team of AR developers from BUas and Dutch Rose Media, and by researchers from the Experience Lab. Subsequently, AR content was developed such that it would support the narrative contained in the dance performance. The AR content consisted of projected, 3D computer-generated graphics that were overlaid onto the 'real world' when viewing through specially designed, head-mounted devices that look very much like glasses.

A group of approximately 60 participants then attended the dance performance at the Effenaar, of which 30 experienced the AR-enhanced performance (wearing AR glasses), and 30 attended the dance performance without AR enrichment. Another group of approximately 60 participants attended a TV broadcast of the dance performance in a home-like setting, again either with or without AR enrichment. Note that the at-home viewing took place in small groups of maximally six participants, so as to mimic a home-like setting as much as possible.

Researchers from the Experience Lab then measured how each of the four groups (Effenaar, Effenaar + AR, home, home + AR) experienced the dance performance, by recording skin conductance while the participants were watching the performance (the objective measurement), and by asking the participants after the show to reconstruct how they experienced the performance (the subjective measurement). Both types of measurement indicated that adding AR substantially improved the experience in an at-home setting. However, in the staged entertainment setting at the Effenaar, adding the AR resulted in a less positive experience. This effect probably occurred because the AR content distracted the audience from the actual performance.

The lessons that one can take home from this study is that AR has the potential to improve experiences, especially in at-home settings, as they make these experiences more immersive. In staged entertainment settings however, the experience designers should take great care to align the AR contents with the actual performance, so as to not draw the audience's attention away from the actual performance, but to create synergy with that performance. At the Experience Lab we are keen on continuing this strand of research projects, as



The AR content distracted the audience from the actual performance.



we see great potential in the developments with AR technology. A new project has already started meanwhile.

How does our brain perceive tourism crowding?

Another example of how technologies from the Experience Lab can be applied to the various domains of leisure is a recent study on crowding perception in tourism, as part of the 'Data & Development Lab Destinatie Nederland' (DDL) programme supported by NBTC (Netherlands Board of Tourism and Conventions), CBS (Statistics Netherlands) and CELTH (Centre of Expertise in Leisure, Tourism and Hospitality). Using virtual reality equipment, we generated various 360-degree pictures of different crowding levels at tourism hotspots throughout the city of Amsterdam – a city greatly suffering from overtourism. A total of 45 participants from two different target groups (backpackers and parents from families with children) were invited to the BUAs Experience Lab and were presented with the 360-degree pictures through an HTC Vive Pro virtual reality device, while their electrical brain activity was being measured using EEG technology. For each of the various 360-degree pictures, participants were asked to indicate their experience level

of emotional valence, i.e., the extent to which they felt emotionally negative or positive on a scale from one to five. Questionnaire results seemed to show that there is an optimal level of crowding: empty places were rated more negatively than lightly crowded places, but after this point participants' feelings of negativity went up as the pictures became more crowded again. More interestingly, results of the EEG analyses demonstrated that more brain activity was observed over the motor cortex as crowding and crowding density levels on the 360-degree pictures increased. As more activity in the brain's motor cortex is associated with action readiness, these brain responses might indicate that as places get more crowded, tourists might feel the urge to 'get out of here'. These findings show that crowding perception can be measured both consciously and unconsciously, with both methods bringing different aspects of crowding perception to the fore. Findings are currently being published in the scientific literature.

Experiencing attractions in theme parks

Finally, the Experience Lab has been conducting several studies in the theme park industry in close cooperation with both theme parks themselves as well as ride manufacturers. Previously, our lab had already published a study on comparing a standard roller coaster ride against a ride with a virtual reality add-on in Europa-Park (see Bastiaansen et al., 2022). Findings showed that a virtual reality add-on can yield an emotionally more intense roller coaster experience compared to the standard roller coaster experience. These findings demonstrated the experiential impact of such investments in already existing roller coasters. Currently, the Experience Lab is taking its research programme on roller coaster experiences to new heights in close cooperation with Vekoma Rides Manufacturing by measuring roller coaster attendees' emotions on F.L.Y. – a record-breaking flying launch coaster at Phantasialand. Results are currently being processed and will be shared soon with our industry partners. Also, the Experience Lab has

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Emotional heatmaps highlight the sections of a theme park where visitors experience the highest sense of emotional engagement.

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The brain responses indicate that as places get more crowded, tourists feel the urge to 'get out of here'.

been doing research at various other types of rides and attractions, such as dark rides and musical theatre shows (see e.g. Strijbosch et al., 2021). Additionally, in close cooperation with various theme parks throughout Europe, the Experience Lab is working on developing emotional heatmaps, which highlight the sections of a theme park where visitors experience the highest sense of emotional engagement. Knowing what visitors feel at which moments and which places in the park provides unprecedented tools for theme park managers to optimise their visitor experience in ways that go beyond the implications of traditional survey methods and visitor questionnaires.

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The value of being there

Pop music venues and festivals in a digital future

Martijn Mulder



Martijn Mulder is Senior Lecturer of Leisure Management at Willem de Kooning Academy and recently finished his PhD on live music, as part of the POPLIVE project.

How many people would never experience live music in their entire lives? How many would never be touched by being connected to a performing artist? Or, to cite the British sociomusicologist Simon Frith, "who [would say] they loved particular performers but had no desire to see them live?" (Frith, 2007). Obviously, live music is of great importance in the lives of many.

This statement is supported by the figures: between 2008 and 2016 the annual number of pop music gigs in the Netherlands increased from 17,000 to 29,000 and this remained roughly stable until the outbreak of the pandemic in 2020 (Mulder, 2023). During the two years that corona gripped our society, the only way to see an artist perform was via (live)streams. While this period obviously accelerated the development of livestreamed music, digital live music offerings were not new at the time. In classical music in particular, concert streaming was common before the pandemic, and when the biggest Dutch concert promoter Mojo announced their streaming concept Larger than Live in 2020, they stressed that this concept was already in development before the pandemic. Also, even before Travis Scott gave his much-discussed performance that was watched by 27 million people in Fortnite (in April 2020), this game already offered other animated live performances. However, although

millions of people experienced concerts via their screens during the pandemic and many venues invested in equipment to provide high-quality streaming, this offer seems to have almost completely disappeared again after corona. The question is therefore: what is the role and impact of digitisation on the future of our venues and festivals?

POPLIVE

Despite the increased popularity of live music, the field of research on this topic is still underexplored. For this reason, the NWO/SIA-funded project POPLIVE was initiated by Erasmus University Rotterdam and Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences. The project consisted of three subprojects focusing on (1) artists and careers, (2) live music policy and (3) venues and festivals. This article stems from the last study, recently published as *I was There! Pop venues and festivals and their value in the ecosystem of live music* (Mulder, 2023). Although this study does not focus so much on the experience of digital live music (see, for example, the work of Femke Vandenberg (2023) for that), based on the analysis of the value of live music that is central to the book, it does provide insight into how that value relates to the digital offering.

The symbolic value of live music

Live music can be considered a complex ecosystem centred on the stages on which the performance takes place, the venues and festivals. These are the focal points in the complex system of live music; everything that happens within the ecosystem of live music (from stage technology to ticketing and artist agencies) is in some way in the service of the performance itself. Therefore, their value proposition includes more than just being a facility for performance. They are also a crucial hub within the live ecosystem and are boosters and curators of pop music in general.



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Digital music consumption has almost completely replaced the physical music carrier market.



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Venues and festivals should focus on optimising the power of physical live experiences.

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Physical copresence, being there, is the key element of concert experience.

The value of pop music in general consists for a significant part of symbolic value or symbolic exchange. The value of a Taylor Swift concert, for example, is not just a fixed commodity but a construct of multiple, changeable elements such as the artist's appearance, time, place and the audience's expectations. In live music, the venues and festivals where the gigs take place, are part of this symbolic value creation.

Digitalisation of music

Over the past decades, the music industry in general has been at the forefront of digitalisation. Digital music consumption has almost completely replaced the physical music carrier market, making music available in almost limitless quantities. An interesting consequence of this development is that the rise of digital music offering correlates strongly with the growth of the concert supply outlined above; there has in fact been a co-evolution of digital and live (Naveed et al., 2017). At the same time, digitalisation and advancing technologies affect the live music sector as we know it. The emerging market of digital concerts has recently been subject to debate in the music industries, particularly during the COVID-19 lockdown of cultural supply. This digitalisation affects both the transmission/reception of

live music (e.g. livestream concerts) and the performance itself (e.g. hologram concerts) or both, as in the example of Travis Scott's Fortnite performance.

Being there

Venues and festivals face the task of whether and how to adapt to these developments. During the pandemic, some venues invested heavily in equipment to livestream performances, and during those years there were even voices that livestreams and holograms could eventually replace traditional live offerings. However, based on the study 'I was There!', that view can be disputed. One of the main conclusions from this study is that physical copresence, being there, is the key element of concert experience. The concertgoer's experience is built from the interaction between themselves, the artist/performance, and – depending on the visitor's motivations – their social company, the crowd as a whole and the physical characteristics of the concert location. The concept of liveness at a music concert is built on five elements: (1) corporal sensations, (2) collective experience, (3) immersion & disconnection, (4) uniqueness of the moment and (5) proximity to performer and performance. None of these elements can be perfectly simulated in a digital context. In other words, a true live music experience is a form of unmediated interaction and thus cannot be replaced by a (live)streamed alternative.

This value of being there fits well within the broader context of a society in which elements such as experience, meaning-making and post-materialism are gaining importance (see e.g. Currid-Halkett, 2018). Consequently, if the abundance of (often freely) accessible creative content that digitisation has brought has led to anything, it is a growing demand for the physical live experience of that content. Arguably, this

can be explained from the idea that in a society of abundance, the value of live experiences only

increases, as these experiences are by definition tied to a physical presence or a specific place and moment and since these represent a high degree of symbolic value. Live experiences are inherently scarce and thus represent increasing value in an environment where there is less and less scarcity.

Reverse hybridity

This leads to the conclusion that venues and festivals should not primarily focus on digitising their offerings. Of course, entrepreneurs in the live sector need to adapt to the increasingly digitalised world. In doing so, however, digitising the concert offering itself is not the best way forward, as the (symbolic) value of a concert experience cannot be fully captured in digital offerings, and as the value proposition of venues is, at its core, not about producing digital offerings. Instead, venues and festivals should focus on optimising the power of physical live experiences. And if they do want to digitise, then there may be greater opportunities in what can be called reverse hybridity, where not the artist is physically present and the audience at a distance (as in most livestreaming concepts) but the exact opposite. Although this form of offering does not offer absolute liveness, it at least fulfils four of the five elements that construct the value of liveness. However, the real magic of live consists of the physical copresence and interaction between artist and audience, and the question is whether the (digital) future will ever change that.

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Photography

- Niels Vinck (page 32 top)
- Bart Heemskerck - copyright Mojo (page 33 top)

Teacher perspectives

Who are you and in what discipline do you teach? What is the urgency of your education for students, industry or society?

My name is **Alain van Duuren** and I have been working at the Willem de Kooning academy with great enthusiasm for 12 years. I am mainly involved as a teacher of design research, concept development, strategic value creation, and project education. Everything I do is based on the vision that content can only have an impact if the context is right. In leisure it is important to engage in social, cultural and sustainable issues.

What competencies are essential to teach students to be qualified entry-level professionals to fully exploit the value of leisure time?

The actual design and implementation of experiences is an important competency. To design and substantiate something based on creativity, to involve stakeholders and to be able to actually implement it. The students should be able to create things that have value for the users and the context in which it is placed. I think there is a need for innovative makers and performers to preserve the value of leisure for the future.

If you could introduce one thing for education in 2040, what would it be?

I would wish for basic support, so that students can fully focus on content and implementation of their education. That students no longer have to 'struggle' to survive. At the moment I see too many students who cannot commit for 100% because they have to work a lot of hours to provide for their basic needs.



Who are you and in what discipline do you teach? What is the urgency of your education for students, industry or society?

My name is **Bertine Bargeman**. I am responsible for the Academic Master Leisure and Tourism Studies at Breda University of Applied Sciences and teach in this master's programme and the other academic programmes (BSc LS and pre-master's). Today, the leisure and tourism sector is confronted with wicked problems, for instance, related to overtourism, sustainability and work-life balance. With my knowledge of consumer behaviour in leisure and tourism practices, I can support students who can deal with these complex issues in a future job.

Are there still blind spots in education that we need to pay more attention to in order to be ready for the future of leisure?

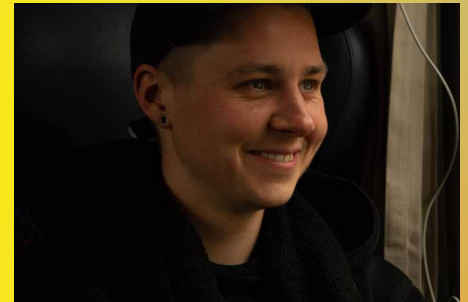
Many wicked problems have to do with consequences of human behaviour in leisure and tourism practices. So, it is very important to teach students about interactions and decision-making processes ('routines' or 'rituals') in these practices to better understand the causes of certain impacts. Consequently, this can inspire various stakeholders to develop meaningful and realistic interventions.

If you could introduce one thing for education in 2040, what would it be?

Not only in the leisure and tourism sector people combine offline and online practices, think, for example, of holiday behaviour in which actual experiences are constantly shared with the home front via social media. Also, in our education practice online and offline activities are blended both by lecturers and students. The challenge for future education is to create a study environment in which, for instance, artificial intelligence could have a valuable and innovative contribution.

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Many wicked problems have to do with consequences of human behaviour in leisure practices.



Who are you and in what discipline do you teach? What is the urgency of your education for students, industry or society?

I am **Felix Rietbergen** (they/their). Partner, child, lecturer, coach, writer. Open, curious, sensitive, cautious. For me the urgency lies in familiarising first-year Leisure & Event Management students at Breda University of Applied Sciences with regard to themselves, others and the world, so that they can contribute to arriving at a society that is based on trust with an open and curious eye, (self) consciously.

What competencies are essential to teach students to be qualified entry-level professionals to fully exploit the value of leisure time?

First of all, (self)-awareness. Learning to make conscious choices and looking at yourself consciously teach you to also have an eye for the needs of others. Furthermore, curiosity is important. By being curious, you create space to discover, to embrace not-knowing and to connect. It offers understanding, openness and gives room to be able to grow as a person and professional.

If you could introduce one thing for education in 2040, what would it be?

A new norm and form in which time, room and attention for sincere engagement with each individual and their vision, qualities and pitfalls are central. Implementing this new concept will open up space to actually connect with each other, to stand still, to dream and to give meaning to who you are, who the other person is, and what is happening in the world. In my opinion, this leads to a world in which we can look at each other with love and make choices based on trust.

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In leisure it is important to engage in social, cultural and sustainable issues.

on the future of leisure

Who are you and in what study programme do you teach? What is the urgency of your education for students and society?

I am **Marijke Hoekstra** and, as a lecturer of LEM at NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences, I work mainly with first- and fourth-year students. I did a master's degree in geography at the University of Groningen. Therefore, I am convinced that leisure is strongly intertwined with our living environment and social processes. Leisure always takes place somewhere and affects us as human beings. Every day, students work on projects from the field and learn how to use leisure as a tool to bring about change.

Are there still blind spots in education that we need to pay more attention to?

I am currently working with colleagues on the new National Competency Profile. We find that more attention needs to be paid to technological skills, such as artificial intelligence, virtual reality and that which has not yet been developed. Including the associated ethical issues. Leisure is also a multidisciplinary field which intersects with various domains, such as health, safety, or spatial planning. Education should better focus on promoting multidisciplinary learning so that students can combine knowledge and skills from different fields and, above all, bring together people from different disciplines to solve complex issues.

If you could introduce one thing for education in 2040, what would it be?

In my opinion, it is important to rekindle more curiosity about theory. We are sometimes so preoccupied with the practice-oriented and design-oriented mindset that we occasionally forget about the beautiful sociological and academic foundation of leisure. I get feedback from some first-year students that they would like more theory. The challenge, though, is to keep developing that theory. It is time for leisure studies to become popular again.



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It is time for leisure studies to become popular again.



Who are you and in what discipline do you teach? What is the urgency of your education for students, industry or society?

I am **Youp Selen**, degree programme manager of the Leisure & Events programme. My role focuses especially on educational innovation and the necessary organisational change that results from this. In my opinion, experimentation and evaluation is the best approach to deal with the complex challenges in society, where linear approaches are not feasible. Small-scale and experimental education properly prepares students for this.

Are there still blind spots in education that we need to pay more attention to in order to be ready for the future of leisure?

I see the main blind spot in education especially at the persuasion level. The belief that we need to load students with knowledge, while I believe that learning to process knowledge, create knowledge contextually and be able to connect knowledge within a network is much more important. That is why we should test and guide as little as possible for preconceived end results, but rather for meta-criteria, such as analytical ability or social awareness.

If you could introduce one thing for education in 2040, what would it be?

The integration of neurodiversity. In education we are currently taking someone who is dyslectic, for example, into account, whereas we should be using the talents of someone who is neurodiverse in any way. If you really want to solve complex challenges, you need a neurodiverse team. Then we must also create education that appeals to all the qualities of the neurodiverse population.

What is your position and field of expertise? How do you view the value of leisure from this perspective?

I am **Dafne Foet**, course leader of Leisure & Events Management at the Willem de Kooning Academy Rotterdam and De Stadspraktijk. My professional background is a MSc in Leisure Studies; professional practice in connecting development of places with social issues. Our leisure behaviour is constantly changing, influenced by current themes such as well-being, inclusion, and gentrification. If designers of leisure actively take part in urban development from this perspective, we will help build liveable and loveable cities. There are many big challenges right now. To be able to cope with them, resilience is needed. Therefore, it is important to also pay attention to the growing stress, in particular, among young people and the bigger misunderstanding towards each other in general.

In your opinion, how can the leisure sector respond appropriately to it?

I believe that by focusing more on real free time, we can better meet these challenges at any rate. Josef Pieper already talked in Leisure. The basis of Culture (1948) about real leisure time as the attitude of the mind that promotes the ability to perceive the reality of the world. If you study leisure behaviour, you will discover that leisure shows how we organise our economy; live together and appreciate culture (Pieper, 1948). By being aware of this, designers of leisure programmes can contribute to the future world with their knowledge of leisure.

Do you see an innovative example that inspires or can trigger a new direction?

In the young and multicoloured Rotterdam I know many examples of leisure programmes that contribute to new ways of making cities, and at the same time work on global challenges. Niteshop is one such place in Rotterdam West where stakeholders are triggered from the concept of a night shop to exert influence on urban development. But the Leisure students of the Willem de Kooning Academy Rotterdam are strongly engaged and socially involved. On the basis of research into leisure behaviour and a critical vision of the world, they design and organise projects around metropolitan challenges.



The theme of Inclusion: Together towards an inclusive society

How to get there ourselves?

Peter Horsten
&
Simon de Wijs



Peter Horsten and Simon de Wijs are lecturers and researchers in the domain of Leisure & Events at Breda University of Applied Sciences, editors of *Uncover* and co-organised the *Future of Leisure* conference.

From the start of the preparation of the conference, it was clear that being together and utilising the experiential expertise should become the starting point for the inclusion programme. In order to outline a future, determine strategies, or reshape the design of cities, the public domain and leisure time, the participation of a diverse society was desired from the principle of "universal design". For everyone, by everyone. Not a conference merely talking "about" inclusion, but at its core striving for inclusiveness itself. Shaping an inclusive design process for which everyone would be invited, not focusing on an assumed average or mainstream user, but going right up to the field's edges and corners. In addition to the approach of the entire conference in which we invited a solid mix of lecturers, researchers, students from multiple years and national and international fields of study, as well as representatives from the entire breadth of the leisure industry, we wanted to increase the diversity of participants in the inclusive design sessions through our regular collaboration partners. These partners connect various communities, such as LFB, the national advocacy organisation by and for people with intellectual disabilities, MuZIEum which focuses on the visually impaired community, Best Buddies with youth and refugee couples, and so on. The parties involved in the conference are briefly highlighted on page 37.

Towards an inclusive society

"We are not there yet. When talking about an inclusive society, bonding and bridging are key elements to achieve this and leisure can play an important part. Over the most recent decades, the Netherlands has become a multicultural and diverse society. Is it also an inclusive one? I do not think so," stated Rabin Baldewsingh, National Coordinator against Discrimination and Racism at the conference. He provided some examples: "Public space is our living room, where everybody should feel at ease. But that's not the case. When young people hang out on a bench at the city centre, the municipality will remove the bench because the youngsters are too noisy. Or think about groups with challenges of a disability who must plan everything because it is not easy to get to a city centre. For parking reasons. Is there a toilet? Finally, flying by KLM you will see wooden shoes, tulips, Delft, The Rijksmuseum and canals in the welcoming film. Okay, it is the essence of the country. But why do we not also focus on the diversity by depicting the vibrant Rotterdam Summer Carnival, attended by a million visitors each year?"

