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## Take care of your city's public services!

"...the society is changing at a high speed and the municipality has to change to reconnect with it..." declared Fleur Imming, Deputy Mayor of Social Affairs, Life and Districts of the city of Amersfoort (Jégou, F., Bonneau, M. 2015). This average city (150 000 inhabitants) located in The Netherlands suffers, like many other European cities, the blow of a loss of capacity of the public authorities. Drastic reduction of budgets, transfer of competences from the national to the local level, influx of new complex social, environmental and economic problems which the city administration barely adapts to because of its lack of agility...

But the picture is not only black. The situation at the local level also shows new dynamics in the population. Considering the problems they face and how public authorities struggle to respond to all of them, citizens are mobilized. If they expressed their dissatisfaction with the dysfunction of the society mainly by demonstrating in the street with the will to attack the system in place and to change the way it works, their mobilization is today also concentrated on the result. They organize themselves at the micro-local level to provide for their daily needs: by gardening around their homes to supplement their food supply, organizing the maintenance and taking care of their neighbourhood, setting up solidarity buying groups, getting rid of intermediaries, valuing their own skills and assets through the sharing economy, etc.

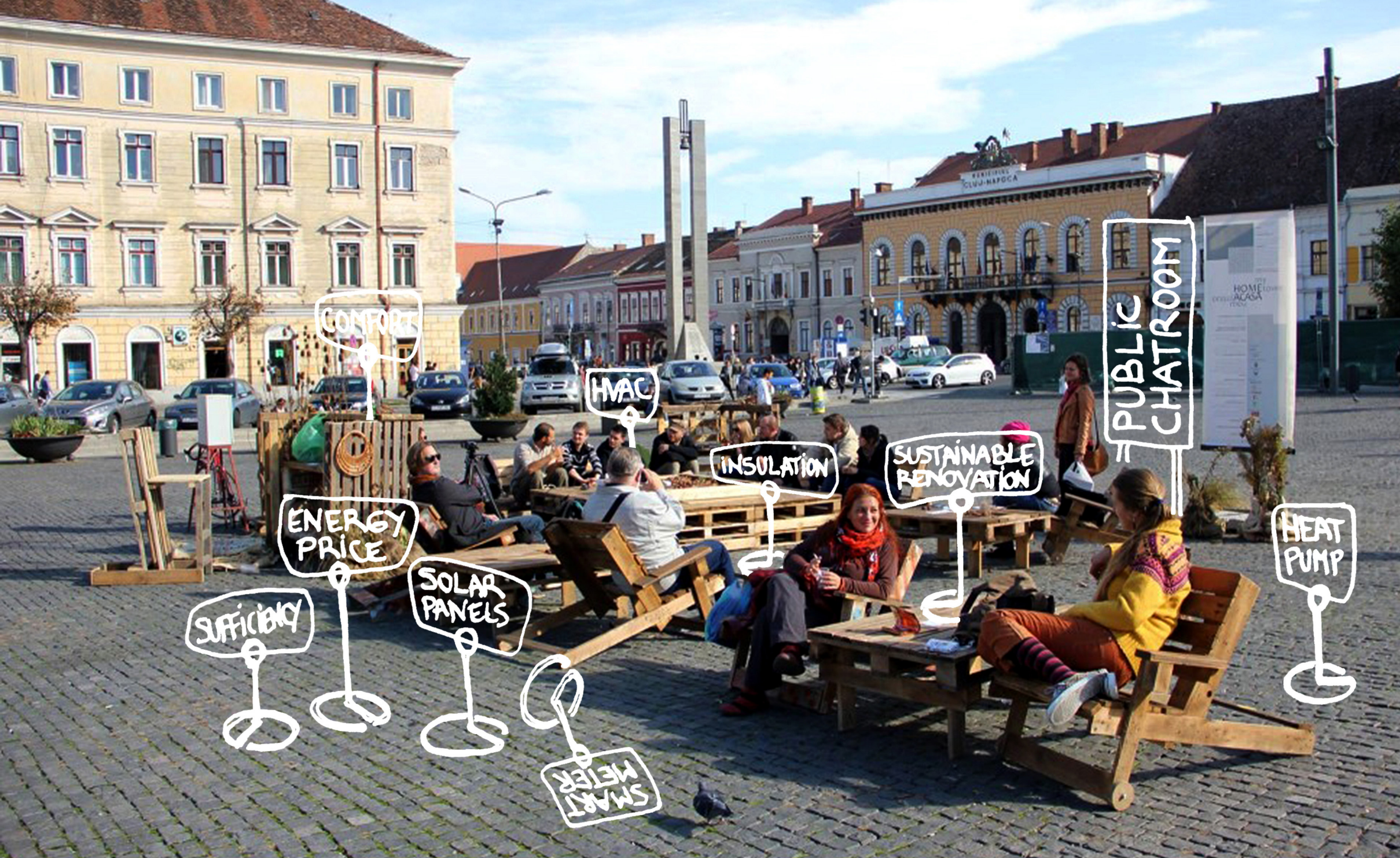
"Empowered by the diffusion of information technologies and the connectivity of social networks," adds Fleur Imming, "citizens seek to reclaim their ability to act and claim the right to take part in the production of their city. Their initiatives are clashing with the complexity of the regulations, with the heaviness of the administrative procedures and they are expressing their dissatisfaction with our modes of governance".

Public authorities at a local level seem somewhat helpless: they are no longer in a dominant position and are struggling to seize the opportunities represented by these new citizen dynamics. While he was Director of the sustainable development department of the city, Steve Marriot was considering the multiplicity of urban agriculture initiatives in Bristol. He highlighted the following: "How should we react as a public power in front of all these citizens' energies? How can we help them without upsetting them? How can all this generate a coherent public policy for the benefit of all?" (URBACT II, 27-30 May 2013)

One of the challenges for local governments seems to be finding the right way to catalyse, consolidate and multiply social innovation (Bonneau, M. 2015). From a "command and control" posture they must change into mediators (Jégou, F. 2015), "rearrange stakeholders" (Nord Pas-De-Calais region) in order to create a better synergy between the forces of the territory (Bonneau & Jégou, 2017).

On the other side, the challenge for the citizens is no longer so much to act as a counter-power in the fight against the public authorities or to do without them but to preserve the public sector, to restore its ability to regulate, rebalance and to take care of it. It is important to seize the openness of the public actor to social innovation in order to build public action with the administration of the city and all local stakeholders.





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Figure 1. PUBLIC CHATROOMS

The architectural collective URBANNECT and the Department of Cultural Affairs of the city of Cluj imagine "Public Chatrooms" between citizens and administration starting from the success of "Urban Living Rooms" series of artistic interventions. In 2015, the URBANNECT collective installs open-air domestic spaces in the public squares of the Manastur and Unirii districts. The idea of the project "Urban Living Rooms" is to associate public spaces of the city of Cluj with domestic spaces: a



living room where to sit down and converse with passers-by, a kitchen to share a meal in the open air, a quiet room to think together... In the same way that these facilities suggest to citizens that public spaces can be home-like places, welcoming and conducive to conversation, the city plans to provide temporary facilities for direct conversation between inhabitants and public services on emerging themes around the quality of life in the neighbourhood.



## And design in all this?

Design for sustainable development first questioned daily consumption products and services. After that it gradually expanded its focus to systems of broader solutions, questioning our lifestyles by drawing inspiration from social innovations promising in terms of sustainable development (Meroni, 2007). In particular, designers have sought to contribute to the development of new “collaborative services” on the one hand by facilitating access for a greater number of users to solutions resulting from this social innovation while preserving the relational quality that is at the very core of these new lifestyles based on more sharing and collaboration (Jégou & Manzini, 2008).

In order to support and consolidate these movements of social innovation, design must widen its focus to include public innovation and help transform the governance of the city through the design of product-service-public-policy systems. Today, it is a question of ensuring that all these rising dynamics “make society” and produce common good. Beyond the injunction too often borrowed from the industrial model of “scaling up”, considering citizen initiatives as social enterprises that should find their value creation model and grow, it is necessary to look for how the dynamics of citizens become part of the territorial ecosystem and reinforce it.