How to create accessible, desirable, and meaningful places where all inhabitants feel welcome and feel like they belong? How should these locations, and especially leisure, be organised? The goal of the design sessions was to re-create society so that everyone can shine, not only as a consumer or an inhabitant, but also as a volunteer, an employee, a researcher, a decision-maker, a designer or a strategist. Leisure plays a significant role in this. Leisure organisations in particular design activities which can build bridges. It is precisely in the leisure domain that places emerge where we can meet, express ourselves and get to know others. Culture and sports create opportunities to "empower". Theatres, pop venues, restaurants and media provide platforms for everyone to have a voice. Leisure activities offer inspiration,

relaxation, connection, meaning, development, or happiness to varying degrees according to different preferences.

Design sessions

Universal design which is usable by all people to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design. From that perspective, re-development towards an inclusive society with inclusive places, goes beyond services such as a separate entrance or platform for people with a physical disability. To take a step towards that, an attempt was made to use rules for universal design as a guiding principle such as usability for all, flexibility, simplicity, understandability and appropriate dimensions. And on the other hand, it was built from the start together with a wide diversity of stakeholders, paying attention to equality of input, mutual understanding and commitment. Finally, the idea was to not to start with a grand abstract challenge of creating an inclusive society, but instead of that call for sharing existing personal experiences, obstacles, challenges or dreams around leisure and public space, and invite others to think about redesign these together.

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It is important to include the people who should benefit from the accessibility tools in the planning process.
Nya Dijkerman

Partners involved in the conference's Inclusion theme

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My most memorable moment was the dance workshop hosted by Tiuri. I found it to be very playful, and it was nice to see all these cognition focused colleagues and other people cutting loose and dancing together.

Peter van der Aalst,
Manager of the Leisure and Events domain

Nya, who is visually impaired, mentioned that he would enjoy being able to move freely on the street by himself. "This really hit some people hard as many don't realise that this is usually not possible." Accessibility is not implemented that well in public spaces. An example is the tactile pavement which is supposed to lead to a place to cross the street. But because it is situated between two bicycle parking structures it is always obstructed by bicycles. Therefore, you can never use the tactile pavement. Indicating white, green or brown glass on a glass bin in Braille is another such example. Awareness needs to be increased in all areas. The solution to many mobility problems lies only partly with me. One can create an app as an aid for visually impaired people, but when motorists do not know that a visually impaired person crossing the street has the right of way, it is still dangerous. Programming people is complicated. During the workshop sessions, various directions for solutions were explored from awareness campaigns to experiments with other floor structures."

In addition, participants looked for inclusive hubs where various activities can be programmed and inclusive food or theatre events for visitors, cooks and performers alike. Other groups focused on more inclusive education. Learning together, playing together as a foundation. Achieve change - together with youth, through education and playgrounds - toward a more inclusive future.

NCDR / HU

As the project leader of the Dutch part of the Inclusive Public Space project of the University of Leeds (UK) and founder and chief editor of the legal journal *Handicap & Recht*, NCDR senior researcher Dick Houtzager together with Mélissa van der Elst, Inclusion Student Advisor at Utrecht University of Applied Sciences pointed out the next steps' aims for supporting professionals, students and others in creating an inclusive leisure industry. What became clear is that although the leisure sector has taken significant steps to make events more accessible and inclusive, much still needs to be done to ensure that activities can be enjoyed by all, regardless of their ability.

Possibilize

Possibilize connects, thinks and acts in possibilities and is inspired by limitations. This creates sensory-stimulating festivals, immersive live performances and multidisciplinary theatre performances which inspire others. For many people, a disability sounds like an obstacle, an inconvenience, and therefore a problem. Possibilizers show the opposite and are inspired by these limitations in order to arrive at new possibilities that have never been seen before.

Pakhuis de Zwijger

In 2021, Pakhuis de Zwijgers' extensive *Designing Cities for All* programme commenced with the support of the Creative Industry Fund NL. This programme focuses on the role of designers in shaping and creating cities for, by and with everyone. At the conference, a set of design principles crucial for designing inclusive cities was presented.

LFB

The LFB Association is an advocacy organisation by and for people with intellectual disabilities. They work towards a society that is accessible to all. Topics at the conference included the STERK project in education and insights into the exploration between BUAs and LFB. Inclusive research and design expecting equal involvement and contributions is the guiding principle. LFB's experiential experts presented the process and the research results during various workshops.

MuZIEum

The muZIEum is a museum where you experience, for a moment, what it is like to be blind or visually impaired. The Personal Encounter is always at the heart of the experience: a job for some, an experience for others. In pitch-black darkness, visitors trust their expert guide and discover what is possible when you cannot see anything. At the same time, the expert guides develop their talents in a work environment where visual impairment is not an obstacle, but rather an added value. At the conference, participants were able to experience this.

Studio Stoofpot

Through workshops, Studio Stoofpot training

and consultancy helps motivated organisations that already believe in the importance of inclusivity and accessibility. Their motto? Nothing about us, without us. That is why all their speakers, trainers and consultants combine theoretical knowledge with lived experience. At the conference, participants dived into their personal outlook on the world: what parts of your identity do you think about daily and which parts have you never even been asked to consider? Participants were challenged to broaden their frame of reference and increase their awareness of (intersections of) marginalisation.

Tiuri

'Theaterwerkplaats' Tiuri invests in the talent development of performers with a (mental) disability. The performers' unprecedented talent becomes visible, having a fundamental impact on today's cultural and social field. By doing so, Tiuri connects the worlds of culture, education and care. In their workshop, Margriet Jacobs and Igor Memic (both Tiuri performers) shared their experience and brought participants into their profession using their movement language.

Football Memories

Reminiscing about football together is the essence of Football Memories. The target group consists of elderly people who struggle with loneliness and/or (early) dementia. Elderly people meet in the stadium where, under the guidance of volunteers, they talk, read and hear about the rich football past of their favourite club. Football as an instrument to create meaningful encounters for older people sharing stories about the old days. At the conference, this method was explained.

Buddy to Buddy

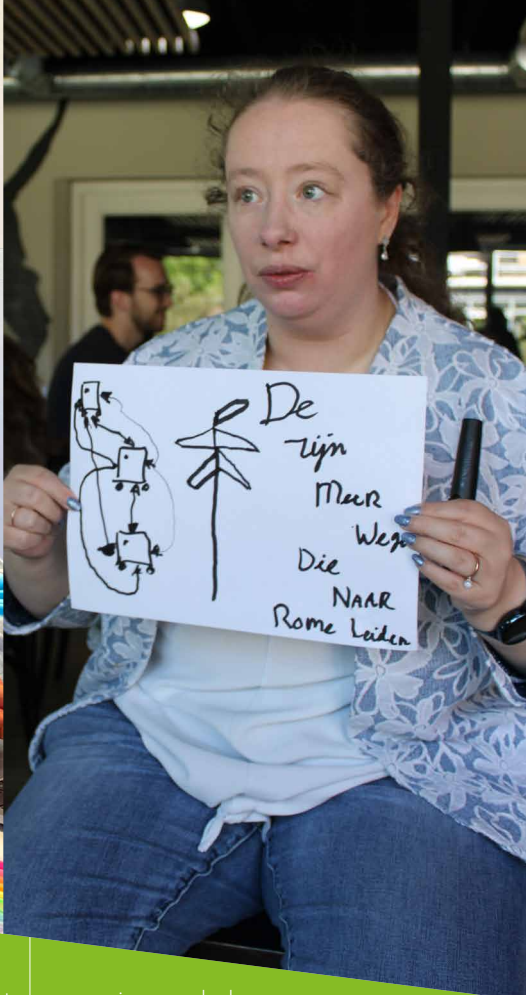
Buddy to Buddy matches newcomers who have a refugee background with fellow citizens. Newcomers are familiarised with their new environment and residents get to know their new neighbours. By getting to know each other and each other's culture, they not only expand their own world, but also that of others. At the conference, participants could find out that having one good friend can make a difference and how leisure creates impact.

BO Diversity

BO Diversity is a not-for-profit organisation which creates awareness about prejudices, stereotyping and taboos. BO focuses, among other things, on reducing LGBTI+ phobia, racism and gender discrimination. They work from an intersectional perspective, which means that you are aware of the fact that people could deviate from the standard in several areas, and that these could strengthen one another. The most recent project is the Samesame festival where art, music, performance and culture are blended together in an amazing queer inclusive cocktail.

More information

See *Inclusive Leisure, Uncover (6)*, edition 2022.



Many appreciated the personal contributions to the meetings and the joint exploration during the workshop sessions. At the same time, it was recognised that certain groups were also under- and overrepresented during the conference.

Fortunately, participants felt heard and welcome. "What an inspiring day it was! The morning was challenging, but also mega interesting and it was possible to keep up. The afternoon was very useful. Nice to see how everyone agreed with each other's ideas and possibilities," said Ellis Jongerius, who felt it was very important that a group of people with intellectual disabilities were invited by LFB and theatre workshop Tiuri. "Recognise that it is not always obvious that people with an intellectual disability can participate in leisure activities. How do I book a restaurant? Do I understand how to make a reservation? Is it accessible so that I can get in? Self-advocates themselves need to explain how important it is and what is important to get an inclusive and accessible society in terms of leisure. Great that we were invited to participate in designing the future of leisure."

Conference accessibility

Another challenge was to include the entire conference organisation in the effort to make the conference accessible to all. What is nice is that accessibility has already been considered as much as possible in the design of the BUas campus. Automatic entrances (though by no means implemented everywhere), adapted restrooms and ramps next to stairs certainly make the campus wheelchair-friendly. "There are clear maps on site, large enough to read when passing in a wheelchair, which allowed me to find my way independently. Except for the gutters for rainwater, there were few bumps. Only the gravel paths near the bicycles turned out to be an obstacle. A simple sign or icon with an arrow on the floor can really help show people that an 'alternative route' is available," Méliissa said.

However, when organising an international conference to which various groups are invited,

more is needed than wheelchair-friendliness.

It proved difficult to get the principles of universal design on the agenda right from the start. Although Marianne Dijkshoorn's (2018) handbook was kept in mind, action on broad accessibility was delayed. Due to the volume of tasks, matters were first settled for the greatest common denominator. A missed opportunity, because designing for everyone and not just for an average visitor naturally ensures that both they and the exceptions are optimally served. Two examples of discourses which illustrate the complexity and sensitivity in such processes. What resources do you offer or need? A tricky topic. "Surely we're not going to invest in accessibility which later turns out to be unnecessary," is an often-heard response, as quoted by Méliissa. Sometimes you can ask in advance. For example, Hogeschool Windesheim asks every student (i.e. not just students with support needs) by mail what help they might need and invites them for a personal interview. But just as often, you do not know in advance. At an information session for prospective students, I actually want to use as many resources as possible to welcome everyone. Also, the idea is that more and more students who at the moment cannot easily access higher education are overcoming their barriers and then know that they should go to you because you are opening up to them."

Similarly, when the conference was organised, there was a long discussion about whether or not to use certain aids, such as a speech-to-text or sign language interpreter. Once aware of its importance (only two weeks before the conference), the image of Irma during corona times seemed to be more decisive in the choice for some than the functional support that a speech-to-text interpreter translating from English to Dutch could provide to both participants with auditory disabilities and participants with intellectual disabilities in the presentations. Of course, the fear of detracting from the overall experience, because the speech-to-text interpreter indicated that he

certainly made mistakes or delayed responses from time to time, is secondary to its importance to a minority.

A second example. Brownies and Downies was invited to provide coffee and muffins during the reception. A nice gesture befitting the conference. But on the other hand, the English language proved to be a barrier for the invited speakers and participants with intellectual disabilities. The thought that "this is not the primary audience of the conference anyway" seems innocent. But in addition to serving coffee, thinking about redevelopment of leisure time should of course be accessible. With the use of the text-to-speech interpreter, subtitling in videos, and programming two tracks (Dutch and English) side by side, equal participation of this group became possible.

Feedback and areas for improvement

During and after the conference, we interacted with experiential experts. Overall, the conference experience and accessibility were highly rated. "I am very positive. Many things are super well done, which made me feel



Inclusion is not letting go but doing things differently.

Méliissa van der Elst

Special thanks to feedback group with selfadvocates (left to right):

- **Mélissa van der Elst**
Student Advisor Inclusion at Utrecht University of Applied Sciences.
- **Ellis Jongerius**
Director of LFB for and by people with an intellectual disability.
- **Nya Dijkerman**
Guide at MuZIEum.

very welcome to your beautiful grounds and the conference. Of course, I also saw some areas that could be better, but so much is going well that those little things did not negatively affect my perception," Mélissa said. "In the first building I found signs requesting to only speak English, this would make all people feel welcome. I personally do not share this opinion, I have regularly found myself looking at people gesturing that I have no idea what they were

saying. But ehmm okay? When entering at the barrier, when handing out the badges and also during the presentations we were asked to stand up and engage in conversation with the person next to you." Mélissa is both physically and hearing impaired. "I automatically try to see Dutch words in the movement of the speaker's mouth. Just an intercom at the entrance is therefore not convenient. At NS, you usually see at least one counter with a screen.

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Recognise that it is not always obvious that people with an intellectual disability can participate in leisure activities.

Ellis Jongerius



The use of stickers with the language you speak could make it clear that in lip-reading, English is incomprehensible to me. And there are also alternatives for standing up such as raising your hand. Not a big deal, by the way, to stick to these kinds of standards during a conference, but redesign it. Inclusion is not letting go but doing things differently".

And where the others found the colourful corporate identity well thought out, stylish and obvious with the theme colours, translations and distinctive imagery, for Nya it proved to lead to some problems. "Colour contrast is an important aspect. It can be very difficult for me to read signs. For instance, when you have black on red. People with different visual impairments can have different perceptions of colour. Having multiple options would be great. Make things stand out. Even if sometimes at the expense of aesthetics. For the subtitles, for example, there was too little contrast. A black bar may help, it is less attractive, but it does provide more contrast. Adding audio descriptions to videos and pictures can describe what is seen. Also, put the screen a little higher. Especially if you sit a little further in the back, the subtitles at the bottom can no longer be read. And make handouts and maybe floor plans available prior to the conference so I can already study them using my tools." Mélissa adds: "If large-scale events are held in this room more

often, it might be an idea to install audio induction loops. The video shown in the morning was incomprehensible without subtitles."

In conclusion

Specialising in Leisure & Events education, the organisers of the conference experienced that universal design is. The first steps have been taken. One rule of universal design has certainly been addressed. Mistakes were made and lessons were learned. Key lesson: involve others to identify and solve the issues. "Good that you asked me beforehand what the solution could be to make it more accessible. Saved some sleepless nights," Mélissa said. "And I was also able to network," Nya adds. "I learned about Buddy to Buddy and became a member in Nijmegen. The other day at the Eid al-Fitr (Sugar Feast) celebration I already attended a first activity".

Sources

- *Marianne Dijkshoorn (2018). Maak je event toegankelijk voor iedereen. Donald Sudman, BigBusinessPublishers. www.ppublishers.nl/toegankelijk*

Photography

- *MuZIEum (page 38: right)*



A 'proper' library for Antwerp's youth

Give young people space, they will do the rest themselves

Elselien Dijkstra

*"In this moment
if only for a moment
all is well*

*In this chair
with this view
is it okay for a while*

*And sometimes this
is just enough."*

Guest book

Elselien Dijkstra is a philosopher, freelance author, and owner of Zinspeler.

For many libraries it is not an easy task to reach young people, but in Antwerp it is getting better and better. Permeke, Antwerp's central library, has had an Urban Bib since 2016, which attracted many young people. At that time youth worker Dries Decru brought hip-hop culture into Permeke, and the young artists and partners who committed to Urban Bib laid the groundwork for a new youth library where young people are given as much space as possible to develop themselves.

Recent developments

This approach to engage young people in the library as actively as possible was expanded in September 2022 by reserving the kubus (cube) exclusively for young people aged 15 through 25. The kubus is a glass building just in front of the central entrance to the library. In 2021 the library decided to provide content for this former restaurant. Since September 2022, the site has been occupied by young people who meet, study or attend workshops in digital competencies, writing and music. In late February, the kubus had a weekend-long inauguration with a grand opening celebration organised by the young people themselves.

Partners

Thanks to various partners, a variety of workshops will be provided in the kubus. StampMedia, a media organisation of and by young people, is hosting some of their offerings such as workshops about podcasting, photography and video. Mayanaise, a not-for-profit organisation, puts performing arts and writing front and centre, and they host open mic events. Hip-hop collective BelgianGarden conducts workshops about beats, music writing and producing. Saamo Antwerp offers a pathway to support young entrepreneurs.

Thanks to these partners, the library manages to reach more and more young people who then find their way to the kubus. Workshops and activities may also be organised by young people themselves, such as the ZineSalon supervised by two young illustrators.

Speeches

According to Laure Ruts (photo above), kubus's project manager, a form of ownership is now emerging among the young people. "It's their building, their place. Here they may write on the walls, move the tables. Get themselves a cup of coffee. And when they are done, they do the dishes themselves."

"The opening party was a great success," Laure Ruts says. "The young people had organised it themselves as much as possible, they welcomed everyone, they delivered speeches, supervised a live proposition game with the alderman for culture in the city and the needs of young people. That was a very special moment, they really made a stand there. Everyone could see: these young people really have an opinion about culture in the city."

Youth Board

The main body of the kubus is the youth board, which consists of about 15 active members. "Kubus's youth board consists of three working groups: the inspirers (bezielers), the collection champions (collectiekanjers) and the project patrons (projectpaters)," says Laure. "The inspirers are a policy steering committee which translates kubus's mission and vision into actions. The project patrons deal with programming activities. The collection champions together decide which titles to bring in. For the past year, we have had a non-fiction collection for young people. Together with the collection champions, we have determined themes about which we purchase new titles. These include the themes of identity, climate,

gender, becoming independent, religion." The chosen books will also end up on the shelves of the other library branches.

Outreach

To get young people involved in kubus, Laure has invested a lot. "I have been very outreach oriented. In the first few months, I reached out to many people. Without an agenda, just by talking to young people as much as possible. When classes came to visit, I would go there to have a chat or to brainstorm. When partners organised something for young people, I went there. I started talking to different organisations in the youth and cultural sector and looked for ways to collaborate. And on Instagram I collected a lot of contact information. During the summer, I organised two days in the empty building to ask young people themselves what they wanted to do there."

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As kubus's project leader, Laure is "responsible for developing and monitoring the DNA of the youth library: what kind of place do we want to be, where do we want to go? And spreading that DNA, within the network of libraries but also more broadly, within the youth and cultural field."

In terms of theme, Laure sees a common thread in what concerns kubus's youth: "Identity and discovering your own story. They are at an age when they think a lot about who they are, who their friends are, what their talent is, what they should study."

Welcome

The fact that there are no adults in kubus really makes the young people feel like it is their own place. "And it is also for the safety of young people. With young people, we really strike up a conversation. We make them feel welcome." As a tip for other libraries looking to reach young people, Laure emphasises an open attitude. "It is especially important to speak to young people without pushing your own agenda. Just ask how they are doing. "What keeps you busy?" The bond you cultivate with that helps a lot. When we wanted to organise an activity ourselves in the past it did not catch on. The demand was just not there. By giving young people a place with ownership, they also see it much more as their activity. We make them feel that they are welcome, they do not necessarily have to participate in any activity either. But we do let them know that they are free to try out a workshop."

Mirror

In Permeke, Laure was able to build on what was already there, she says. "There were already a lot of young people using Permeke as a place to study so they just got an upgrade, and it is not often you have that much time, that much space and that many resources to experiment with young people. I think it is great that the kubus can be an example or a living lab, but I always tell colleagues from other libraries not to mirror it too much and focus on the value of small interventions in their own context, which can already be a lot. But let it be a call to policy-makers and directors to provide space and time for initiatives like these."

Young people talking about their kubus

Keltoum (20): "Sometimes I think to myself how lucky I am, the joy to have people and especially young people around me who all have very big dreams but most of all they dare. They dare to write their own story, dare to chase their own



Kubus's youth board consists of three working groups: the inspirers, the collection champions and the project patrons.

d r e a m s , dare to have an opinion and values and they express themselves effectively. Because it can sometimes take some time to find a place and especially people where things are okay. Okay to not have to do anything and walk your own path without question. I like to call such a place my second living room. Because I feel comfortable but above all supported, just like home but a tad different. Supported to bring out the best in myself without always having to be my best."

Yasmine (18): "The kubus, a second home, where everyone is welcome and where everyone can do their own thing. Young people are very important to the kubus, they are the reason it was created. The young people want to make sure everyone can feel at home in the kubus. In the youth library, everyone gets the chance to chill out for a while, to study in a comfy place, but also the opportunity to participate in great workshops. Beyond all this, kubus is also a place where young people can get together. Where young people can blossom, be themselves and explore. We as young people are talented. We learn from each other every day. Young people have the power to change the world. And that is what Permeke's Youth Library would like to contribute to."

Note

This article is an adaptation of an article previously published in Bibliotheekblad (Library Journal) 5-2023.

Photography

• Sanad Latifa



We are so grateful for this youth library. It feels like home here but better, you guys have helped me a lot.

Guest book



Working on diversity and inclusion is not a project, but a change process

Peter van der Aalst

Implementation of the Diversity & Inclusion Code in the cultural sector



Peter van der Aalst is degree programme manager and lecturer of Leisure and Events at Breda University of Applied Sciences.

The joint industry associations in the cultural and creative sector presented the Diversity & Inclusion Code (CODEDI) on 1 November 2019, a broadened version of the Diversity Code developed in 2011. The content of the CODEDI is in line with the Culture Governance Code and the Fair Practice Code, the two other codes of conduct as instruments for self-regulation within the cultural and creative sector. These three codes of conduct reinforce each other. Within the broadened perspective of the CODEDI, attention is also paid, in addition to cultural diversity, to differences in gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, socio-economic status, level of education, and age. Diversity means that people differ from and are equal to each other through both visible and invisible characteristics. These differences mean something to everyone's position in society and the opportunities they are given. The unique and interrelated combination of these characteristics form a person's identity.

The aim of CODEDI

Diversity in cultural organisations concerns the question to what extent the diversity of society is represented in the four Ps: programme, public, personnel, and partners. Inclusion is about the question how differences and similarities between people are dealt with. Inclusion is the extent to which creators, producers, workers, and audiences of all identities, whether or not visible, can be themselves and feel safe and respected.

The aim of the code is that the cultural and creative sector represents, respects, and appreciates the broad diversity of Dutch society, so everybody feels at home. The sector must be equally accessible for everybody, both on the supply and demand side. Accessibility means physical, informational, digital, social, and financial accessibility and reachability of amenities.

Importance and implementation

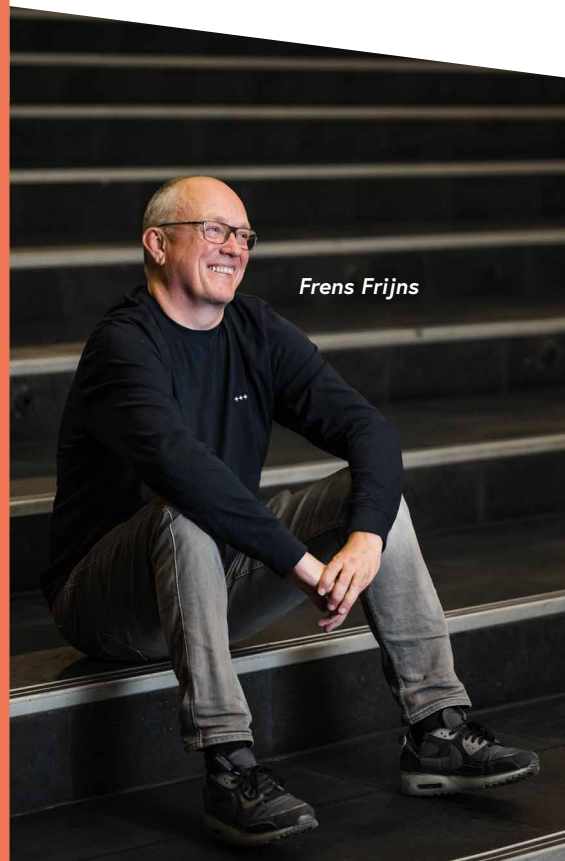
It is very important to the cultural and creative sector to be diverse, inclusive and accessible for everyone, to remain relevant and attractive now and in the future. Artistically substantively and socially, it is enriching because in this way, unique experiences and unfamiliar perspectives are created and made accessible. An inclusive organisation has a stronger position from a business point of view. (Top) talents can be attracted and retained more easily; it is better able to respond to the needs and wants of a more diverse, larger and new audience; the adaptability of the organisation becomes stronger, more innovative and creative because more variety of perspectives are brought into decision-making; employees are happier and more engaged and loyal.

In order for the code to really work and thus promote diversity and inclusion in the sector, five principles have been formulated, which have been worked out in five steps (www.codedi.nl):

1. People know their own status as regards diversity and inclusion: know the strengths and points for improvement of the organisation and make unconscious biases transparent.
2. Diversity and inclusion are integrated

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A diverse and inclusive workforce means that we as an organisation become richer and more mature.



Frens Frijns

into the vision: explain why working on diversity and inclusion is important to the organisation and share this vision with everyone in the organisation.

3. Commitment and support are created for complying with the code: involve the whole organisation at all levels, make everybody co-owner, discuss the blind spots, biases, process steps and include everybody in the change process.
4. A plan of approach is drawn up aimed at continuous improvement: make a plan of approach on the basis of the four Ps, determine the starting position, desired situation and objectives for each P, determine the actions required and implement them.
5. Compliance with the code is monitored and evaluated, and is accounted for: monitor and evaluate implementation of the plan of approach, take measures to safeguard diversity and inclusion, determine who monitors progress and results and how all this is accounted for. Map out the progress, value and award the achieving of targets, celebrate successes, learn from mistakes, determine points for improvement and follow-up actions, and share the outcomes with the whole organisation and the outside world.

Experiences within the sector

The CODEDI is an instrument of self-regulation within the sector; with what insights and challenges are organisations from the cultural and creative sector confronted?

Pop music venue 013 in Tilburg is explicitly committed to promoting diversity and inclusion within its workforce. "After Covid-19, we had to recruit a lot of new staff, which offered us an opportunity to work specifically on our diversity and inclusion ambition. We launched a major recruitment campaign in multiple languages and through channels other than the usual, with the express aim of achieving a more diverse and inclusive workforce. That takes extra efforts regarding recruitment and then training, but it brought positive results for us, which we are very happy with. A diverse and inclusive workforce means that we as an organisation are becoming richer and more mature in terms of insights, creative ideas, networks,

programming, and potential audience. So, in addition to a social choice, it was also a right choice from an artistically substantive and business perspective to invest in it," says managing director Frens Frijns.

According to Berend Schans, director of the Vereniging van Nederlandse Poppodia en -Festivals (Association of Dutch pop music venues and festivals), the pop music venue and festival sector has implicitly always been quite diverse and inclusive in terms of content. "Queer and gay parties have been organised ever since the seventies, hip-hop has been embraced from the very beginning, Iranian New Year's parties with a very substantive programme are organised. The night has always been open to and was organised by 'people who think differently'. Not because it had to be done because of a code, but because there are communities that like to come and watch good live music from their own culture and want to help organise programmes. Because a lot of good music is made in, for example Africa, and because there is an audience for it".

Schans considers the CODEDI a good first guideline for pop music venues and festivals. "But we are also told that, for example, quick scans can be filled in with socially desirable responses. Furthermore, we hear that it is very context-sensitive; as an organisation, you just have to start working with it yourself. There are no blueprints available because they are hard to make. By the way, I think that we as policymakers in the sector should be critical of more subtle exclusion mechanisms. Think of the language and concepts we use among ourselves, the application methods for subsidies, the implicit consensus about what is considered normal, abnormal, desirable and undesirable, of choosing an office location on a canal instead of in a neighbourhood where "normal people" live. Then you can polish the status quo with diversity programmes or award all prizes to creators of colour just like that, but of course nothing will fundamentally change in the system".

Imke de Feber, advisor of Music and Finances at Kunstloc Brabant, stresses the importance of taking a critical look at one's own organisation. "The ability of an organisation to take a critical

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Policymakers should be critical of subtle exclusion mechanisms.

look at itself is essential if you want to really increase diversity and inclusion within the sector. Raising awareness is a good start. Within Kunstloc Brabant work processes or procedures are also adjusted, so we as an organisation become more accessible and inclusive. Yet, I believe we could do more. Because we are getting more and more aware of our perspective and our role, the blind spots within our organisation become more visible. It is particularly challenging for me to step out of my own bubble as far as partners are concerned. If we organise a programme for the sector, for example, it is important to be aware of the organisations or creators that you ask as partners. You often fish in your own 'safe' pond without thinking about it. Whereas it is so good and important to broaden your view. Getting off your own beaten path takes time and can be complex. You should learn to understand each other and explore each other's way of working. That is the only way it makes sense. Just engaging someone ad hoc to 'join in the conversation' is too limited. You want to build a lasting relationship and hear someone in your network on a structural basis. It takes trial and error, but as long as you actually have the intention to do better from that awareness, I think you are on the right track".

Photography

- Seye Cadmus (page 42 below)
- Ben Houdijk (page 43 right)



Imke de Feber



Berend Schans

Improving accessibility makes sense

How to create an inclusive leisure experience

Dick Houtzager



Dick Houtzager LL.M. is a legal researcher. He currently works for the National Coordinator against Discrimination and Racism. This article is written in a personal capacity.

"I thought we would get an inclusive society!" That was the cry from the heart of a participant at a conference on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2018. The Netherlands ratified the Convention in 2016. Since then, in the perception of many people, little has been achieved to make the country more accessible and inclusive.

The participant's call suggests that there is still work to do. With regard to urban public space and, in its wake, leisure events, accessibility for persons with disabilities requires attention. In this article, I will address obstacles in urban public space and leisure events which stand in the way of participation. I will present some accessibility requirements for policy-makers, planners and builders of urban public space. Given the fact that in the Netherlands around 2 million people have a disability (CBS 2022), the need to make society accessible and inclusive, is apparent. Just like persons without disabilities, they use public space and all types of facilities in the leisure sector. To improve accessibility is not only an ethical and legal requirement, but it also makes sense from a business perspective.

The concept of disability

According to the United Nations, disability results "from the interaction between

persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others". Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others (United Nations, 2006). These descriptions reflect the shift in thinking about disabled people. The medical perspective on persons with disabilities is replaced by the social model of disability. Under the medical model, an impairment is considered as something that needs to be treated or fixed. Disability is seen as a deviation from the normal health status. The social model on the other hand, explains disability as a social construct through discrimination and oppression. Its focus is on society rather than on the individual. Disability is regarded as a mere difference within the continuum of human variations (Degener, 2016).

So, if we describe issues that persons face with access to urban public space in general and the leisure sector in particular, we should look at the way the different spaces are designed, built and maintained, rather than looking at the impairments of individuals.

Inclusive urban public space

Persons with disabilities experience various types of difficulties when using public space. To understand the types of problems they experience and what impact it has on their lives, the University of Leeds (UK) has undertaken a research project. The Inclusive Public Space project aims to understand how effectively law and politics are responding to problems caused by inaccessible or difficult streets. In the Netherlands, the research has been carried out in the cities of Utrecht and Almere. The results will be published in 2024.

Obstacles impeding pedestrians can be permanent or temporary. Permanent obstacles are often the result of street design or construction. Examples of these are road signs, street furniture, ramps and kerbs, fences, and street noise. Temporary obstacles can be ascribed to a lack of awareness, lack of space and neglect. Examples are parked bicycles, garbage bins, road works, billboards, and terraces.

For obvious reasons, these obstacles can be experienced differently by persons with different disabilities. For a person who is blind, street kerbs may be difficult to detect, but they may be overcome. For a person in a wheelchair, these obstacles may be easily seen, but impossible to overcome.

As a result of these barriers, persons with disabilities experience disorientation, anxiety and sometimes even injury. This results in reduced participation and increased social isolation (Lawson et al., 2022). In order to avoid confrontations with these barriers, many

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The social model explains disability as a social construct through discrimination and oppression.



employ coping strategies. They prepare their walking route or use special clothing and equipment (sturdy shoes, use of walking apps, fluorescent jackets).

Inclusive leisure facilities

Experiences of persons with disabilities while visiting leisure facilities have not been the subject of research so far. However, leisure events can be made accessible and inclusive if several rules are followed. Successful elements of an inclusive leisure experience require the accessibility of:

- online information and ticketing;
- entrance to the venue;
- entry, usability and safety of attractions;
- information on site: signs in Braille, visual or spoken information;
- catering services, staff hospitality;
- bathroom facilities;
- escape routes for emergency situations.

Organisations in the Dutch cultural sector have realised this and have adopted a Diversity and Inclusion Code (<https://codedi.nl/> Accessed 14 May 2023). Organisations that have signed the Code are required to take steps to improve the accessibility of their buildings and events. Many cultural organisations have taken steps to facilitate persons with disabilities. Some venues have appointed an accessibility coordinator, others have created low-stimulus spaces or built wheelchair ramps. The use of accessible online information, by applying WCAG standards, is increasingly common in the cultural sector.

Work to be done

However, exclusionary policies and practices still exist. Sometimes because of a struggle between aesthetics versus accessibility, which is often won by the aesthetic designer instead of the inclusion activist. In other areas there is a lack of awareness about inclusion among policy-makers, event managers, designers and builders. Existing laws and regulations are fragmented and insufficiently prescriptive to prevent or remedy inaccessibility. And lastly, complaint mechanisms are unsuccessful and ineffective. To rectify this, it is necessary to

integrate accessibility in all stages of procurement, design, construction and enforcement in urban and leisure planning.

Several legal and other measures are being developed to meet CRPD requirements. The European Union is promoting a Design for All approach to the built environment, with the objective to make buildings and public spaces usable by as many people as possible and accessible to all. Dutch equal treatment law (Article 2 and Article 2a from the Dutch Act on equal treatment on the grounds of disability or chronic illness) requires leisure events to provide reasonable accommodation for individual visitors and to gradually achieve general accessibility.

In the current Dutch Buildings Decree (Bouwbesluit) only a few accessibility requirements are included. The Decree is scheduled to be replaced in 2024 by the Environment and Planning Act (Omgevingswet). This Act contains new accessibility standards for urban planning. During the parliamentary debate, accessibility was included as a legal requirement. Article 4.21 of the Act stipulates that in the case of new developments in the design of public built environment, municipalities will take into account the promotion of accessibility. In addition, Article 5.103 of the Living Environment (Quality) Decree (Besluit kwaliteit leefomgeving) states that accessibility must also be taken into account in public space (Houtzager, 2021).

Conclusion

Urban public space is often not accessible to persons with disabilities. The same applies to the leisure sector. It has a negative impact on disabled people. They are excluded and feel left out. To effectuate their participation, they need to employ adaptive strategies. However, with awareness, sectoral agreements and effective laws and regulations, inclusion can be made a reality.

Note

Part of this article is based on the Leisure Toegankelijk! presentation at the BUas 'The Future of Leisure' conference by the author and M. van der Elst, 22 March 2023.



Existing laws and regulations are fragmented and insufficiently prescriptive.

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From Foxtrot to Freestyle

Dancing with an alternative logic for complex change

Frank Crucaq
&
Suzan Lindhout



Frank Crucaq and Suzan Lindhout are lecturers in Leisure & Event management at Breda University of Applied Sciences.

Complex issues in society require a different logic than the logic and methods used so far. Is it really the experts, policy-makers and trusted institutions from whom we can expect this different logic? At least in project 'De Ader', (The Vain) those involved did not wait for this answer. They wanted it to be different and they did do things differently.

As the initiator of 'De Ader', Dansnest (Dance hub) has experienced in previous community art projects that there are a lot of 'by-products' when working on an art project in a neighbourhood. In addition to the social and artistic value of these projects, requests for help, talents, health questions and financial (im)possibilities were also revealed. But as a stand-alone organisation, in this case a dance company, you cannot take on all the societal roles to adequately respond to these by-products. From this experience, 'De Ader' was set up as a collective with five equal partners each with their own interests:

- **Dansnest:** creating a dance performance with residents to explore in the process what it means to be currently connected in South-West Breda.
- **Surplus Welzijn:** increasing social cohesion in the south-west part of Breda, get in touch with people in the neighbourhood who are off the radar.
- **Wij:** connecting with others and increasing networks to encourage self-reliance for the elderly.
- **Nieuwe Veste:** enabling everyone in Breda to participate in cultural events.
- **Breda University of Applied Sciences:** having students and staff collaborate in practice to learn about the changing power of dialogue.

Starting in 2023, these five partners decided to explore in practice how dance can serve as a means of strengthening social networks of vulnerable groups in the south-west of Breda.

Different logic

In a traditional approach to a complex question such as this, the first thing that is often determined is who is responsible for a solution. Is it the municipality and if so, which department? Or are the residents themselves responsible? Or a care organisation? Then an analysis is made and a plan is created. Traditionally the process is that when there is a problem, professional expertise is called in, and a solution is offered based on that expertise. According to complexity expert Dave Snowden, this is an example of a complex problem, where many variables are constantly affecting each other and the problem is constantly changing and it is approached with a specialist approach. A specialist approach assumes a clear relationship between cause and effect that requires specialist knowledge to understand.

However, complex matters are characterised by the fact that these relationships cannot be clearly analysed at all, but rather, can only be understood experimentally or even in retrospect. That is a different logic and requires a different approach. By carrying out specific experiments and seeing what their impact is, the next step is determined. So, you do not know in advance what the solution is going to be.

De Ader

Project 'De Ader' was designed from that logic. The specific experiment was always 'dance'. At different places and times, dance was initiated. There was dancing by performers in a residential complex, the elderly were encouraged to dance by coaches, directors of institutions danced with their own target audience, girls danced for empowerment, and there was a public

choreography exercise in a square. This dancing brought people together. Some came back, others watched from a distance, and still others took people with them the following time.

These dance interventions were foreign to many. It raised the question 'what is happening here and how do I relate to it?' For example, for Kees who was bothered by the social distancing during the Covid pandemic. It had been a long time since he made conscious physical contact with others again. He felt connected. He was surprised that this felt so easy. And another participant mentioned: "This is not a dance! This is moving to music. Dance is foxtrot, Viennese waltz, Rumba." After talking briefly about what dance has to do with self-expression and connections in addition to movement, "actually I dance all day, it just depends on what your definition of dancing is?!"

These experiments provided a connection, and by listening to what residents wanted to bring in, initiatives emerged from within themselves that were supported by partners. To expand that process, the partners in the project met weekly. These meetings always focused on three questions: 'what visibly happened?', 'what do we want to happen?' and 'what can we offer?' All partners provided their perspectives on those questions, and so new steps could be taken to connect more people. In addition, Performatory (BUAs) students facilitated reflection dialogues to zoom out further and explore new directions.

A different working method

This was an unusual working method for all partners. Apart from the confusion and ambiguity it sometimes caused, it also brought value:

- Instead of thinking in plans, it was now mainly about thinking in terms of what each partner could add from within their own organisation. Frank Weijters (Surplus) contributed his direct knowledge of the



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Each week in a residential complex, coffee, dance, choreography and social care were provided simultaneously.

neighbourhood: families which could be involved, available meeting rooms, etc.

- The different perspectives of the partners gave rise to creativity and the ideas were applicable immediately. To more deeply understand what is going on in the neighbourhood, for example, students developed methods for retrieving stories from the neighbourhood. A mixture of culture, welfare and leisure also emerged: each week, a residential complex simultaneously hosted coffee, dance, choreography and social care.
- A strong collective and informal accountability emerged. Work, appointments and responsibilities were prompted not from systems, but from a personal loyalty to the project.
- Instead of looking at problems in the neighbourhood, the focus was on opportunities. This approach, underpinned by 'Appreciative Inquiry', generated a lot of positive energy.

Impact

So, what is the impact of such an approach? There are many different answers to this question. Often with a complex problem, you do not even know what the problem is, let alone the impact you envisage. From January to May 2023, there were several experiments and follow-ups:

- Eight morning dances, starting with eight and ending with 30 residents, students and professional dancers.
- Five dance meetings, of 20 residents each time in a social housing building.
- Eight dance classes for ten girls with youth work.
- Two months of choreography in a public square (dozens of passers-by participated).
- Two presentation days with all dance activities. Several dance groups presented their choreography. Closing dialogue between 160 dancers, audience and residents.
- Social media: 20,000 hits.

But beyond the actual events, the project is very much about the lifeworlds of those involved. For residents: "My wife passed away, I have only lived here for a year. I did not know anyone and felt lonely. Now I belong somewhere, I belong with this group. I am not much of a dancer, but I can just participate in my own way" (Ben 75+). And for professionals: "This touches on all kinds of topics: intimacy, finding your place, fun and wonder. We come from different places, we have different backgrounds, ages, but we hear the same music. With dance, special conversations arise without words and everyone can be a part of it" (Ineke van Dijk of Nieuwe Veste).

Operating principles

Looking back on this method, we see the following guiding principles:

- Be open to the people, ideas or events which present themselves. This requires time and presence in the neighbourhood.
- Organise the team and communication in such a way that you can act quickly and in a flexible manner.
- Gather immediate knowledge around you. Assemble a team with a wide range of knowledge: practical, artistic, local, social and theoretical.
- Involve policy-makers in practice so that trust in this open approach increases.
- Find moments where 'it works', where you see the potential in people, places or experiments. Build on that and follow that energy for a positive atmosphere and easy follow-through.

More information

<https://deaderbreda.nl>

Photography

• Ilse Wolf

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I cannot dance, but my wife can, she also enjoys Zumba and such. I will pass her the flyer. There are not too many handsome men there, are there? (man at the pool table).



Konekt radically champions a world where everyone can live, learn and work together

Koen Deweer outlines the need for a talent-focused approach

Peter Horsten
& Marco van Leeuwen



Peter Horsten and Marco van Leeuwen are lecturers and researchers at the Academy for Leisure & Events.

In the context of our work in the fields of inclusive education, research and design, we sat down for a chat with Koen Deweer, founder and director of Konekt (www.konekt.be). Konekt radically champions a world in which persons with and without disabilities live, learn and work together. The goal is clear: to allow people with disabilities to live fully in an inclusive society. In doing so, Koen and Konekt focus both on developing individuals' full potential and on making the environment more inclusive. The origins of his drive lie in his own school experiences, as well as those of his son. Both times he observed how everyone is pushed through a system which is the same for everyone and therefore not set up to utilise personal talents. When someone is not good at something, it may lead to biased advice from teachers: "Something with psychology and pedagogy is probably beyond your depth. Maybe becoming a forester is more suitable." When Koen noticed the same thing happening to his son, he felt: now we really have to change things.