This article shows through a series of examples of processes and projects that are part of the emerging movement of these new “Forms of Public Innovation” (FIP research project, 2014-2017) how design contributes in improving collaboration between different citizen initiatives as well as creating a better synergy with the public action in the city. In particular, it seeks to show through these examples how design approaches can help social innovation to meet and strengthen public action towards a more collaborative city.





## 1. Find synergies with your city's public policies

In the city of Poznan in Poland, four young Makers founded Zaklad Maker Space. They settled in the vacant premises of an old printing press in a building near the city centre. Gradually, the initiative enriched with a wood workshop, machine tools, 3D printers and the inspiring mix from makeshift DIY to computer aided manufacturing that characterizes the spaces of Makers (Doctorow, 2010). We met there citizens of all ages, sexes and socio-professional backgrounds who work together to “make”, from the repair of a piece of furniture to the experimentation of the most improbable fabrications.

Gathered during a visit of participants of the European Union funded URBACT REFILL network (Urbact & RefillTheCity) on the practice of temporary use of vacant spaces in cities, organizers expressed some complaints. They used to benefit from the preferential rent program carried by the municipal administration that was aiming at reactivating the many empty spaces in the city, but today the period of temporary use has ended. They now have to move out and are finding out that the administration actually does not care about their initiative and does not help them enough .

“But really what do you bring as Makers? Why should the city of Poznan help you find a new space if you do not explain how your initiative is a benefit for the inhabitants and for the city?” This remark by Amalia Zepou, Deputy Mayor of Innovation and the participation of the city of Athens, which participated in the visit, triggered the discussions in favour of a better construction of the interface between citizens’ initiatives and local public authorities (Jégou, Bonneau, 2016).

What is it more precisely? The Makers welcome young people outside school hours to make them aware of computer-aided manufacturing processes: in this sense Zaklad is a form of school outside the walls that should interest the city departments responsible for youth and education.

The space also includes the visits of many unemployed people who come to find in this place of multiple activities new professional motivations: Zaklad thus provides a form of assistance to the job seekers and should in this interest the department economy and employment of the city, etc.

“Zaklad is boiling with social innovations but does not know how to highlight the benefits it brings to the different services of the city” concludes Amalia Zepou.



## Design of a matchmaking process between the city and citizen initiatives

Inspired by the discussions around the Zaklad case in autumn 2015, we are seeking with the 10 URBACT REFILL network partner cities to co-develop a process of “matchmaking” between the various departments of the city administration and citizen initiatives. A canvas was sketched in the spring of 2016 for a first pilot conducted in autumn by the city of Cluj in Romania: 1 / map the citizens’ initiatives of the city and identify a first sample invited for the pilot; 2 / in the same way, identify among the departments of the administration of the city which are likely to be interested by the invited initiatives; 3 / organize a first meeting between the two to get to know one another; 4 / to deepen this mutual knowledge through cross-group visits: both public officials meet each initiative on their own ground and these in turn go to each department of the administration to understand the logic of operation; 5 / Finally, the two meet for a very structured matchmaking workshop: two-to-two initiative-department meeting in “speed-dating” mode, at each meeting a hypothetical collaboration scenario is co-constructed, exploring these 3 questions : how can this citizen initiative contribute to the public policies of this department of the city? How can this department support this initiative in return? Finally, what could a scenario of collaboration between the two actually look like?

Eight scenarios emerged from the first pilot in Cluj as a result of the coming together of, for example, the group of urban artists Somes delivery and the Office of Road Safety and Highways (see box: SERVICE OF CO-DESIGN OF PUBLIC SPACE) or Urbannect activists and the Department of Cultural Projects potential partnership (see box: PUBLIC CHATROOMS); etc.