What has been the main motivation for the creation of Konekt?

The focus on 'defect thinking' - looking only at what cannot be done, what is difficult, rather than paying attention to talents and potential

for development - is simply disastrous for people with disabilities. In Belgium, 90% of people with disabilities are sent to special education. Indeed, at the moment this seems to be the best solution, because in regular education parents have to put in a lot of additional effort to overcome all the resistance from teachers, other parents and boards. Nobody is against people with disabilities, but at the same time there is a lot of exclusion - an unconscious form of discrimination subsidised by the establishment of separate schools. This is only 'the best option' because there is no suitable alternative at hand. Education is not set up to foster talents for different types of people. We notice little ambition to change this system.

The problem arises early on. For young people with disabilities, the decision about whether or not you can have a job later in life is made based on a counselling meeting at age 12. BUSO (Extraordinary Secondary Education) has four levels, of which only the fourth level leads to a 'regular' job. Levels 1 and 2 prepare someone for living in protected contexts, where employment is not an option. For many, it means spending their time in a day centre, where they are given few opportunities to grow and develop. There is very little advancement to higher levels. In fact, at least a thousand young people over 18 are redoing their final year of school (sometimes multiple times) in anticipation of a person-centred budget.

If you imagine the group of people with disabilities in pyramid form, there is a small top with people with disabilities living largely inclusive lives and a large base with a significant need for care and support. But in between, you have a huge group which actually

receives too much care and support. This is unfortunate, because being well taken care of does not make you happy. People, like others, want to take on visible and engaging roles and be meaningful to others. 'Defect thinking' has a disastrous effect on these people. They have little experience in developing skills, have little opportunity to try things and as a result they develop a negative self-image. Consequently, they have little motivation for the future. They grow up in a second-class society, isolated from the rest.

This isolation is harmful in two ways: if children in regular education do not grow up in close proximity to people with disabilities, they will also be unaware of the needs and desires of people with disabilities later in life, for example

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'Defect thinking' has disastrous effects on people with disabilities.



Can you give some specific examples of success stories?

If I have to single out a few, I will start with the 'kindergarten co-supervisor' course which kicked off ten years ago. This is a 14-day training course with an additional 14 days of work placements, spread over a six-month period. When we started this course there was a lot of resistance from schools to let people do a work placement, people immediately thought it would require 'additional work'. But it is just like an intern coming to take work off your hands! Pre-schoolers themselves see few problems with a co-tutor with disabilities. Evy, who went through this process, has an intellectual disability, but functions very well in a kindergarten. It took some persuasion, but once a teacher finally dared to allow Evy to start in kindergarten, she was able to show her added value and others soon followed. Evy does not perform all coaching tasks, but what she does she tackles with passion and dedication using her talent.

This changed role also has implications outside the classroom. Where previously the neighbourhood avoided people with disabilities, resulting in loneliness and a sense of inferiority, you now see that Evy's living conditions have changed dramatically. In the supermarket or around the neighbourhood, all toddlers run straight up to her. That has a huge impact, on Evy, on the pre-schoolers and their parents, on the school, on the neighbourhood, on the whole system.

Another success story involves Davy, who followed a track to become a co-corporate employee. Davy has autism and for him it was difficult to find a work placement company. He has to get used to entering a new social context, which is difficult for most corporate supervisors, who are not used to managing people with disabilities. On the other hand, Davy is very meticulous and precise. After a six-month work placement, we were told by the shoe factory's warehouse manager that Davy was doing a better job than the average interim employee. Getting to such a point also requires

in their work. As a result, you see continuous confirmation of the status quo. This has to change: Konekt opposes the discrimination and the marginalisation of people with disabilities.

What does Konekt do different in their talent-focused approach?

It is not rocket science. But shifting the focus, from everything that is difficult to finding in each individual the things that they are good at, makes for experiences of success. When you have the opportunity to do what you are good at, experience that you can do it, you become enthusiastic, you want more, you experience growth and you become happy. We use various methodologies, always starting from the strength and potential of the individual. Teach someone to feel the 'stress zone' and how to turn that stress into a stretch. How do you get out of your comfort zone and stretch towards growth?

Konekt wants to change the world by connecting parties who want to give people with disabilities a chance. Obviously, not everything is a success story just like that. There are people who need some additional consideration and that requires an environment which moves with them. We know that throughout their lives, people with disabilities have been forced to fit into systems not designed for them. Instead, let people work within their talents, because then it does not feel like work.

To achieve this, we need to take a more open approach to the system of job profiles, for example. Some people with disabilities may not bring immediate economic growth to a company, but they can be significant in other important ways: a new atmosphere, increased slowing down and awareness, and increasing motivation among other employees to focus on inclusion and not just economic added value. Companies also have a social role to play in this process.



Involving people with disabilities at all levels from the start accelerates change.

change in businesses - which is why Konekt also provides coaching.

Finally, our course to become a professional dancer in Platform K has been a success. Many people with disabilities have a talent for dance, rhythm, improvisation, and want to be on a stage. They are unfortunately still not yet admitted into professional dance schools, but Platform K shows that some dancers are very talented. This is certainly not easy: for these dancers there are also strict requirements regarding nutrition, training, structure in life, and so on. Dancers are selected based on their talents. We had a long discussion about whether we should have a selection process. But Kurt, who himself has a physical disability gave us the answer. He said, "If I am really good, I should also have the opportunity to be able to seriously grow and train at a professional level. Let me be on stage because of my amazing talent and not because of my disability."

Growth and development are achieved through trial and error; the lessons are sometimes hard. Take Kobe, a dancer with Down Syndrome. Too often expectations are set too low and we dare not give honest feedback. But this keeps people down, and they are not taken seriously. Kobe once, a long time ago, managed to draw all the attention to himself at the end



of a performance by stepping outside of the performance. The audience cheered loudly, but that was really disrespectful to the other dancers. This would not be accepted from any professional dancer. This was followed by stern but honest feedback. It led to tears at first, but in the long run he will improve as a dancer if he takes himself seriously. The audience then follows this lead.

You indicated that in addition to developing individuals, you also focus on making the environment more inclusive. Is Ghent an inclusive city?

No, but there are several city government initiatives and in recent years there have been many collaborations. They see Konekt as an expert to share their thoughts with. Not so much regarding physical accessibility such as the width of doors and obstacles for example, but mainly to become more aware of unconscious exclusion and ignorance. For

example, we recently started a project with NMBS the Belgian railway company. Mobility by train is not just about platform height, but also about reservation systems. When people are aware of how we exclude people with disabilities and pay attention to that then we will go a long way!

There are still few examples of universal design in Ghent. Cultural houses and the City Hall are often accessible through a separate entrance, venues are accessible, but the stage is often not accessible yet. Separate entrances are not the solution at festivals either; too often people do not think beyond a person with a disability and their companion. People with disabilities also just go to a festival with friends, and then they want to go through the same door together, then they want to enjoy the music together and not somewhere separate on a raised stage. The companion of 'the person with disability' is welcome to come along, but their partner and friends do not fit within that category.

The *Gentse Feesten* (Ghent Festivities) are for everyone. The organisation only partially succeeds in its ambition. It is important that we see people with disabilities not just as spectators, but also as collaborators, volunteers, creators and artists. Things are moving into that direction. From the dialogue which emerges from these initiatives, we must learn, become aware, and take steps towards an inclusive city.

At all levels it is important to involve people with disabilities from the start. This accelerates change. Do not talk and make decisions about them, but with them. In advisory bodies, look for people with disabilities with the right talents and position them correctly in the team using their strengths. Notable, for example, was the approach of Ghent European Youth City 2024. A call-out came to young people regarding what constitutes a tailor-made city to them. At the end of the process, there was a realisation that they had forgotten to include young people with disabilities. Even now we are at the stage where policy-makers at some point realise that they have forgotten. Next time they will really remember.

Konekt has helped many people along the way and received high praise for it. What is the next step?

We started the development of an inclusion hub in Ghent. This is a large construction project which transcends the current day-to-day operation of Konekt. The inclusion hub will be a physical meeting place where everyone is welcome, where everyone can meet and use their talents. In this place, interactions between persons with and without disabilities take centre stage. By focusing on a physical place, we want to demonstrate how buildings can be a lever for a warmer society. We want to create a free space where local residents, organisations and businesses drop by to do business and learn. Near the Gent-Sint-Pieters train station, we are developing an energy-efficient new building with catering, offices, meeting rooms, a dance hall and multi-purpose spaces for meetings under one roof. Persons with disabilities are given a leading role there.

The design process involves intensive collaboration with people with disabilities. This way, in the design process, you also experience how complex getting coffee in a wheelchair can sometimes be. It will be a transparent building with as few corridors and doors as possible to allow a maximum number of spontaneous encounters. This sometimes results in clashes: the fire department, for example, wants as many partitions in the building as possible from a safety point of view. What is important here is that we are not only focused on the building, but also want to be a gateway to the neighbourhood and the city. The area around the station is very transit-oriented, with the inclusive hub also becoming the place for tourists with and without disabilities with an information point on, for example, adapted sanitary facilities, attractive and accessible attractions, and - where necessary - support with online booking. In this manner Konekt becomes the linchpin in the neighbourhood.

Much work remains to be done, but by 2050, people with and without disabilities will be learning, living and working together. Any step in that direction is a good step!



Buildings can be a lever for a warmer society.

Photography

- Konekt (pages 48, 49 & 50 top)
- byWM (page 50 bottom)



Industry perspectives on the future of leisure



What is your position and for what organisation do you work?

I am **Madelon Gilaude**, and I work in the heritage sector as a museum assistant at MAS (Museum aan de Stroom) in Antwerp for a year. My main duties include the youth activities of MAS in Jonge Handen and events. The MAS is a museum that collects, preserves, researches and displays heritage around the city of Antwerp, the port, and the world in collaboration with various communities.

Do you see matters that threaten the functioning of your sector?

The reality in the big city is that the younger generation (16-26 years) is becoming increasingly diverse. I am not only referring to migration roots, but also to gender, neurodiversity, religious beliefs, interests. Every young person has an opinion and we want to hear them, so we can give them a voice. Due to the hyperdiversity it is a challenge to get everyone involved and not to exclude anyone from the museum's activities.

In your opinion, what way of 'flip-thinking' would be desirable within your sector, organisation and/or environment?

It is nice to experiment with new formats. Involve different audiences, (sometimes) dare to aim your programmes at specific target groups and respect their mutual diversity. Representation in your exhibitions and in your programmes plays a crucial role in this. Urban culture, current social issues and using social media are important in this respect. Thanks to our diverse collection, there are many links to be made and through contemporary ways of collecting you can seek new links.



What is your position and which organisation do you work for? What is the relationship with leisure?

I am **Rutger de Wit** and I work at ONE2TEN, a research firm located in Bussum. Using our data, we can find experiential solutions which are also very important within the leisure industry. As a project manager, I, along with my team, which is active around the world (India, Singapore and Sri Lanka) make sure that everything runs smoothly!

Where are opportunities in your industry to contribute to a 'better' world?

ONE2TEN makes every effort to support companies eager to get better. Companies that want to grow, develop and realise that day-to-day operations can and should always be optimised. Here are opportunities, because with our company we can enhance the creation and implementation of research related to a better world. 'Improving' is part of our own DNA, and also of that of clients with whom we enjoy working.

If you could dream freely: what would you like to contribute through your field?

That is a tough one. I personally want and hope to develop more and more in terms of a future-proof world, especially in the area of sustainability. In doing so, I hope I can inspire my own organisation, as well as our clients, to get to work on the fact that things in the world really need to change. I may not have the greatest immediate impact as an individual, but I hope to inspire others to create a true chain reaction.



What is your position and where do you work?

I'm **Simone Kramer** of C-mone, agency for culture and communication. Together with Studio Boot, we were given the key to an old cattle feed factory in 2015. With a healthy dose of idealism, we set to work to add a new atmosphere to the city. Meanwhile it is hard to imagine Den Bosch without developed concepts, such as Werkwarenhuis, Social Label Lab and Tramkade.

What are three essential aspects to build a sustainable and liveable environment?

1. Wonder through applied art

Making ideas visible and communicating them with applied art. Our Werkwarenhuis is a place where people and ideas come together naturally. Where people come into contact with art and culture. Where creators and audiences meet, playfully, indoors and outdoors, on an equal level, in multifunctional spaces.

2. Setting an example with a meaning

Seeing several qualities and trusting each other's qualities is important in facing complex challenges, such as organic area development through engagement. It is not so much about bricks and systems, but rather about interpersonal relationships. Setting an example, upcycling and re-evaluating a place, so that another leisure experience emerges.

3. Easily accessible and open character

Shaping culture, well-being, space and entrepreneurship in coherence, very broadly and in an easily accessible way. Precisely that broad horizon and open character are important for future developments. Then you are talking about multiple value creation.

If you had to build a future setting, what would it look like?

See the inspiration image (design by Studio Boot) of the Werkwarenhuis after 2025, in which culture, creators and enthusiasts are given a destination through housing, working and living together. Inspired by the bulb houses in Den Bosch (designed by Dries Kreijkamp in 1984) to connect residents with nature; environmentally friendly and energy efficient. Our pink BarbaPapa is the metaphor for transformation and diversity and forms a family together with the black BarbaMama.



Placemaking and experience design

Leisure professionals as change-makers

Wendy de Jongh



Wendy de Jongh is a lecturer in Event Management at Inholland University of Applied Sciences.

Everything is space! But how everyone arranges that space for themselves and for others is becoming increasingly complex. The world is experiencing a rapid transformation in urban development, which has led to the emergence of new design approaches such as placemaking and experience design. These processes have become crucial components in creating spaces that are not only functional but also socially and culturally significant. Whereas spaces were previously designed for one purpose, we now see multipurpose spaces. For example, playgrounds for children used by adult boot campers. Placemaking is the process of creating quality public spaces that are welcoming, safe, and accessible to all. This concept involves collaborative efforts between community members, designers, planners, and other stakeholders to create places that reflect the unique character of a neighbourhood or city. Placemaking also focuses on enhancing public spaces by incorporating art installations, greenery, seating areas, playgrounds, and other features that make them more attractive to visitors.

Experts involved during the conference

Experience design is a relatively new concept that, as Experience Designer Nils Roemen puts it so beautifully, enables people to become

visually appealing spaces that attract visitors and stimulate their imagination. Dennis Elbers, Cultural Entrepreneur, showed us great examples of this. With his companies Graphic Matters and Blind Walls Gallery, he shared his fascination with the impact of visual culture on our lives.

participants instead of being an audience when they visit a place or space. By using various techniques such as storytelling, user-centered design principles, sensory experiences, gamification, and technology, Nils and his team create memorable experiences for visitors of places and events. This approach goes beyond designing physical spaces but aims to create emotional connections with visitors.

Street art also has a social impact on communities by providing an outlet for artists who may not have access to traditional gallery spaces. It can also serve as a platform for political messaging, raising awareness about important issues affecting society.

Both placemaking and experience design have significant social impacts on communities. They provide opportunities for people to connect with each other through shared experiences in public spaces. For instance, a well-designed public park can be a gathering place for families where children can play while parents catch up with their neighbours. We do not design for individuals but for communities. But what are the conditions for such a design? What values are important for a design that enables use by and serves an entire community? And can we upscale 'small' designs for a street or square to an entire city? Questions we asked Eva James, Designer and Lecturer in Experience Design at Inholland University of Applied Sciences. Through a co-design workshop during the conference, participants experienced that bringing together personal values leads to a great variety of elements that ultimately result in an excellent design.

Placemaking and experience design are now a significant part of the leisure industry. And although it is seen as a new development, pubs are one example of how these concepts have traditionally been applied successfully in the leisure industry. Pubs have always been an important part of social life. They serve as a communal space where people gather to eat, drink, socialise, and engage in various activities. This can lead to increased social cohesion and a sense of community belonging. Pubs also provide employment opportunities for residents and contribute to the local economy, as Olaf Ernst shared in his research into the functional impact of pubs, in Amsterdam in particular.

But there is more. Art is another area where placemaking has made significant contributions. Street art has become increasingly popular in cities as a way of transforming public spaces into vibrant cultural hubs. Street art can be used as a tool for placemaking by creating

visually appealing spaces that attract visitors and stimulate their imagination. Dennis Elbers, Cultural Entrepreneur, showed us great examples of this. With his companies Graphic Matters and Blind Walls Gallery, he shared his fascination with the impact of visual culture on our lives.

Street art also has a social impact on communities by providing an outlet for artists who may not have access to traditional gallery spaces. It can also serve as a platform for political messaging, raising awareness about important issues affecting society.

Change-makers

The future of leisure will require professionals in the industry to adopt these new approaches such as placemaking and experience design principles to create engaging spaces that are socially relevant and culturally significant. Leisure professionals will need to work collaboratively with other stakeholders such as community members, designers, planners, artists, and policy-makers to create places that reflect the values and aspirations of the communities they serve. Leisure professionals can be the change-makers that build communities and great cities. It is time for us to really own our creative organisational talent in creating socially impactful places that enhance the quality of life in communities around the world.

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What values are important for a design that enables use by and serves an entire community?



A look into the future of placemaking

With leisure as a key component

Greg Richards

Greg Richards is Professor of Placemaking and Events at Breda University of Applied Sciences.

Leisure has an important relationship to time, space, and place. In leisure studies we are used to thinking about time as the basic resource for leisure. We need leisure time in order to be able to enjoy leisure, and so the struggle for leisure time has been an important focus of leisure research.

But in addition to time, leisure also requires space. This is very obvious when we think about leisure undertaken in nature – we need to conserve natural spaces in order to allow people to experience nature. Nature needs space to be able to flourish. This applies to urban environments as well, where parks and other public spaces provide a vital leisure resource. We also need space in our own homes for leisure – with the growing range of fitness equipment and digital technology to support leisure activities we need an increasing amount of space in our attics and living rooms.

Space and place

Leisure activities not only take up space, but they also importantly and literally 'take place'. In very simple terms, a place is a space which is given meaning through activities and events. Our home is not just a space to live in, but a place where we feel comfortable, where we are surrounded by people, memories and objects that are meaningful to us. The same applies to our neighbourhood or our city – we become attached to such places because they provide us with meaning. The place where we grew up, the school we attended, the place we work, and so on.

The act of giving meaning to space is what placemaking is all about. Meaning can be generated for and by places because they are economically important, socially important, symbolically important, and so on. Places are important because they enable people and communities to thrive and to enjoy a certain quality of life: "Placemaking is the process of creating quality places that people want to live, work, play and learn" (Wyckoff, 2014). Richards (2020) summarises the placemaking process

as the outcome of three important aspects of place: the physical and intangible resources found there, the ways in which people attach meaning to those resources, and the creativity required to develop systems that will support the quality of life for all.

The concept of placemaking is also changing, from a focus on physical aspects of places, with placemaking initiatives being largely led by planners and architects, to a much broader concept of placemaking as a combination of tangible and intangible change that involves the whole community. There are several challenges in the definition and implementation of placemaking strategies.

Multifaceted placemaking

Placemaking is a very broad concept, involving all aspects of life and therefore all aspects of leisure. Placemaking processes are also subject to the same general societal trends as other areas of life. The main challenges for placemaking therefore include issues such as the energy transition, the circular economy, housing supply, inclusivity, and the rise of digital technologies. Meeting these challenges involves not just physical planning, but also the need to give new meanings to places. This principle is now enshrined in the Dutch Government's long-term vision on the future development of the living environment in the Netherlands. The Dutch National Strategy on Spatial Planning and the Environment (NOVI) requires local government to produce an environmental vision setting out how the available space will be organised and managed to deal with future challenges to 2040.

One important consideration in the implementation of the NOVI is how spatial equity might be achieved. The strategy sets out three important factors to be taken into consideration in weighing different interests in the use of space:

- 1) Combined functions are more important than single functions
- 2) Characteristics and identity are central
- 3) Avoid shifting the problem to other areas

This implies that in the future, leisure will be increasingly involved in the multifunctional use of space and that it will be an increasingly important tool to develop and support the identity of places. The need to ensure inclusivity and multiple use means that we need to consider not just the division of leisure space between different target groups, but how we can give leisure places multiple meanings. Place meanings will increasingly need to be based not on a closed and static idea of identity, but on concepts such as Turkish author Elif Shafak's "multiple belongings" that enable us to understand and share places in a flexible way. Shafak (2019) argues that identity, and therefore our relationship with place, is not fixed, but a fluid set of relationships, or stories people tell about themselves. These stories should bring us closer to – rather than divide us from – our fellow human beings.

Shafak's optimistic vision is born of movement between multiple cultures and multiple locations, which necessitates opening up to difference and change. But she argues that multiple belongings can also be developed in situ, also through leisure: "Through your family stories, cultural affiliations, social preferences, political views, sports and arts connections, and so on, you still have multiple belongings." As space for leisure becomes increasingly scarce, it will be important to develop positive stories that facilitate the multiple use of places.

Rather than stick to traditional ways of making places to fit specific uses, or the design of 'multifunctional leisure spaces', the development

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In addition to time, leisure also requires space.



A place is a space which is given meaning through activities and events.

of multiple belongings to leisure space depends on developing stories about the different uses and meanings of spaces. This becomes easier in a leisure context, because the emphasis is placed on the unconstrained and flexible use of space, rather than heavily defined, exclusive and economically charged spheres of work or 'essential services'.

Developing creative placemaking

Even before Covid, events such as Park(ing) Day were re-thinking the use of parking spaces as leisure space. Park(ing) day is "a global, public, participatory project where people across the world temporarily repurpose curbside parking spaces and convert them into public parks and social spaces to advocate for safer, greener, and more equitable streets for people." The event began in 2005 with the transformation of a single parking bay in San Francisco, but by 2011 had grown into a global movement, encompassing almost 1,000 sites in 128 cities (Richards, 2015). This is an example of placemaking as tactical urbanism: "The purpose of this event is not to permanently reclaim parking spaces for public use. This is not an Occupy movement, or a sit-in. Rather, it is a temporary project, the goals of which

the organisers define as "to promote creativity, civic engagement, critical thinking, unscripted social interactions, generosity and play" (Barber, 2013: 21). These types of events therefore not only use space for leisure purposes, but also have leisure outcomes. At the same time, they challenge people's perceptions of the 'right' use of space, and the 'right' of different groups to occupy space. These are important discussions that lay the basis for tackling the major challenges ahead.

In many cities we are seeing an increased use of rooftop spaces for leisure and for other purposes. For example, the Portuguese city of Faro organised the Açoteia Rooftop Festival in 2019, giving residents and visitors a new view of the city and generating considerable publicity. This led to the formation of the European Creative Rooftop Network, which aims to "develop and share new methods for the sustainable and collaborative management of rooftops in Europe" which includes much bigger cities, such as Rotterdam and Amsterdam. Stichting Roef in Amsterdam argues that rooftop activities are needed because "Only 2% of Amsterdam rooftops is utilised; Just 1% of flat roofs is vegetated; The city is still growing busier, and Green is essential in battling climate change". The total roofscape of Amsterdam is around 12 square kilometres, or 25 times as large as the Vondelpark. The Amsterdam rooftops are therefore becoming leisure spaces: "Get away from the daily hustle and bustle and enjoy the view. Read a book or have a drink in one of the city's roof parks, green terraces, public food gardens, and other public spaces".

The annual Rooftop Festival shows the potential of leisure events for placemaking. The 2022 edition of the festival included programming from Holland Festival, Fringe Festival, Julidans and IDFA, showing the potential of these 'new' spaces to become part of the event programme of the city. The future vision of Stichting Roef is even more ambitious, envisaging "Holland's

biggest rooftop park, connected by footbridges, allowing you to go from roof to roof to roof!"

Meeting future challenges

Such tactical placemaking can be applied to new designs as well. Danish architects Third Nature have responded to the challenge of climate change by designing flexible parking solutions. Their pop-up garage design solves three challenges at the same time. When heavy rain falls, stormwater fills the underground reservoir, pushing the floating underground car park to the surface. The emergence of the car park into the cityscape highlights the adaptation to the forces of nature:

"Cities are in extreme situations where billions need to be spent on climate mitigation solutions and the equivalent amount on handling densification of the cities, especially the conflict between cars and urban spaces, so for us it is natural to think of the solutions together. It is a serious game with the infrastructural systems that provide real viability and completely new types of experiences back to the city's users" (Flemming Rafn Thomsen, partner at Third Nature).

As Marques and Pimentel Biscaia (2019) suggest, by linking leisure and placemaking, in cities in particular, leisure can contribute heavily to a healthier, happier, and more balanced way of living, by providing the flexibility needed to change uses and meanings.

Another extension of placemaking in the future will be the design of the virtual world. Emerging virtual environments such as the Metaverse and Decentraland may in the future provide alternative leisure spaces that can help to increase the sustainability of physical leisure places. Building new virtual places that are attractive for leisure will also require 'digital



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In many cities we are seeing an increased use of rooftop spaces for leisure and for other purposes.

placemaking', which entails turning digital space into place by creating meanings for those spaces and therefore generating a digital sense of place. One of the biggest challenges in digital placemaking is to produce a digital sense of co-presence, as Meta suggests: "the metaverse will help you connect with people when you aren't physically in the same place and get you even closer to that feeling of being together in person".

Meta showcases the development of skating community in the metaverse by Melissa:

@bronzgirlsskate, a growing community where girls are finding their place in #skateboarding. With the support of Melissa's skate crew from the Lower East Side to the Bronx and beyond, the only thing she's limited by is her imagination. All over the world skaters like Melissa use our technologies to build community and make the sport more open and inclusive. With more access to the sport and each other, skateboarding makes its official debut at the Olympics. We change the game when we find each other.

In Decentraland, a wide range of leisure events and attractions are springing up, such as is the Museum of Contemporary Digital Art (MoCDA), which "provides digital art education and technology to artists, collectors, institutions and art lovers". There is also a Metaverse Fashion Week 2023 and a Metaverse form of Amnesia Ibiza nightclub.

To make these digital places engaging for visitors, digital placemaking will need to adopt similar strategies to physical placemaking, ensuring that the digital resources are turned into meaningful places through the application of creativity. It will be important to ensure the development of digital co-presence, in order for participants to share a common focus and generate emotional energy.

Conclusion

The future of placemaking arguably needs to be grounded in addressing future challenges, allowing leisure practices to adapt to the changing context. For this to happen, more participative modes of placemaking should be developed that involve leisure as part of the process, rather than simply a design output. A number of projects, such as the EU-funded SmartCulTour initiative, are using 'serious games' to help planners, residents and other stakeholders co-create solutions to problems such as inner-city tourism management. The fact that the discussion of serious issues is contextualised as leisure, as a game, means that much of the edge is taken off potential conflicts.

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Photography

- www.stefanoborghi.com (page 53)
- *Street Lab* (page 55)



Is Rural the new Urban?

Creative placemaking in the context of non-urban communities

Matic Gajsek



Matic Gajsek is a lecturer in Leisure and Event Management at Breda University of Applied Sciences and PhD candidate at Tilburg University.



Rural communities face a range of negative developments that continue causing the disappearance of remote village communities and the weakening of rural social structures on a global scale. The negative trends of ongoing depopulation and increased urbanisation, fuelled by the rapid and fundamental climate, social and cultural changes therefore threaten to destruct cultural traditions that have been transferred from generation to generation. But it took us a pandemic and global climate crisis to raise attention back to the roots of nature, reflected in the global pursuit of sustainability to ask ourselves whether rural is the new urban also when it comes to placemaking?

Slovenia

It did take a family inheritance in rural Slovenia and the global pandemic for me to equally rethink and make a shift towards the immense beauty and inspiration that rural areas can give to an individual. Keen to create a platform that can empower the local community in the Kozjansko region, where our farm is situated, we have founded cultural residency Podlog pod Bohorjem. A non-profit that aims to become a cultural catalyst, using the power of culture and creativity as a *driving force* behind broader sustainable development of the community in this historically deprived region.

Objectives

The three-fold objective of the residency is to support the development as a cultural destination of both the residency and region of Kozjansko, stimulate economic development by following sustainable principles and lastly, create broader societal impact through capacity building and knowledge development (emphasis on cultural and creative tourism and circular economy). The residency is to serve

as a catalyst, positively contributing to the creation of stronger intercultural dialogue and integration of the local community and region in the European context. It is the lack of access and immense curiosity of the local community which made us recognise the need for such a laboratory environment.

Creative placemaking in rural contexts

Exploring the topic of creative placemaking in rural contexts is significant in the light of rural-specific trends as well as ongoing fundamental social and cultural change. Global depopulation and urbanisation continue causing not only the disappearance of remote village communities and the weakening of social structures but also the destruction of the cultural capital rooted in the rich cultural traditions transferred from generation to generation (Johnson et al., 2019). Rural decline makes social and cultural capital even more critical concepts, as these are essential resources for wealth creation.

But when discussing the creation of wealth in non-urban areas, we cannot exclude the notion of natural capital – a significant asset for (cultural) amenity-poor rural communities. And it is the natural capital that has gained public and policy attention, visible through the global pursuit of sustainability. Global consent that would therefore place cultural capital as one of the central pillars, side by side with ecological, social and economic sustainability (Cerisola, 2019).

Rural communities face the challenge of limited development possibilities, and tourism presents an apparently simple approach to stimulating the local economy (Dupre, 2018). A simple approach, which was deployed in our region by EU development grant schemes. But it is "when a transmission channel between the cultural heritage and economic performance is hypothesized, this is exclusively cultural

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Globally, rural depopulation and increasing urbanisation continue at an alarming rate.





Synergies between creativity and tourism do not only provide a new diversification strategy, but also an expansion of the creative economy.

tourism" (Cerisola, 2019). UNWTO's broader definition of cultural tourism, encompassing numerous dimensions of creativity and contemporary culture, furthermore indicates the ongoing integration of cultural tourism and creative economy (Richards, 2020).

Despite extensive academic and policy discussion about approaches to stimulate urban and rural regenerations (Richards, 2020), traditional approaches continue to emphasise culture-led regeneration or economic geography approaches based on cultural clusters (Edensor et al., 2009). It is the use of creativity and creative class for economic recovery (Florida, 2002) that has received an uncritical acceptance by policymakers around the globe, joining the race in the creation of urban hot spots. Promotion of creative clusters, networks and cosmopolitan neighbourhoods and the preconditions for the influx of the creative class, however, privilege only a specific creativity notion. Hence, it is timely to challenge the hierarchical ordering negatively translating into predominantly championing specific urban development forms (Edensor, 2009), also into the context of rural creativity strategies.

From cultural tourism to creative tourism and placemaking

With events and architectural highlights becoming tools for increasing the vibrancy

of places, attracting the creative class and tourists, and strengthening spatial identity, there is a growing interlink between creativity and tourism. Synergies that provide both a new diversification strategy and an expansion of the creative economy, depending on the mix of assets, skills and knowledge. This represents a transition from "the conventional mode of traditional heritage-based cultural tourism towards the new models of creative tourism centred on creativity, innovation and intangible content" (Richards, 2014: p.7). Expanding the scope from heritage-based tourism towards creativity-based tourism furthermore enables a symbiotic relationship between cultural tourism and creative economy, where tourism gains with added symbolic value generated by creativity and broader creative industries benefit from increased tourism.

"Creative tourism is a form of networked tourism, dependent on the ability of producers and consumers to relate to each other and generating value from their encounters. Creative tourists are 'cool hunters' in search of creative 'hot spots' where their own creativity can feed and be fed by the creativity of those they visit" (Richards et al., 2014 p. 10). The encounters-seeking creative tourist therefore also assumes the role of creative migrant, acting as an external actor connecting the local community and furthermore increasing their set of skills, knowledge and creative status (Janc et al., 2020).

"Placemaking as a concept describing the intentional process of activating new or existing public spaces to create that emotional connection" (Ball, 2014, p. 2) is in its essence about the "strategic shaping of physical and social character of neighbourhood, town, city or region around arts and cultural activities" (Markusen et al., 2014, p.3). Taking different forms, placemaking includes private and public space activation by means of programming, design, community empowerment, art, marketing and structural rejuvenation, improving local business viability or public safety, etc. Placemaking is both contextual and situational, and any placemaking project therefore requires the 'unique recipe' based on the needs of the community or specific location. But both the community and specific location remain under-investigated in cases of rural proximities.

The criticism of creative placemaking generating

'philanthropic routes to gentrification' represents a true challenge, specifically in the resources-poor rural context. Acknowledgement and consideration of urban bias remain visible both in academic and policy spheres. When European cultural policy is looked at, rural communities fall short when competing against urban metropolis or even smaller cities, due to a lack of access and resources. And as in the case of the Kozjansko region, tension is emerging due to the lack of resources of local communities and increased incoming investments by external actors.



Even at the European cultural policy, rural communities fall short when competing against urban metropolises or even smaller cities.

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Photography

- Cultural residency Podlog pod Bohorjem



Students on a placemaking mission in the city of Amsterdam

Prototyping positive Urban Experiences

Eva James

Eva James is Designer and Lecturer of Experience Design at Inholland University of Applied Sciences.

What happens if 120 second-year students go on a placemaking mission in the city of Amsterdam? A story about happy communities, making international headlines and contributing to the agenda of the Night Mayor.

The challenge

For the design-based Placemaking course at Inholland University of Applied Sciences, Leisure & Events management students were asked to research complex neighbourhood challenges, formulate a design scope, and create and test a prototype for a positive urban experience. Departing from a broad 'How might we...' question students spread out over five neighbourhoods in Amsterdam to carry out place-based and in-depth contextual research, as well as co-create and test spaces designed for social impact. Experts from The Placemakers, lecturers, coaches and neighbourhood experts and stakeholders guided the students throughout the co-design process. The public was the judge; evaluation of the prototype took place on the spot. The concepts were presented to a panel from the industry during and at the end of the project.

Why placemaking?

Placemaking is all about "Places shaping people, people shaping places" (Ellery & Borkowsky, 2021); the process by which a socially meaningful place is created on the basis of local knowledge and qualities as well as by doing small-scale interventions, thereby contributing to both local and wider social goals. Placemaking evolves around the needs and the involvement of local stakeholders - the community is the expert on how a place is used and experienced. Based on analysis and co-creation, placemaking can transform a space into a place by adding social and experiential value.

Why for Leisure & Events management students at Inholland?

Placemaking is an excellent breeding ground for experience-based, co-creative education: students discover they can create a place that holds experiential value using simple means. Within the design-based curriculum, students must take into account what is going on locally in their research and design process in order for their interventions to contribute to the experience and use of that place and to the needs of stakeholders. Awareness of complex urban challenges and their stakeholders is increased and iterations based on co-creation and evaluation add depth to the students' leisure experience design.

At the core of the curriculum is this quote by architect Jan Gehl: "A good city is like a good party- people stay longer than really necessary, because they are enjoying themselves" (Matan, Newman, 2016). The experience of a place is central: the design (physical, programme) of a place has an effect on experience and can change behaviour. Students base their concepts and prototype interventions on experience design theory. Incorporating placemaking as an experience in the education programme creates environment-conscious Leisure and Events Managers who know how to create support, a network, social impact and attractive places!

Successful Case: Dress & Dance

One of the best-received concepts was developed by a group of five students who started the project with the question: how can we make sure everyone gets to enjoy an evening out in the Reguliersdwarsstraat, the heart of the LGBTIQ+ area in Amsterdam? Through research, students found out that the rainbow community did not feel safe to dress as they wanted when travelling to and from the clubs in the street. The group managed to involve the local entrepreneurs and community from the start by testing their concept and paper

prototype models for Dress & Dance, a safe changing room before going out to the club. The prototype test took place in a local salon with drag queens doing make-up, a free taxi service home offered by TCA, and safety officers helping out. There was a lot of enthusiasm for the intervention by visitors and the press: the test received attention from De Telegraaf, Het Parool and even Reuters picked it up. As one of the visitors mentioned: "It's very unfortunate that we need this, but great that it's here." By testing in real life, students gathered valuable insights on the spot with which the prototype can be improved. The group was asked to help turn this test into a fixed location by the street manager. The night mayor of Amsterdam told Parool newspaper that creating this safe space is to be one of the first accomplishments of his term.

Project evaluation

Below, you can read the outcome of a small evaluation of the Dress & Dance project with

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By testing in real life, students gathered valuable insights on the spot with which the prototype can be improved.



the project group which shows that value is created on different levels. For the city, for the development of the students, and for the stakeholder and target groups involved.

How did you feel about this project at the start?

Emily: "At the beginning I had a hard time finding out exactly what was asked of us and what needed to be resolved. Only later did I get a picture of the total assignment and what the problem was. When I finally had clarity and we had created a good concept, I became even more motivated to participate in the project."
 Kim: "I found it rather difficult: what exactly was the purpose of this project? That was because we were asked a very broad question and I didn't really know what to focus on. Once we had chosen a target group and location, it became a lot clearer to me with what the intention was."

Josien: "At first, I thought it was all a bit vague but as we did more and more research it all became clear. Due to the many collaborations and stakeholders we spoke to, the project

became more and more realistic, which ensured that we also started working more seriously."

What was the best part of the project?

Maaïke: "That our concept has been treated so seriously by people we have worked with and may well become a permanent thing. When we noticed that there was a lot of interest, it motivated me to persevere and make something cool out of it."

Emily: "What I liked most about this project is that the concept was received so well by the LGBTIQ+ community and that we received so much publicity, even internationally. I am extremely proud of the project group and of what we have achieved, the beautiful things we have created."

Kim: "I am proud of what we were able to achieve in the end. I think it's great that Dress & Dance has received so much media attention and I thought it was great that so many people responded so enthusiastically to our concept. That made me feel like we've built something really cool. I think it would be very cool if this concept could help even more people in the future."



The rainbow community did not feel safe to dress as they wanted when travelling to and from the clubs in the street.

Josien: "In the end, we made headlines and that's not something I've been able to achieve with a school project before. The collaboration was a bit difficult here and there, but in the end we created something super cool with all of them. I am very proud of it."

Lieke: "I found it super fun and instructive to work with someone [a stakeholder of the business association, EJ] who sees it not just as a school project, but as a potentially working concept."

Het Parool

Plus Reportage

Een veilige omkleedplek in de Reguliers voor uitgaanspubliek: 'Ik ben altijd bang'

Lang niet alle mensen van de regenboogcommunity voelen zich veilig genoeg om in hun uitgaanskieren over straat te gaan. Uitgaanspubliek kon zich zaterdagavond daarom voor en na het uitgaan omkleeden in kapsalon WhoCares in de Reguliersdwarsstraat. 'Ik ben altijd bang.'

Raounak Khaddari 15 januari 2023, 07:41



More information

- <https://www.parool.nl/amsterdam/een-veilige-omkleedplek-in-de-reguliers-voor-uitgaanspubliek-ik-ben-altijd-bang-b8c690dc>
- <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/nightlife-safe-space-lgbtq-community-tested-amsterdam-2023-01-19>

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Photography

- Het Parool (page left below)

How to make place in and out of the classroom?

Leisure and placemaking in academic and professional education

Olaf Ernst
&
Kristel Zegers



Olaf Ernst is coordinator of the Urban Life & Placemaking specialisation at the Academy for Leisure & Events (BUAs). Kristel Zegers coordinates the Leisure and Placemaking course as a lecturer and researcher at the Academy for Leisure & Events (BUAs).

It is a term you see pop up in strategic plans, policy documents and in education more and more: placemaking. Will it be the new 'buzzword' of the 2020s, or is there more beyond this flashy concept? At the Future of Leisure conference last March, it was one of the central themes, and it already has a prominent place within education. How does the Academy for Leisure & Events make sure that placemaking has a meaningful and practical application within our programmes? This article shows how and why we give placemaking a 'place' in our leisure curricula.

From consumption to a human-centred approach

Within the academic Bachelor of Science Leisure Studies, one of the central questions revolves around the context in which leisure practices take place. Physical and virtual places can be seen as contexts for all sorts of leisure practices. At the same time, these leisure practices also influence what places look like or how they are experienced. Leisure thus plays a role in placemaking. To dive deeper into that, the Leisure Studies curriculum offers the Leisure and Placemaking course to second-year students and pre-master's students.

The course illustrates that leisure consumes place, and that it can be a carrier of spatial quality thus producing place. Since both perspectives are especially prominent within cities, we zoom in on the urban context. The leisure as consumption perspective shows how inner cities turned into theme parks. By making use of cultural flagships to put themselves on the map, cities participated in an intensified rat race for attracting mobile capital of visitors, tourists, businesses, residents - particularly those labelled the 'creative class' - to enable economic growth. However, it has become clear that strategies focused on using leisure as spectacle and consumption have downsides: exclusion, homogenisation, privatisation of public space, lack of authenticity to name a few. Not surprisingly, a call for more human-centred urban planning became more prominent. Emphasis is given to quality of life, sustainability, inclusion, collaboration, and community, thus placing social objectives next to economic gain. These thoughts steer leisure away from primarily commercial connotations towards thinking of leisure as focal practices. Leisure can unite people around a shared interest (a focal activity), which stimulates social interaction, and thus supports the creation of trust. In this way, leisure creates opportunities for strengthening social cohesion among and between communities of shared interest.

Field trip, game, and project

Placemaking is a collaborative effort, ideally community-focused, often combining both top-down as well as bottom-up strategies. Within education we believe that placemaking not only needs to be studied but also experienced. We therefore incorporated a field trip, a serious game, and a practical assignment in the Leisure and Placemaking course.

The field trip to the Galvanitas factory in Oosterhout taught students how complex placemaking processes are, given the variety of interests of different stakeholders, and how challenging it is to balance hardware, software, and orgware.

To further understand the different stakeholder perspectives students played a serious game. This multiplayer physical board game in combination with a digital dashboard was, according to researcher and game facilitator Jessika Weber, originally developed to "promote stakeholder engagement, deepen the understanding about the complexity of sustainable urban tourism and explore integrated strategies to manage sustainable tourism." Students participated in five stakeholder teams representing destination management, hospitality, attractions, mobility, and ecology. Actions that students took on the game board (e.g. building a public transport stop, removing or building a hotel, launching a marketing campaign) were translated to the

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We are the connectors. We join forces to create cool places making urban life better and more fun.

dashboard showing the effects of their actions in terms of ecology, visitability, liveability, equity, economic growth and smart citizenship. Students reflected that "Since residents and visitors did not have a voice, our team forgot to consider their wishes in the first round". Students became aware of politics, power relations, and - most importantly - the need to have a shared vision.