In the same way a second pilot took place in the city of Poznan bringing together Zaklad Maker Space course but also 4 other local citizens initiatives with the departments Education, Culture, Town Planning and the Mayor’s Office (see box: INFORMAL EDUCATION OUTSIDE THE WALLS).

Finally in Ghent, a third pilot of the Matchmaking process took place for the temporary use of the former building of the Central Library of the city (see box: CREATING HYBRID COALITION) and led to “The Nest”, a giant socio-cultural incubator of 6700 m2 developed for 12 months by the collective “Stadslabo” (Urban Lab) formed of 30 local citizens initiatives.

Co-constructed and refined by these three successive pilots, the design of the matchmaking process is included in the toolbox validated by the URBACT REFILL partners as one of the key steps in setting up a collaboration between city and citizens for the temporary use of vacant spaces (REFILL Match-Makers).





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Figure 2. INFORMAL EDUCATION OUTSIDE THE WALLS  
The Zaklad Maker space and the Training Services of the city of Poznan imagine lifelong learning relays. In the district of Lazarz, the city of Poznan has experimented with preferential rent schemes giving cultural and artistic initiatives access to spaces in exchange for involving the local population in their activities. The Training Department of the city would find it interesting to extend this type of practice to initiatives such as the Makers

movements, which are at the forefront of the issues of access to information technology, learning networks, citizen science, etc. In exchange for the provision of public premises, an initiative such as Zaklad is committed to sharing its momentum with schools, collaborating with universities and thus completing scientific and technical education.



## 2. Stimulate the development of visions for the future of your city

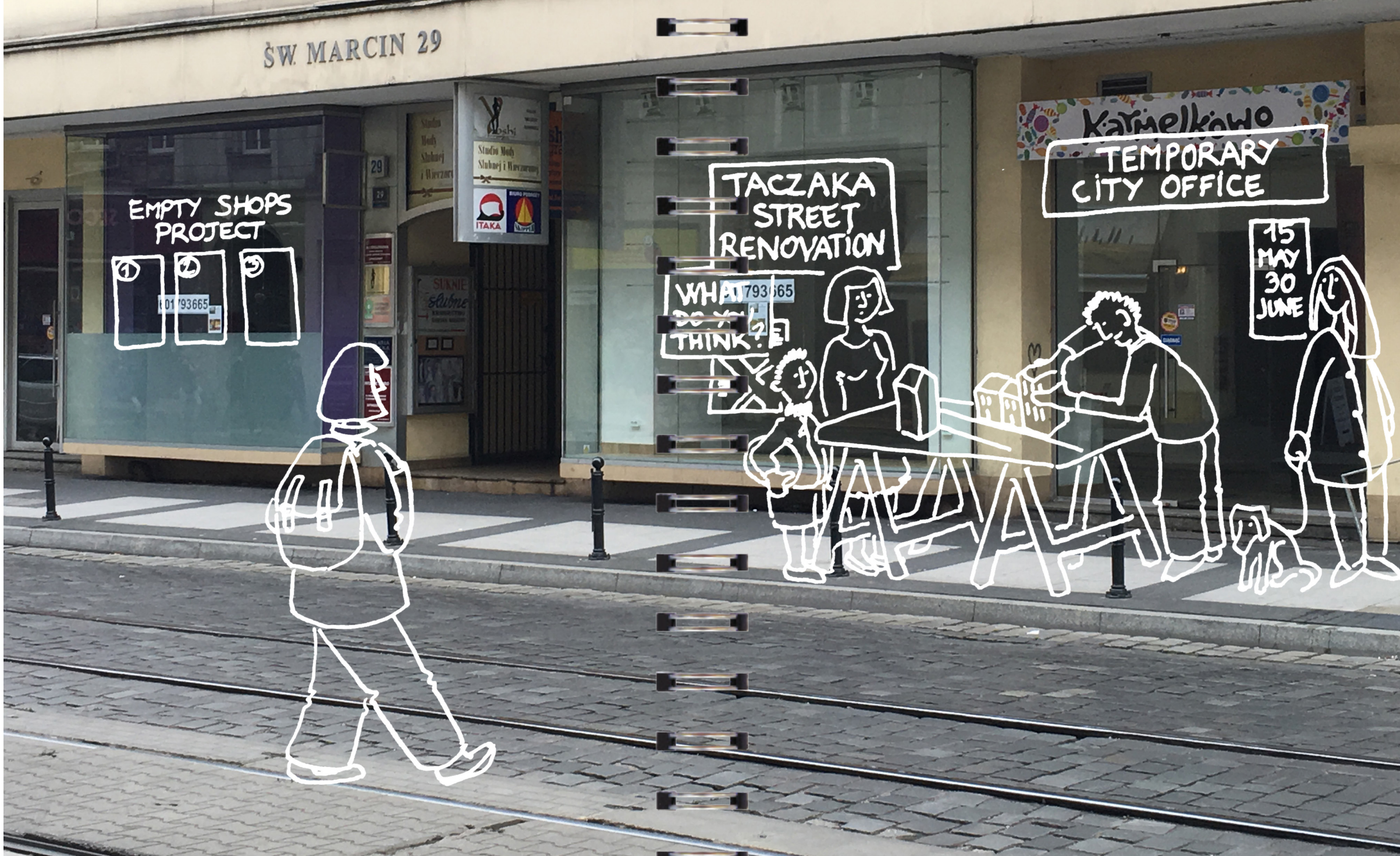
“The territorial projects of sustainable development that are evaluated are generally good projects but they often lack a vision for the territory” noticed Sandrine Fournis, Head of the former Bureau of the Territories, the cell of the General Commissariat for Sustainable Development (CGDD) responsible at the time for the recognition at national level of Agenda 21 (Jégou, F., Gouache, C. and Fournis). Originating from the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992 (Jégou, Gouache & Fournis, 2015), Agenda 21 were conceived as a territorial action plan for the collective transition to a more sustainable society. These Agenda 21 and, more generally, the territorial projects for sustainable development have had various successes and evolutions according to the sensitivities and the national policies for the environment ranging from action programs and synergy between local actors brought by the public authorities to citizen movements such as Transition Initiatives (Boutaud, 2009).. In France, for example, more than a thousand local authorities (cities, departments, regions, etc.) carry out Agenda 21 action programs that seek to align local public policies with the Rio principles. However, it is clear that these both top-down and bottom-up initiatives do not carry a shared vision of the territory. In other words, the various initiatives aiming for a sustainable society are struggling to share a common vision and come together in a more structured and transformational movement (Romain Feche, 2013).