In their practical assignment students also experienced the diversity and complexity of stakeholder processes within several (creative) placemaking projects. Business cases were Galvanitas, Breda Botanique, Pier 15, MotMotGallery, and Trankade. Their educational vlogs showed suggestions for strategic interventions to enhance placemaking processes. This can provide food for thought to professional bachelor's students to concretely execute them.

Placemaking linchpins

Placemaking manifests itself prominently in urban environments. After all, many spatial challenges occur in complex contexts with a diversity of people living, working, and spending their free time. Therefore, in September 2021 a track within the bachelor's programme in Leisure & Events started, named Urban Life & Placemaking. In this programme we immerse students in all kinds of aspects of leisure in city environments, with a prominent position for placemaking. In a two-year curriculum, starting after the propaedeutic year, students learn how to bring the vision of our specialisation into practice: "We are the connectors. We join

forces to create cool places making urban life better and more fun". As you can see from this vision, communication, cooperation, concepting and citizen's well-being remain central.

What the track aims to do is find a balance between the social, economic, and spatial aspects of urban leisure and specifically placemaking. Students will not become experts in either social issues, commercial area development or urban planning and design, but will be the ones who bring these different views together. In this way, they become central points of contact for all kinds of stakeholders in the city.

Because Urban Life & Placemaking has a broad view on leisure in cities, many different themes are offered to students as topics of study: from greening aspects such as the use and value of city parks to the issue of gentrification and the effects on leisure supply, social cohesion, or property prices. Inclusion is another big theme, in the broadest sense of the word and aimed at all citizen groups. The role of arts and culture in area development is a topic which logically fits within our educational programme. At the same time, other leisure subsectors such as events, hospitality, and sports also get attention. These topics are mainly taught in ten-week courses, but also by four weekly visits to Dutch cities, where students take a deep dive into a specific topic. This programme element is called Urban Scope and lets students experience the practical translation of broad themes such as mobility, storytelling, and hospitality & food.

To bring theory into practice, students work on projects for a substantial number of study credits. The programme is flexible meaning students can decide themselves on which competencies and learning outcomes they want to work, in which time frame and with which fellow student(s). This gives them a lot of freedom throughout the year. It requires self-organisation, discipline, and proactivity. Some assignments are offered by the specialisation itself, some are recruited by students. Examples of projects are the organisation of a carnival event aimed at international students in Breda, and a new concept for an event in Rotterdam where artists open their studio doors to their audience.

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Students move to European cities like Bilbao, Porto, and Turin to live like a local.

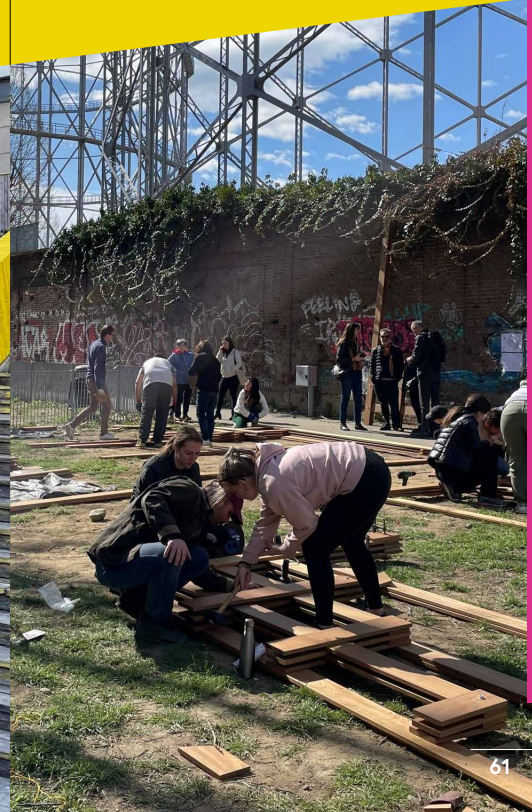
To get the placemaking aspect even more across, third-year students move to a European city for a five-month time frame, in a group of three to five students. Here, they transform from being tourists at the start to becoming 'locals'. They do this by living, working, and enjoying their leisure time in cities such as Porto, Turin, and Bilbao. By means of online education and assignments they are supported by city coaches. At the same time, students work on their professional development by doing volunteer work or a work placement at a leisure-related organisation. They also get to know their city better by 'challenges' in which students need to conduct assignments often together with locals.

Best of both worlds

In describing the two courses we offer our students we illustrated the importance of leisure in placemaking. As a context to bring people together, but also as an instrument to enhance placemaking. We believe it deserves a prominent place within our curriculum, in a way that goes deeper than using it as a marketing tool. Since we offer a programme on both academic and professional bachelor's level, we also have the possibility to learn from each other and use the best of both worlds in terms of course and class design.

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Students became aware of politics, power relations, and - most importantly - the need to have a shared vision.



Collaboration workplace enhances the transformative capacity

The library as an engine for sustainable inclusive district development

Ger Pepels



Ger Pepels is involved in the Urban Living Lab Breda (ULLB) on behalf of Breda University of Applied Sciences.

The collaboration workplaces (*Samenwerkplaatsen*) of the ULLB sees direct involvement of residents in their own living environment as a prerequisite for sustainable, inclusive development. Leisure practices, such as the ones in the new library, provide an opportunity to support the transformation of the role of residents in the social playing field.

ULLB and resident engagement

The voices of residents are represented less strongly in conversations about urban development. As a resident, you can cast your vote your opinion, and then it is up to local politicians to represent that vote. According to ULLB, this representation is inadequate to achieve a justifiable, inclusive, and sustainable transition. Therefore, ULLB involves residents in projects. The way in which they do so varies from project to project, for example, ranging from the learning-oriented development of socio-technical innovations like the *Zelfbewuste Huis* (Self-Aware House) to the Collaboration workplace focused on profound transformation of relationships.

Addressing challenges in the district

ULLB has worked together with collaboration workplace in the Hoge Vucht district as from 2020. This district regularly receives negative publicity, residents are far removed from institutional parties that want to contribute to the liveability of the neighbourhood, and the level of organisation of residents themselves

is low. In the 2021 report *Segregatie in Breda* (Segregation in Breda), the Breda audit office substantiates the failure of local policies and the growing dichotomy in the development of neighbourhoods. The challenges in the fields of socio-economic position, housing, participation, well-being, and health are most severe in the neighbourhoods of Hoge Vucht: Geeren-Zuid, Geeren-Noord, Biesdonk and Wisselaar.

This issue does not only arise in Breda. With the 2022 National Liveability & Safety programme, the national government indicates its intention to give long-term and substantial extra impetus to twenty districts in the Netherlands. In line with this, Breda is developing the *Verbeter*

Breda (Improve Breda) programme. On 19 April 2023, a large group of institutional players signed Pact 3, the implementation programme. The focus on housing, liveability, safety and youth development is obviously relevant, and compared to the regular neighbourhood approach, residents are involved in the development of *Verbeter Breda* more directly and to a higher degree.

Still, it is important to note that the residents themselves living in this district have not been instrumental in making choices for and translating them to their neighbourhood. Therefore, even though the programme aspires to give residents a stronger voice, "residents see it as yet another programme that has been developed top-down," said the chair of the district council.

Overview of ULLB

Transforming			Collaboration workplace
Improving			
Learning			
Understanding			
	Technical innovations	Socio-technical innovations	Innovations in the social field



Based on the ABCD philosophy, it is up to residents to decide what goals they want to use the power sources for. In the past three years, residents have emphasised housing ('no more social rent'), (traffic) safety, greenery and, above all, meeting people as priorities. In a more general sense, those priorities correspond to the focus of *Verbeter Breda*, but, as mentioned, in *Verbeter Breda* the direct involvement of the residents concerned is of secondary importance.

However essential this involvement may be, achieving it is especially challenging. Leisure practices pass by in the collaboration workplace Hoge Vucht: small events with resident involvement (New Year's drinks, WIEK tour) entice people to go outside and encourage encounters. The realisation of these initiatives repeatedly shows that the organisational power of Hoge Vucht residents is still limited. Many residents have other, everyday priorities. They have largely lost faith in institutions and are looking for solutions to their personal problems themselves.

As challenging as that step is, however, it is also essential. How can residents become more and actively involved in strengthening the liveability of their neighbourhood?

The library returns

The local authorities decided to close the library in the district in 2013, much to the chagrin of many residents. Library North had a broad social function, offering social work consultation hours, the form filling service, and organised read-aloud events and activities for young and old in addition to the library facility. By 2019, the fact that residents missed their library had permeated politics and the motion to bring back the library received wide support in the city council.

From earlier conversations of collaboration workplace Hoge Vucht with residents, 'meeting people' appeared to be a core need. For residents, the library has multiple functions, with the traditional library function being only one. Besides borrowing books, residents think that access to study or work areas, learning or developing, and easily accessible opportunities for meeting people outside their own circle are essential functions of the new facility. Residents also connect the library with pride in their neighbourhood and even enhancement of the neighbourhood's image beyond their own borders.

In the 2022 coalition agreement, the political desire was turned into a reservation of three million euros for the new library facility in the district, with a connection made to the *Verbeter Breda* programme in formation as well.

The municipality approached the district council requesting them to play an active role in the reintroduction of the library, starting with mapping out residents' needs. To this end, the district council together with collaboration workplace Hoge Vucht, organised exploratory trips to Permeke in Antwerp, the cultural facility Theek 5 in Baarle-Hertog, district library Delfshaven in Rotterdam, Bouwlust in The Hague, Nieuwe Veste, and the new cultural centre De Nobelaer in Etten-Leur. In addition to municipal councillors, neighbourhood professionals, officials and administrators, the residents took part in the exploratory trips. This provided inspiration and deeper insights into the wishes of residents.

In spring 2023 the district council and collaboration workplace Hoge Vucht conducted additional interviews with groups of residents (the elderly, Moroccan women, around both



Residents determine what power sources will be used for what purposes.



mosques, and Stichting Hart van Breda Noord). This additional research confirmed earlier lessons about the importance of meeting and connecting:

"Those (meetings) add tremendous value to the neighbourhood. It brings people together. Think of the example in Antwerp as well. The library 'went outdoors' about a hundred times a year, to other public spaces. Make sure there's a programme."

The library will need to serve multiple functions. It is essential to determine in dialogue what makes 'the library a library' of this neighbourhood and who should be involved in it in what way. This plurality of functions requires the involvement of other actors than just experts from the library.

Transforming to sustainable, inclusive organisations

Developing a library that contributes to a sustainable, inclusive society requires strong involvement of the neighbourhood community. By participating in the development, residents step into the pluralistic social playing field and make their voices heard. Taking that step is not easy in practice. For example, the group of active residents in Hoge Vucht who want to take up this challenge is still small. The trips, individual and group discussions, and articles in the district newspaper *Koers* are now generating attention. An early trust that the library will return is budding. The first residents willing to participate are now signing up. The hope is that the realisation of a pop-up library will accelerate this process.

The municipality's invitation to residents to take an active role is a major step in exploring ways in which residents, municipality, social organisations, and businesses can work together in new ways. Collaboration workplace Hoge Vucht is going to organise a social learning process to thus contribute to the transformation of neighbourhood governance.



The residents themselves have not been heard when choices were made for and translated to their neighbourhoods.

Working based on ABCD

Collaboration workplace Hoge Vucht wants to contribute precisely here by strengthening the residents' voices and, to this end, works on the basis of Asset Based Community Development (ABCD). The residents' say and working from the residents' strengths and assets are central to this. These assets/sources of power include:

- residents' individual qualities
- their formal and informal collaborations, e.g. Foundation Hart (Stichting Hart) at Breda Noord, La Femme Vitaal, football club Advendo, children's farm Parkhoeve
- availability of social amenities, such as the collaborative building societies 1 Team Hoge Vucht
- public areas (outdoor areas, community centres)
- the shared stories ('It is pleasant to live in the neighbourhood')
- the range of shops (Hoge Vucht shopping centre) and businesses

How do you measure experience and impact in the culture sector?

Theoretical principles for research

Pieter de Rooij
& Adriaan van Liempt



Pieter de Rooij is a lecturer Experience Marketing and researcher of consumer behaviour at the Academy for Leisure & Events. Adriaan van Liempt is a lecturer of Sociology, Statistics and Data Science and researcher of consumer behaviour at the Academy for Leisure & Events.

Experience has long been at the centre of cultural and leisure offerings. In the 1990s, it was firmly put on the agenda by Pine and Gilmore. Recently, there has been increasing talk of the transition from the Experience Economy to a Transformation Economy. That's quite significant, from experience to impact, because as we will argue later, transformation is seen in the literature as the strongest form of impact. The concept of impact is high on the research agenda in the cultural sector. In this article, we describe some theoretical principles and explain how to measure experience and impact. We do this on the basis of a study we are currently conducting for the Netherlands Open Air Museum in Arnhem.

Why impact?

Cultural organisations often have an important role within the playing field of social relevance. They are well aware that this relevance goes beyond numbers of visitors, numbers of performances, or good satisfaction ratings. Nowadays, it is also mainly about the effect of cultural visits on individual visitors and thus on society. In the past, organisations carried out many satisfaction surveys, and more

recently experience studies. Our idea is that in the near future it will increasingly be about impact research. It is all about *to prove* and *to improve* as stated by Vermeulen and Maas (2021). Impact research not only provides opportunities to demonstrate impact to grant providers and sponsors, but also to improve strategy and make effective investments to increase impact.

What is meant by experience and impact?

We define experience as an immediate, personal, subjective outcome, as a result of an interaction between a visitor and environmental stimuli designed by an organisation and other visitors which is affective, cognitive, and sensory in nature. We emphasise *immediate*, as opposed to impact, which involves a *growing* and *delayed* effect.

Some people focus on the instrumental value of impact, such as economic or social significance. Here, we focus on individual impact. So what is the impact on or what is the effect for the individual? Duerden et al. (2018) distinguishes three levels of *experiential impact* that we also adhere to. The first level of impact is memorable. The visitor's attention has been caught and held and (strong) emotions are involved. The second impact level is meaningful. The experience is not only memorable, but also leads to significant and personally relevant, new insights. The third and highest impact level is transformational. The experience is not only memorable or meaningful, but also leads to a personal change in values, beliefs, intentions or behaviour.

So the big difference between experience and impact is that impact is about what the experience actually triggers. Impact, in other words, is the effect of the experience. Visitors can characterise their experience of a cultural



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Three levels of experience impact: memorable, meaningful and transformational.



visit immediately afterwards. But creating impact requires (some) reflection and thus has a delayed character.

How do you measure experience and impact?

Experience and impact are difficult to measure. They are both personal and subjective. Moreover, all kinds of environmental factors play a role, making it difficult to generalise outcomes. Consider, for example, the context of the provider (mission, image, physical environment) and the composition of the audience. It is therefore important for any experience and impact research to properly describe the situation and circumstances in which the service is delivered. It is particularly important to properly describe the purpose of the organisation (the *intended experience* and the *intended impact*). After all, this will enable you to evaluate the experience and impact in a targeted way and make improvements.

Opinions are divided on whether you should use qualitative or quantitative visitor research. Those in favour of a qualitative approach (using interviews, for example) say you should give the visitor a real voice. This way, you embrace the subjective nature. The focus is then on



Experience and impact are both personal and subjective and therefore more difficult to measure.

understanding experience and impact. Those in favour of a quantitative approach point out that there is a strong need to make experience and impact measurable. Moreover, you can better explain experience and impact because of the larger numbers. In our study for the Arnhem Open Air Museum, we measured experience and impact in a quantitative way because we wanted to explore the relationships between service ratings, experience, impact, satisfaction and the NPS (Net Promoter Score).

Experience dimensions in museum research

In our research for the Open Air Museum, we used experience dimensions previously described by researchers in the museum sector (Packer et al., 2018). In the first phase of our research, we made a selection from the 17 dimensions identified. We used a short survey to ask visitors how important they thought each experience dimension was (n = 120). Then, taking into account the mission of the Open Air Museum, we had a discussion with marketing manager Carola van der Woude about which dimensions were relevant to select: what would fit the *intended experience*? In the end, we included eight experience dimensions in the follow-up study. We measured each experience dimension by means of four questions (taken from Packer et al., 2018).

Below is a list of all the experience dimensions and, in brackets, two examples of the questions.

- Engagement (I felt very engaged, I was very interested).
- Appreciation of beauty (What I saw was attractive to me, I enjoyed the many beautiful things I saw).
- Relaxation (I felt relaxed, I was able to unwind well).
- Reflection (It made me think, a mirror was held up to me).
- Sociability (I felt involved with others, I had a sense of togetherness).
- Marvel (I had a sense of wonder, I loved it).
- Joy (I enjoyed it, I was enthusiastic).
- Choice/Autonomy (I felt free to do the things I wanted to do, I was able to make my own choices).

Impact measurement

We measured the *experience impact* by means of the three-way classification already described by Duerden et al. (2018) (examples of questions are in brackets):

- Memorable (I was touched emotionally, the visit will stay with me for a long time)
- Meaningful (The visit led to new insights about myself, others, or the world around me)
- Transformational (It led to a change in my attitude, belief, identity or behaviour; I felt inspired to do something new or different in my life).

We conducted the impact measurement at two points in time: immediately after the visit to the museum and two months after the visit. As we are currently collecting the data, we cannot yet describe any results.

In conclusion

In this article, we have described the theoretical principles underlying the choices we have made in experience and impact research in the cultural sector. We hope that the results we will soon provide can contribute to the further development of this kind of research, and that these results will support the Open Air Museum in the choices they make in the field of experience and impact design.



Impact research provides opportunities to grant providers and sponsors, improve strategy and make effective investments.

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Photography

- Nederlands Openluchtmuseum

Student perspectives on the future of leisure



Who are you and what programme do you study? Why did you choose Leisure & Event Management?

My name is **Guus van der Wolk** and I am currently graduating in Leisure and Events Management (LEM) at the Willem de Kooning Academy in Rotterdam. I chose this study programme four years ago because I knew I am good at coming up with ideas and developing them in a broad spectrum. LEM offers a broad field of work, so that's how I ended up here.

What trend or development inspires you and how do you want to work on that?

My interests are currently in healthcare and education; what is happening there, but more importantly, what is not happening there yet? And what are the opportunities in healthcare and education from the perspective of leisure. For example, gamification is a trend that is very interesting in this area; how can you make learning or medical rehabilitation more fun by adding a gaming element.

And your avatar? What will it do in 2040 in this trend in terms of leisure?

My avatar in 2040 works in a place where I can connect people and solve problems with creative, playful solutions. I work in a horizontal team with a very positive atmosphere where almost anything is possible. Thinking inside the box is the new smoking; you are only allowed to think outside the box!



Who are you and what is your study programme? Why did you choose Leisure & Events Management?

My name is **Tijn Geurts**, at the time of writing I am a third-year student of Leisure & Events Management at NHL Stenden. I am in this programme because I really enjoy making others happy, something you get to do in this industry.

What do you see as the biggest challenge facing the leisure industry?

My expectation is that there is a great challenge ahead in supply and demand. During the Covid period, it became very clear that people very much like doing something in their spare time. Nowadays, more people also know better what they enjoy doing, which is why I expect demand to rise sharply and supply to struggle to keep up.

Which role in the leisure industry do you see as contributing to a future solution?

Personally, I see a lot of opportunities in the (outdoor) sports sector. Community health is becoming increasingly important to each individual, this is often sought in sports and outdoor activities. Coincidentally, that is also where my interests lie at the moment. So, it would be nice if I could play my part there as a provider in the future.

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My avatar in 2040 works in a place where I can connect people and solve problems with creative, playful solutions.



Who are you and what specialisation do you study? Why did you choose this domain?

I am **Pascalle van Dorst** and I am doing the Master of Science Leisure and Tourism Studies at Breda University of Applied Sciences. I previously did a bachelor's in communication in the leisure industry and I thought that this master's might possibly add to that. I was also very interested in the multicultural environment of the school and the very diverse programme.

What trend or development inspires you and how do you want to work on that?

I am interested in the continuing growth of the experience economy. The product or service is not the main focus anymore. I think that storytelling and listening to the consumer can help create continuously evolving experiences that are not only memorable, but also moving and maybe even life-changing. Alternative technologies like AI and VR can make experiences more inclusive and I am more than curious to see what other techniques the future brings.

And your avatar? What will it do in 2040 in this trend in terms of leisure?

What I personally hope to add to the future of Leisure and Events is a fresh pair of eyes and an endless curiosity towards others. I believe that we can only improve the industry by listening, not only to consumers but also to others in and around the leisure and event industry. By working together, new inventions can be made, talents can be optimised and we can all, in general, be prouder and happier.



Who are you and what programme do you study? Why did you choose Leisure & Events Management?

I am **Loreen Brink**, 21 years old and living in Amsterdam. I am now at the end of my second year of Leisure and Event Management at Inholland Diemen University of Applied Sciences. This study programme appealed to me because I enjoy conceiving and organising events. The study programme offers me the opportunity to develop my organisational talents and apply them in a professional context.

What do you see as the biggest challenge facing the leisure sector?

I think the biggest challenge is going to be how we all organise leisure in a sustainable way. The sector has a significant environmental impact, ranging from transport emissions to waste generation. Reducing the environmental footprint and promoting sustainable practices, such as energy efficiency, waste management and use of renewable resources, is essential, yet far from all organisations seem truly aware of this. Greenwashing is also a real problem.

What future role in the leisure field do you see as contributing to the solution?

In the future, I see an important role for myself as a sustainability manager in the leisure field. In which I will be responsible for developing and implementing sustainability strategies within the leisure sector. I like the challenge of working with companies, organisations and government agencies to actually promote sustainability practices and reduce environmental impacts. And to do so in a fun and interactive way.



Who are you and what specialisation do you study? Why did you choose Leisure & Event Management?

I am **Tommaso Del Maso**, currently a student specialising in Urban Life & Placemaking at Breda University of Applied Sciences. I chose Leisure & Events to jump into a new industry that is often overlooked in my home country, Italy. It attracted me for the ample opportunities it offers and the unique satisfaction it gives back.

What do you see as the biggest challenge facing the leisure sector?

When I look at the industry I will soon be immersed in, I believe the biggest challenge will be to stand out in what often becomes a saturated market. While free time has increased in people's lives, so has the leisure offer. It is urgent for the industry to develop new strategies to remain relevant in a fast-changing scenario that offers buyers a multitude of opportunities.

What role in the leisure field do you see for yourself in the future to contribute to the solution?

As a future leisure placemaker, my strategy would be to focus on local urban life and events on a small scale. My desire for a career in area development, working on creating and developing urban clusters and hotspots, can help me to achieve this by reconnecting leisure to one's identity. After all, these developments would add to the market a co-creative, multifunctional space which can be used for a range of leisure purposes and differentiate it from the global offer.

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I believe the biggest challenge will be to stand out in a saturated market.

Sustainable Futures

Decoding the interplay of leisure and sustainability

Wilco Camp

Wilco Camp is a senior lecturer in Leisure & Events management at NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences.

As our society evolves, so does our understanding of sustainability and its interplay with Leisure & Events. This complex relationship was spotlighted as one of the focus areas during the Future of Leisure Conference. Showing us the potential for a world where leisure not only coexists but thrives alongside sustainable practices.

The organisational team of the Future of Leisure Conference made an effort to adhere to sustainable event practices, following examples from Green Events and Innofest. The events and festivals connected to these initiatives are pioneers of sustainable leisure, integrating zero-waste initiatives and circular economy models into their operations. These events prove that sustainable leisure is not an unrealistic goal, but an attainable reality that offers engaging and meaningful experiences.

Together with BUAs' Green team several actions were taken, working towards a zero-waste

conference, such as vegetarian lunches and snacks, no disposables, digital communication and local suppliers.

Sustainability programme

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were an integral part of the discussions in the afternoon programme in the afternoon sustainability programme. SDG 3, Good Health and Well-Being, and SDG 11, Sustainable Cities and Communities, were of particular significance, underscoring the need to balance societal health, welfare, and environmental stewardship.

These themes were brought to life through LEGO Serious Play workshops and a storyboarding workshop, which offered participants the chance to envisage sustainable cities of the future. The workshops were alternated with inspirational activities encouraging participants to learn more about zero waste, from Elisah Pals (zero waste Netherlands); actively recycling waste to create new valuable products with Rolfh Adriaansen (van Pet naar Pret); or go Plogging, an active way of picking up litter, with Ron Bekker (Runnerscafé).

Workshops

Within the workshops each subgroup focused on one of five key themes, resulting in these interesting key takeaways:

Green Living, the future blend of business & leisure: This concept envisioned a society that reveres both the wisdom of the elderly and the innovative ideas of the younger generation.

Waste-Free, leisure experiences rethinking waste: The participants created a city where waste does not exist - a city that efficiently manages resources and is committed to cleaning the oceans.

Circularity, what comes in, must come out: The solution highlighted the importance of changing our behaviours and attitudes towards waste, transforming it from a nuisance to a resource within a circular city.

Sustainable Communities, sense of leisureness: The city model emphasised collective growth and harmony, reminding us that humans are part of the natural ecosystem, not superior to it.

Ban the Butts, towards a smoke-free campus: This theme focused on designing a clean, smoke-free campus, indicating the vital role of public health and cleanliness in sustainable leisure spaces.

These imaginative city models capture the synergy between SDGs 3 and 11, presenting a future where health, well-being, and sustainability are balanced and thriving. They demonstrate the innovative solutions that become possible when we explore sustainability in a creative and open-minded manner.

Looking towards the future, it is clear that sustainable leisure and events are set to become the standard rather than the exception. Every event, whether it is a music festival, sports event or a city-wide carnival, will champion green practices. We predict these events will adopt zero-waste policies, encourage participants to offset carbon emissions, or even turn waste into public art.

These sustainable leisure activities will not merely provide entertainment. They will serve as educational platforms, inspiring attendees to integrate sustainable practices into their everyday lives. They will foster community engagement, promoting awareness and responsible behaviours.

The Future of Leisure Conference demonstrated that sustainable leisure is not just a trend within the industry, but a powerful movement capable of shaping our collective future. The creative city models, innovative concepts, and forward-thinking visions generated during the conference offer a glimpse into an exciting future of sustainable leisure. They underscore the transformative potential of the leisure industry and its ability to redefine our experiences, cities, and communities in a more sustainable, more prosperous world. As we move towards this exciting future, let us each do our part to adopt and promote sustainable practices in our own leisure activities.

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Sustainable leisure is not an unrealistic goal, but an attainable reality that offers engaging and meaningful experiences.

Leisure inspires hope for change

'Challenging the younger generation to create impact towards a more beautiful world'

Frank Cruca
&
Juul Paalvast



Frank Cruca and Juul Paalvast are lecturers of Leisure & Events Management at Breda University of Applied Sciences.

If you open your eyes, you see the cracks; if you listen, you hear the squeaking and creaking: nitrogen, loneliness, food banks, energy prices, working conditions, gender inequality. The old doesn't seem to work anymore. Old, mostly white, men and women talk on TV. Politicians speak in circles. Scientists say things must change. 'The world is falling apart,' a cry of urgency to those who want to hear and those who do not. It is clear that things have to change, but how?

Impact challenge for first-year students

We asked 447 first-year students to make an impact with 'leisure' in a fortnight. To throw a stone into a pond. A pond they considered important themselves. They did so in three steps:

1. Choose a societal issue that has you puzzled or worried,
2. Research a local practice nearby,
3. Design, and test an 'experience' and execute it.

With these 'experiences', they made an impact on the awareness, engagement and empowerment of a target group. The experiences are small, sometimes a bit messy, modest or unfinished. But it is the young generation that is learning how to influence their own future through their profession of leisure. Experiences ranged from an exhibition on meat production, a game on racism at a primary school, and a cooking workshop with elderly people. We asked students to share their 'impact experiences' with us, and we made a booklet out of these: '101 ways to make impact'. That booklet is a small window to look through to the meaning of this challenge.

Between activism and discomfort

Looking through the small window, a few things struck us. We saw that some students immediately understood what we were asking them to do. They saw what was going on in the world and were looking for a way to do

something with it. But there was also a group that did not know what to do and saw no connection with their study programme. We saw that they needed help to make that connection. Helping students see that these societal issues are not just something for politicians or newspapers, but that these questions permeate their own daily work practices. We also saw that it can feel uncomfortable if you, as a student, take on the responsibility of doing something about it. Life and your work practice become more complicated in terms of ethics. Leisure goes beyond pleasure. It is also more than just making money. It raised the question of what is the right thing to do. We found that it helped enormously if students looked for issues closely related to their own everyday lives. Starting from a local situation or practice in their own family, sports club, neighbourhood or side job, for example. This meant that, starting from the major societal challenges (think global), they were able to ask themselves what they themselves wanted to change (act local).

What are students concerned about?

And then the practicalities. To put it into practice, tools are needed, of course. But above all: students should be given hope and positivity to work from. Show them that leisure is aimed precisely at constructively, that there is hope, and that taking one's own everyday life as a starting point is valuable. This resulted in the development of creative and meaningful actions. It is interesting to see what students are concerned about and what issues they are drawn to. We saw that Leisure & Events Management students especially like to make a positive contribution to the lives of others. We also saw this social focus reflected in their choices where the following issues were the most popular: gender equality, mental health among students, bullying, sexual harassment, women's rights, loneliness among the elderly, drug abuse, and racism in schools.

Leisure quality and responsibility

Students used what are called core elements of leisure to make a difference. For instance, art served as a tool to make a statement, play

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Leisure & Events Management students are especially keen to make a positive contribution to the lives of others.



and imagination to identify alternative futures, movement to get involved, dialogue to uncover difference in thinking, fun to approach difficult topics, and creativity for refreshing solutions. And we ourselves? We saw the responsibility of and opportunities for leisure as a change method. And we saw our own responsibility to enable this generation to develop their own value in relation to the major societal issues.

Towards a waste-free generation

Too good to be true?

Marisa de Brito
&
Amber Herrewijn



Marisa de Brito is a senior researcher and lecturer at Breda University of Applied Sciences working in the area of Sustainable Events and Placemaking. Amber Herrewijn teaches Event Management at NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences and works for the European Tourism Futures Institute (ETFI) on sustainability within the MICE sector.

It is 2040 and there are no waste bins on the streets, and there is no litter in sight. Nothing goes to waste, food leftovers become compost, and packaging materials are valuable resources. The circular economy is alive, nature is being restored, the water flowing in our rivers is crystalline, the air we breathe is clean, and the climate is balanced. Too good to be true?

All of the above is urgent and its urgency is being advocated by many, from academics to world leaders, from small enterprises to corporations. If we continue the throw-away age "we irreparably damage our planet" as stated by Prins William (UK), who was inspired by John F. Kennedy's Moonshot, and created the Earthshot Prize (n.d.-a), in alliance with Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN). As Kennedy was able to align people and resources to put a man on the moon, Earthshot (n.d.-b) is meant to support those around the globe who are practising a thought-to-be-impossible goal: to repair our planet Earth. The City of Amsterdam has been one of the finalists, aiming to be fully circular by 2050.

Front-runners

Amsterdam is the home of DGTL, the world's first festival that became circular in 2022, and which aims to become the first regenerative event organisation. In their Road to Circularity documentary, DGTL shows how it puts in a lot of creativity and ingenuity, going from

simple solutions of reusing old materials to more high-tech ones. Being visionary, having a sustainable orientation, and having strategic partnerships are key in designing sustainable festivals (De Brito & Terzieva, 2016). Training staff and informing the audience are equally crucial at the tactical level, as the pioneer implementation of hard cups by DGTL in 2016 showed (De Brito & Smorenburg, 2016).

Given the European Union (EU) Directive against plastics, the Netherlands and other EU members are putting in place regulations prohibiting single-use plastics in 2024. To make it work, both business and consumer mindsets need to make a leap. In addition, steps need to be taken to define impact indicators (Cavagnaro et al., 2022). Festivals can be used as a ground to defy the status quo, test solutions, and measure their impact. This is especially auspicious when the sector has exemplary, ambitious front-runners with more than 40 events European-wide signing the Green Deal for Circular Festivals, during the Amsterdam Dance Event (ADE), in Amsterdam in 2022.

The Netherlands has come a long way regarding sustainability practices in Leisure and Events. There is a lot out there to support festivals (e.g. organisations such as Green Events and the Green Leisure Group). Guidelines for sustainable events and toolkits for social impacts such as inclusion are available. At the

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Festivals can be used as a ground to defy the status quo, test solutions, and measure their impact.

a truly sustainability transition to take place, a lot still needs to be done.

Leisure and Events as an opportunity

In recognition of this, sustainability was one of the pillars at the conference. The showcases, which took place during that afternoon, illustrate how sustainability is being practised by many, from conscious individuals to pracademics, from small enterprises to national movements, in leisure activities, and beyond.

Leisure and Events, being a time in-between ordinary life, are inherently self-expansion opportunities (Lawendowski and Besta, 2020), which can be used for awakening new perspectives and shaping change. Events and Leisure organisations can purposely design transformative experiences using positive





psychology to provoke metamorphosis (Neuhofer, 2020), also in the sustainability sphere.

Thus, is a zero-waste society too good to be true? It all depends on us. Have a look at the showcases and get inspired.

The BUas Green Office & SDG Support Hub

At Breda University of Applied Sciences (BUas), as well as at many other Dutch universities, there is a Green Office, and a working group around the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to share knowledge and organise activities within four focus areas: education, research, operations, and community. Some of those are focused on mitigating waste, such as clothing swap events.

The BUTTLE

People often do not realise how harmful it is to throw cigarette butts on the floor. The BUTTLE, an innovative prototype, previously tested in partnership with Innofest, at the Eurosonic Noorderslag in Groningen, 2023, was also present in Breda during the Future of Leisure conference. There is a triple objective in this intervention: 1) create awareness 2) gather data 3) reduce cigarette litter.

Zero Waste Nederland

Zero Waste Netherlands, founded by climate psychologist Elisah Pals, is a platform with thousands of followers, ambassadors, and activists of the zero-waste philosophy. With challenges such as 'buy nothing new' or 'take your own container when getting take-away food', and with zero waste tours at several cities in the Netherlands, the platform is there for every individual or business wanting to take specific steps into the zero-waste society.

From Pet to Pret

What started with irritation, ended up as innovation. Rolf Adriaansen decided to take the PET bottles he found on the streets and give them a new life: making colourful toys

or decorative objects. He teaches children how versatile waste is, and how much fun recycling can be. The ReCycle (an eye-catcher shredder bike) can also be used at events.

Ploggers

Lifestyle coach and running coach, Ron Bekker, organises group plogging activities, combining running with picking up waste on the streets of Breda. It does have a double impact: being a healthy leisure activity, it contributes to a cleaner environment as well. As Ron put it: "we are all responsible for keeping the city clean."

Serious Lego Method

In imagining a future that is not there yet, a useful and high-spirited tool is Lego Serious Play. In the 2023 Future of Leisure conference, participants could tactilely delve into rethinking waste, green living and healthy leisure for our communities through this facilitation method, envisioning the city of the future. This can also be used by organisations in exploring waste-free scenarios.

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The Netherlands has come a long way regarding sustainability practices in Leisure and Events.

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Social impact is the future

Greater understanding required as to where and how leisure can have an impact

Esther Peperkamp



Esther Peperkamp is a lecturer and researcher at Breda University of Applied Sciences and is a member of the Placemaking & Events research group.



There is a growing awareness of the social impact of leisure. In companies, governments, social enterprises and in leisure science itself, both in terms of an object of study and a task: the 2014 Butler lecture, for example, made recommendations for leisure scientists to boost social impact and help society understand and address social challenges.

Impact or effect?

But what does *social* impact actually mean? 'Impact' is defined in Longman's Dictionary of Contemporary English as "the effect or influence that an event, situation, etc. has on someone or something", but in practice, a distinction is often made between impact and effect. Effects refer to the more immediate and visible consequences, which are therefore also easier to measure. Impact is used for longer-term effects, which may not be as visible. These effects have a wider scope - no wonder organisations and companies prefer to create (positive) impact rather than effects. Impact suggests greater complexity, doing justice to a world we have come to find complex.

A definition of social impact

An obvious definition of *social* impact could then include all impacts that are not economic (or ecological) in nature. However, this raises two problems. Firstly, social impact then degenerates into a catch-all collection of all kinds of long-term effects (making identifying them an impossible task). Secondly, long-term economic and social effects are not always easy to distinguish. For example, employment is an economic good, but having a job also contributes to personal well-being and social contacts, while the possible workload is another negative factor. A narrower definition of social impact is thus needed.

In this context, it is interesting that Statistics Netherlands (CBS) has been conducting research - based on the sustainable development goals - into 'broad prosperity' for several years. The term Broad Prosperity covers everything that people consider important for a good quality of life and thus does justice to its complexity, but has also been elaborated in concrete themes (and indicators). These themes are as follows: subjective well-being, material prosperity, health, labour and leisure, housing, society, and safety and environment, with the indicators for 'society' corresponding to commonly used indicators for social capital and social cohesion. Social impact could thus be broken down into these themes.

Making social impact visible

Subsequent measurement of the social impact of an activity or intervention is difficult because - given its complexity - it involves effects that may also have other causes. The causal link is uncertain. Nevertheless, there are many examples of trying to capture impact in indicators. In activities where social impact is the main objective, theory of change is popular. This involves first examining what possible impact an action or intervention *could* logically have - taking into account all kinds of other influencing factors - in addition to the effects an organisation *wants* to achieve. Useful indicators are then sought to match these.

Social contacts as social impact of leisure

To actually create social impact, it is also necessary to understand factors that play a role in whether or not it comes about. In this respect, I would like to highlight an important form of social impact of leisure. Indeed, one traditionally important assumed social impact of 'leisure' is its role in connecting people. This is an important topical theme, because although the *Monitor Brede Welvaart* (Broad Prosperity Monitor) shows that the Netherlands

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Leisure activities are widely seen as a context for establishing and maintaining social contacts.

is doing well in terms of 'society' compared to other European countries, the trend for the indicators of 'contact with family, friends and neighbours' and 'volunteering' is downward. And on feelings of discrimination, the Netherlands dangles at the bottom of the EU rankings. This makes the question of the role of leisure time topical. Leisure activities are widely seen as a context for establishing and maintaining social contacts, especially in repeated activities in which people share a common focus: the weekly choir, the regular painting afternoon, maintaining an allotment garden. A lack of meeting opportunities is a major reason why personal relationships are not continued (Mollenhorst et al., 2014). However, it is not always clear how this works.

Creating conditions for social impact

A meeting opportunity alone is not enough, as a study of a 'living room' for older people shows. A 'living room' where older people can get together once a week to play cards, for example, does not directly result in meaningful

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There seems to be an important role for informal leaders.

social contacts (Peperkamp & Haumahu, 2023). The impact of sports activities - often mentioned as a means to achieve integration - is also questionable. There are studies showing that sport contributes to trust (Brown et al., 2014) and social capital (Darcy et al., 2014), but other studies (Elling, 2005; Spaaij, 2012) show that there are limits to social bonding through sport. And there are also drawbacks to the widely praised community gardens (Glover, 2004).

There seems to be an important role for informal leaders. For example, they play a role in informal running groups (Hambrick et al., 2018) and craft groups (Palmer & Kawakami, 2014). Expressive leadership, a form of leadership where the well-being of participants is central, is sometimes also being referred to. This informal and expressive form of leadership benefits group stability.

The spatial aspect is also important. A meeting place is a physical place: how public and accessible is the space? How is the space laid out? There is a lot of focus in placemaking on public outdoor space, but on a micro level, the design of indoor spaces also plays a role: how are the tables arranged? Does the space invite people to spend time and interact with others in the same space?

In addition, there is the what is called 'extended leisure experiences', or the experiences that participants have after the activity by, for example, having a chat about it afterwards. This can be immediately after the primary activity, but also at a later time in another place, and even digitally. This secondary activity enhances the experience of the primary activity and can contribute to group solidarity (the 'third half'). What's more, these activities can be a bridge to new activities, creating a chain of activities that in turn create new opportunities for social interaction (Scott & Harmon, 2016).

These are just a few examples from research into factors that influence the initiation and maintenance of social contacts.

The future of Leisure

Of course, there is much more to be said about social impact and leisure. It is essential to better understand exactly what social impact is, and how it can be achieved and made visible. This is obviously relevant for social innovation projects, but also for commercial leisure providers who value social responsibility. For a sustainable society, social impact is the future. Here lies an important task for leisure research and leisure education of the future: to provide the knowledge and skills that lead to leisure having (positive) social impact.

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Photography

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A meeting opportunity alone is not enough.



Sports and Exercise scenario study

How can the indoor sports facilities of the municipality of Westerveld become more future-proof?

Albert Postma



Albert Postma, professor of scenario, European Tourism Futures Institute (ETFI), NHL Stenden University.

The leisure industry is influenced by what happens in society. This impact may take a while, such as the gradual ageing of the western population. Such gradually (sometimes even imperceptibly) increasing forces are also called stress factors. But Covid-19 has also shown that suddenly something unexpected can happen which can affect the industry considerably. These are referred to as shock factors or black swans or, in severe cases, disruptions. As a company or an organisation, you can try to guard against the effects of future influences in advance, by spotting them early and taking measures which reduce vulnerability to such developments. If you can manage that, you become more 'future-proof'.

Prediction or exploration

Unfortunately, we do not know that much about the future, especially when it is a bit further away. Most of the knowledge we have is about the past, while the goals we set, and the plans we make, are always about the future. In order to anticipate what awaits you as a company or organisation in the coming years, you would actually want to be able to look into some kind of crystal ball. Future scenarios serve as such a magic ball, so to speak.

Often, many people think of scenarios as predictions of the future. But in fact, the chances of the predictable future actually becoming a reality are zero. All kinds of developments and events we do not know about may cause society to develop in unpredictable ways. The future is not as unambiguous as it may seem. Due to the dynamics of a complex interrelated social force field, the future may evolve in a

variety of ways.

Scenario planning involves exploring and describing these alternative futures in extreme but imaginable and recognisable storylines which take place in the future. It should be noted that these scenarios are explicitly not predictions but explorations of what might happen. Together, the alternative scenarios represent the boundaries of how the realm of businesses or organisations evolves. Thorough consideration of the scenarios provides a picture of longer-term opportunities and threats. Through the timely inspiration of vision, policy, strategy, business concept, business model, etc. using these insights, greater future-proofing is achievable.

Social structure vision of the municipality of Westerveld

The municipality of Westerveld in Drenthe also considered this a few years ago, when it was about to draft a new social structure vision (structure vision focused on the social domain). The municipality of Westerveld is located in the western part of the Drenthe province on the territory of the national parks Dwingelderveld and Drents-Friese Wold. The municipality consists of 26 villages with about 19,000 inhabitants and 8,300 households. Its main population centres are Havelte, Diever, Dwingeloo, Vledder and Uffelte.

An important idea for the new social structure vision was that sports and exercise can provide an important contribution to the quality of life in the municipality because it may connect art, culture, welfare and education.

Within sports and exercise, indoor sports facilities play an important part. They are often freestanding in the village centre and some even perform the function of a village hall or are connected to it. The municipality of Westerveld has two sports halls, a sports centre, two gyms or fitness centres, and a number of, often older, school gyms. Due to the decline in the use of the facilities, they have gone into a downward spiral in terms of operation and management. The question the municipality asked the

European Tourism Futures Institute (ETFI) is how to future-proof indoor sports facilities. The scenario study conducted by ETFI in 2018-2019 had four phases: an internal analysis, an environmental analysis, scenario development and its translation into policy implications.

Scenario study of indoor sports facilities

The internal analysis focused on supply and demand for indoor sports facilities in the municipality and how the municipality influences them with sports and exercise policies. For example, the profile of residents (lifestyle and vitality profile), the use of indoor sports facilities, residents' familiarity with the offered facilities, the municipal policy regarding the facilities, and the policy to encourage sports and physical activity were examined. This initial study was carried out on the basis of policy documents, interviews with the alderman, policy officials involved and exercise coaches.

For the environmental analysis, the researchers delved into existing studies, reports, policy papers, and so on. The identified relevant demographic, economic, social, technological, ecological and political changes and developments which will influence the demand for and supply of sport and exercise in the coming years. Thus, developments in sports demand and sports participation (sports participation, types of sports, individualisation, group behaviour, the role of the traditional sports clubs/associations, role of the distance between home and accommodation, liveability of the neighbourhood) were examined; developments in requirements for operation and management (regulatory pressure from national government, government spending, performance management, diversity of supply, broadening the tasks of sports clubs), the developments regarding sports clubs (membership numbers, membership fees, availability of volunteers, and broadening of the social tasks (consider social integration, health promotion, education, promoting liveability, or changing lifestyle)). The cohesion between the inventoried developments was analysed, resulting in seven forces which are likely to drive changes in the market of supply and demand

until 2030, which are referred to as drivers of change.

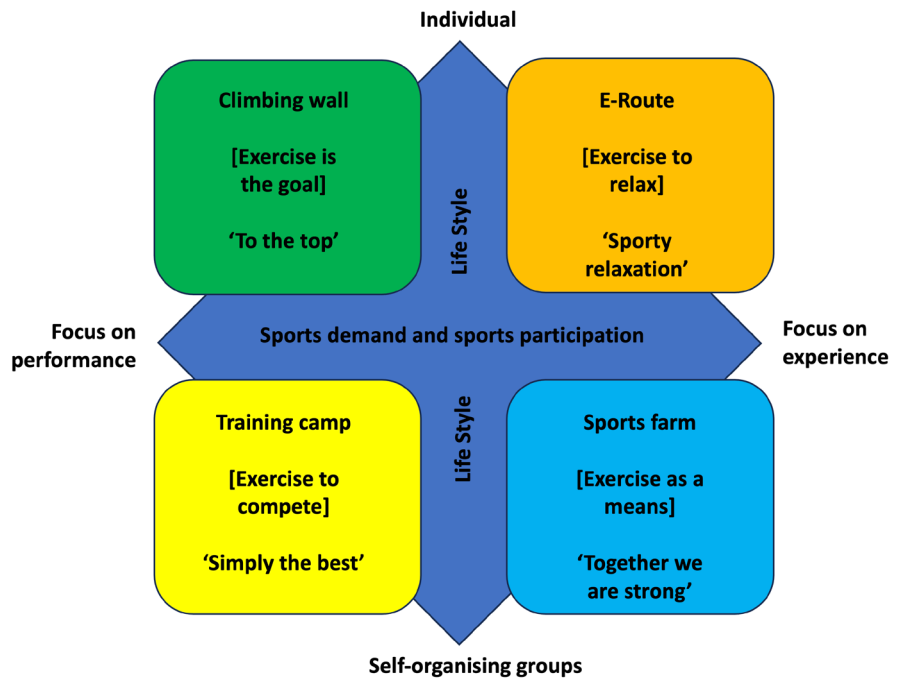
Driving forces

During the scenario development phase, two of those driving forces were identified during a workshop by stakeholders as most influential and at the same time least predictable. These two core uncertainties formed the basis for framing four scenarios. The two core uncertainties were: sport demand & participation and lifestyle.

'Regional characteristics' and 'elderly' were seen as relatively predictable driving forces. What is special about these kinds of elements is that they will occur in each of the future scenarios, but always in a different context. Finally, there are three other driving forces which workshop participants believe have limited influence relative to the others for future developments. These are 'operation of sports clubs', 'technology' and 'national policy'.

Four scenarios

Of the two core uncertainties, two conceivable extremes in which those uncertainties could develop between now and 2030 were identified. When both core uncertainties showing the most extreme cases are drawn as two perpendicular axes, a 'scenario graph' emerges which provides the framework for four scenarios. Using free association and the necessary imagination, the four scenarios were explored in more detail and finally articulated in a consistent and imaginative story which outlines the future regarding sports and physical activity. Each of the scenarios has been given an appropriate title and a distinctive slogan.



Advice

During the final phase of the study, we, together with the municipal council committee, reviewed what would be the desirable and undesirable consequences of each scenario in 2030. Following this meeting, ideas were provided by ETFI to anticipate the most important desires and unwanted outcomes.

The overview of ideas for each scenario indicates the types of accommodation and facilities needed (product range) and the forms of management and operation (role of the municipality versus commercial parties, citizen participation, revenues). The relationship with arts, culture, education and welfare is also described. Finally, the alignment of the

scenarios with the municipality's current residents' vitality profile is mentioned.

The advice to the Westerveld municipality was to not focus on just one of the scenarios. Gambling by focusing municipal policy on one scenario could turn out to be ineffective when society evolves in a different manner. The wise choice is to draw inspiration from all four scenarios simultaneously. Only then can robust policies stand the test of time. Temporarily, that is. Today's complex and dynamic society calls for permanent monitoring of the forces involved, and periodically reviewing the analyses, the core uncertainties, the scenarios and thus also the policies based on them, and adjust them when necessary.



Most knowledge is about the past. Goals and plans are always about the future.



The trade fair of the future

Virtual and physical interaction all year round

Dorothe Gerritsen

Dorothe Gerritsen is a lecturer and researcher at the BUAs Academy for Leisure & Events.

Creating real-life experiences with a purpose is the domain of the event manager. Developers and organisers of B-to-C and B-to-B trade fairs also invest heavily in the 'total experience' and pull out all the stops to stimulate the visitor's senses. We are in the middle of the experience economy in both public and corporate events: visitors want meaningful experiences that are felt on an emotional level. All kinds of touchpoints are orchestrated to make the trade fair concept a unique and personalised experience. It is no longer just about the live encounters. Increasingly, crossovers between real-life and virtual experiences are being developed. Technological innovations combined with globalisation and the emergence of a 'hyper-connected world' have pushed developments even further in this direction. Event organisers are increasingly asking themselves what their core business is: is it creating experiences for visitors or generating meaning for people or society? This is also the case at Jaarbeurs Utrecht. This article examines the Bouwbeurs (International Building and Construction trade fair), Jaarbeurs Utrecht's own trade fair title, as a case study. This is done on the basis of the results of a fourth-year project group of BUAs' Strategic Event Management minor in combination with the vision of Concept Developer Camille Janssen of Royal Jaarbeurs Utrecht.

Royal Jaarbeurs Utrecht

Jaarbeurs is a building complex for large-scale events in the Dutch city of Utrecht. The buildings are located near Utrecht Central

Station at the Jaarbeursplein. Jaarbeurs is available to visitors, organisers and exhibitors. Jaarbeurs organises and facilitates all kinds of small and big events, live and online. It is a place to attend conferences or events and to organise meetings, workshops, training courses, public and corporate events, trade fairs and exhibitions. Every year, Jaarbeurs attracts around 2.5 million visitors. The event venue in Utrecht is suitable for a wide range of activities. From large fairs, events and shows to small-scale meetings and business conferences.

Building and construction exhibition of the future

As part of the further development and future-proofing of successful trade fair titles within Jaarbeurs, BUAs' student project group worked on the assignment: Develop the Future-Proof *Bouwbeurs* 2029. The construction industry is ambitious, innovative, sustainable and directional and, despite challenging times, very forward-looking. This makes this case a good example for trade fair concepts of the future. After all, the construction industry needs a future-oriented and therefore sustainable event that does justice to its ambitions. The construction chain is changing rapidly with a growing focus on the environment and circularity, aided by positive developments in technology. These changes and developments demand that we connect with each other now and become even stronger as a construction sector. How is the construction trade fair developing towards 2029? Is the current concept sufficiently future-proof? What should and can be maintained and what should be changed? The students found out through desk and field research.

Camille Janssen

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The construction industry is ambitious, innovative, sustainable and directional and despite challenging times, very forward-looking.



For now, setting up an event on a small scale is becoming the new way to make an impact.



Vision of the trade fair of the future

The conclusions combined with the vision of Camille Janssen, *Bouwbeurs'* concept developer, offer a good perspective of the trade fair's future. For the *Bouwbeurs*, Camille is responsible for construction, installation and for the manufacturing industry. He gets started on an event concept as early as two years before the event. What are the themes and topics in the industry? What will the market look like in two years' time? He is also heavily involved in creating valuable content. How do we make the right translation to the exhibition floor plan? Places where exhibitors are brought together. He then creates a logical layout taking into account the logical customer journey. The exhibitors' customer journey has changed in recent years.

These days, in addition to the physical exhibition at that one moment in time, exhibitors choose to be visible in the market throughout the year through digital exposure on *Jaarbeurs' Bouw & Installatie Hub*, for example. That mix of different propositions changes edition after edition. In particular, Camille sees exhibitors being more conscious about the use of their marketing budgets. In addition, they want to collect visitor data before, during and after the trade fair. How many visitors visited the stand or attended the lecture? Moreover, the networking app developed by *Jaarbeurs* provides a lot of relevant data. Central themes of *Bouwbeurs 2029* are the digitisation and sustainability of the construction & engineering sector.

Embedded in education, inclusive and sustainable

The trade fair of the future is embedded in education at various levels, has a clear link to (local) business, and inclusion and sustainability are important. What is also important is that the trade fair is efficient in terms of time and resources and that this remains just so: more focus on content, contacts with the right networks, and perhaps multiple (smaller-scale) editions. Despite technological developments being and remaining important, interaction with content and social elements will continue to be important.

The techniques for following or organising an event online have developed at lightning speed and people now know how to attend these events online. In 2020, it became clear (because of Covid) that a physical event is not always the most effective way to reach targets and audiences. Digital and hybrid are becoming standard parts of the marketing mix, even after the corona era.

Small scale

Previously, the large scale and many people getting together all at once were the strengths of events. Now the focus is on intimacy and engagement. People are less willing to travel

also because it is less sustainable; safety guidelines also push for smaller groups at a venue. Visitors who are physically present expect a personal experience where they can, for instance, compile their own programme. For now, setting up an event on a small scale is becoming the new way to make an impact.

Technology

Emerging technologies can be used to turn an event into a guest experience. Here, technical service staff are replaced by human-centric technology and the focus is on how people interact with the digital world. It is no longer one form of interaction but multiple forms that make an overall whole. Chat, voice and AR features, for example, are now being used to create experiences. A strategic vision of this is needed now that interactions have become more mobile and virtual.

In the world of events, this means, for example, that event visitors can sign up for the health screening area via an app and staff members can already have check-up interviews through voice-activated technology before visitors come to the event. Hyper-automation means automating as many past human actions as possible. With the current staff shortage problem, this too can help reduce the staffing problem. Processes should be automated to the extent possible.

Real-life education projects

BUAs' Strategic Event Management minor (year 4) and Events for Business specialisation (year 2) deal with issues surrounding events with a strategic objective. Young professionals studying these subjects are the future and have a refreshing perspective on today's events, trade fairs and exhibitions. This project of the minor is a great example of what a cooperation between companies and education can deliver: sparring together about trends and developments and their consequences and meaning for the (near) future.

Sources

- BUAs project group (2023). *De ideale Bouwbeurs voor 2029*. Breda/Utrecht: project report.
- Gerritsen en Van Oolderen (2020). *Events as a Strategic Marketing Tool*. Coutinho: Hilversum.
- Interviews Camille Janssen, Concept Developer Koninklijke Jaarbeurs Utrecht. 14 september 2022 en 11 mei 2023.



These days, in addition to the physical trade fair at that one moment in time, exhibitors choose to be visible in the market throughout the year through digital exposure.

World Leisure Organization on the Future of Leisure

A joint perspective

“

Leisure should be a vehicle for helping to change humanity and it should also be focused on the rights of humans to enjoy themselves.

What is your position and how do you view the value of leisure from this perspective?

Leisure is priceless and contributes significantly to our *quality of life*. However, in some cases, leisure is not considered important and is not fully appreciated. Yet it provides space to enhance *social connections, mental and physical health, and community engagement*. In this regard, leisure has the ability to *build bridges* between different demographic and cultural groups.

In your opinion, how can the leisure sector respond appropriately to the challenges the world is facing?

Leisure should be a vehicle for helping to *change humanity* and it should also be focused on the rights of humans to enjoy themselves without consideration for the potential of other offerings. This aforementioned change could be made possible by reaching out to kindred associations and leaders to collaborate.

From an academic health perspective, leisure is a tool for clinical, educational and research work with potential to improve health across the lifespan. For example, *recreational therapy* utilises recreation preferences in the rehabilitation process to help people resume or develop new healthy leisure lifestyles.

Leisure professionals can respond to challenges by offering *diverse, inclusive, and accessible* programming. If leisure is seen and experienced beyond opportunities for physical activity and connections to nature, it becomes a social-political phenomenon.

Leisure stands at a crossroads as the significance attributed to work and the increasingly blurred lines between *work and leisure* force us to reassess our perspective. The quality of the time we have is often lacking, and we risk neglecting one of its purposes: a domain for individual growth and high-quality moments that liberate us from the constraints of daily life.

Leisure could also serve as a *tool to educate people* on how to become entrepreneurs and become self-sustainable alleviating poverty. Moreover, leisure education can inform people about new leisure trends and how AI can be used to enhance leisure experiences.

Do you see an innovative example that inspires or can trigger a new direction in the leisure sector?

Leisure is an innovative sector of industry with potential to continue pushing boundaries of innovation. For example, *Esports*, which create virtual connections through gaming, have opened up new revenue streams and sponsorship opportunities while creating a new ecosystem of job opportunities. Regarding leisure and innovation, virtual tourism, global events, outreach programmes, global webinars and hybrid events also facilitated crucial connections during a global pandemic and have continued as avenues to address diverse accessibility needs.

What is the biggest challenge the world is facing?

Today's world and humanity itself are divided and we face a number of challenges that leisure has potential to address. One of the most notable is the *climate emergency* and the *neo-liberal and late capitalistic policies*, which include economic policies and agendas that privilege wealth attainment, consumerism, and growth models of development. These systems also devalue political and civic engagement as well as public discourse. This situation ultimately results in an *inability to collaborate* to solve shared problems.

Providing *inclusive leisure experiences* is a potentially innovative way to address global challenges identified by leisure professionals. Community-based initiatives facilitate resource sharing and break down barriers, including free borrowing programmes for recreational items similar to Sweden's 'Fritidsbanken,' inclusive planning processes for LGBTQ+ citizens, and innovative equipment that enables individuals with disabilities to access pools and engage in outdoor activities.

The *inequality in access to the resources* of our society is a pervasive problem that is often considered global, yet also evident within our own communities. Leisure experiences should be accessible to all, regardless of income, gender, age, and physical capacities.

Other examples of innovative programmes we have include *Ultimate Peace* and *Ultimate Spirit*, which bring together youth. Programmes such as these can help to address the divisive and individualistic nature of capitalistic societies.

Focusing on the current context, *poverty, war* and fast-changing *technology* (as in the case of the advancement of AI) is also important for leisure professionals to keep pace with people's leisure needs.

More information

- <https://www.ultimatepeace.org>
- <https://bcultimate.ca/ultimate-spirit>

John Tower, Lisa Mische-Lawson, Marie Young,
& Marc-André Lavigne and Aggie Weighill



John Tower, Victoria University (Australia), Co-chair WL SIG Leisure Management.



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Marie Young, University of the Western Cape (South Africa), Co-chair WL SIG Leisure and Education.



Aggie Weighill, Vancouver Island University VIU (Canada), WLCE VIU representative.



Column

Edition 07
September 2023

Roland Kleve is director of the Academy of Leisure & Events, Breda University of Applied Sciences.

I am honoured to close this year's edition Uncover. Reading all the different in-depth articles I was wondering how to conclude. Also, I wanted to share with you what really kept me awake at night these past few months, which is Chat GPT OpenAI. Not because it worries me, but because I cannot stop fantasising about the countless possibilities. One way or another, we are going to have to deal with this new technical application. How do we handle this? Will we condemn it? Are we going to do everything possible to go against it? Or will we embrace it? How can we work with this new tool and toy to our advantage? I do not have the answers, but I know one thing, we cannot stop it. I wanted to test it myself and share it with you. I must say that, in the end, the column became a co-creation between OpenAI and me. It was interesting and I learned a lot.

Here we go

Edition no. 7 brings an incredible reading journey and exploration into Leisure for a Better Future. Through these different articles we see exciting developments and rebellious discussions. Remarkable initiatives that push the boundaries of what leisure and events can achieve in driving societal change.

I am proud to see our commitment to creating a difference for and with students, lecturers, and industry partners. Our mission is to position them in the middle of our education and have them explore the power of leisure and events. They will continue to build bridges and foster collaborations to make a real and positive impact on our world.

I wanted to highlight some topics - not to do injustice to all the others but they are just too numerous to go into them all here.

One of the most remarkable trends we have witnessed is the steep rise of esports among our new generation of students. Esports has become a powerful force, bringing young people together and providing a new dimension to leisure experiences. Not just as a form of entertainment but also as a platform for innovation and social interaction. I see the diversity and inclusion amongst the fan audience. To further support this development, together with the City of Breda, we initiated an esports community base, called The Hyve, at our campus.



I must say that, in the end, the column became a co-creation between OpenAI and me.

Dutch Leisure Week

Talking about the City of Breda, they are building on the future as well, putting their citizens centre stage. Breda has taken a significant step forward by supporting the co-development process with BUAs for the Dutch Leisure Week. This initiative exemplifies the idea that leisure and events can be the catalysts of change, bringing communities closer together and enhancing the overall well-being of the Breda citizens.

What I like about all these initiatives - the most inspiring aspect of leisure and events to me - is their potential to drive societal change, particularly in the areas of diversity, equality, and inclusion. By leveraging the power of these tools, we can create spaces that celebrate differences, challenge stereotypes, and promote a more inclusive society. Our commitment to this cause remains unwavering, and we will continue to champion diversity in all its forms.



By embracing the richness of different perspectives, we can foster an environment of innovation, collaboration, and global citizenship.

World Leisure Congress 2025

Looking forward, I am delighted to announce that BUAs will be hosting the esteemed World Leisure Congress in 2025. This prestigious event will bring together educational leaders, practitioners, and scholars from around the globe to explore the theme of Leisure for a Better Society. It will serve as a platform for the exchange of ideas, the celebration of achievements, and the forging of partnerships that will shape the future of leisure.

For now, we are already preparing for next year's edition of Uncover where we shift the focus towards internationalisation and highlight the invaluable contributions of international students, staff and industry partners to our academy. We recognise the importance of diversity and cross-cultural understanding in today's interconnected world. By embracing the richness of different perspectives, we can foster an environment of innovation, collaboration, and global citizenship.

In conclusion, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all the readers, contributors, and partners who have created this year's edition of Uncover. It is through their support and enthusiasm that we continue to push the boundaries of knowledge, challenge the status quo, and strive for a better future through leisure and events.

Here's to another year of exploration, inspiration, and making a difference.

Uncover is a publication of the domain of Leisure & Events of Breda University of Applied Sciences.

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Uncover

Uncover stands for discovering things together. This magazine offers Breda University of Applied Sciences a platform to share research and projects with its network. Through this Uncover, we explicitly try to reach and bring together our entire network around knowledge sharing and knowledge development: entrepreneurs, government, education, research and social organisations. In addition to the publication of Uncover magazines, Uncover meetings are also organised under the heading of 'future perspectives on Leisure & Events'.

Domain of Leisure & Events

The domain of Leisure & Events offers the HBO (professional) bachelor's programme of (International) Leisure & Events Management, with study tracks in the fields of leisure, events, social innovation, attractions & theme parks, (e-)sports, and urban life and placemaking. Additional course offerings include WO (academic) degree programmes - the Bachelor and Master of Science Leisure Studies - and master's programmes in Imagineering and Strategic Event Management. Within the domain of Leisure & Events, research is carried out into 'Imagineering and Business Innovation', 'Storytelling and Consumer Experiences', and 'Events and Placemaking'.

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