## Design of a participatory projection process

After having collaborated for the first time with the CGDD of the Ministry of the Environment to co-design Agenda 21 evolution scenarios with a set of French territories, in order to stimulate debates on the subject at the second Rio+20 Earth Summit in 2012 (Jégou, Fournis & Rousseau, 2012), we continued developing a co-constructed process which would cast a vision shared by all actors of the territories. Starting from user-centred design approaches that engage stakeholders in the co-construction of product-service systems that we are expanding and adapting, we are bringing out a range of tools allowing a diverse group of actors in the region to build together an embodied vision of how this territory could live and function in a more sustainable way. The scenario(s) produced are both the narration of a concrete and tangible vision of the sustainable territory over a period of 10-15 years as well as a series of concrete solutions (services, infrastructures, public policies promising in terms of sustainable development) that make this vision more tangible and actionable by the actors involved.

This work conducted between 2013-2015 and entitled VISIONS+21 is presented as a community of practices for the co-construction of a shared sustainable vision of the territory. The VISIONS+21 community of practice relies on an open source toolbox (Boîte à outil, Vision21), a participatory workshop process and the formation of a network of activators throughout France.





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Figure 3. TEMPORARY OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATION

The city of Poznań imagines setting up temporary representations of its administration in the districts for a better collaboration with the citizens.

Many streets in Poznań suffer from disaffection. Number of commercial spaces are empty causing neighbourhood decline, vandalism and the remaining shops to close down. The revitalization of these streets requires consultation processes with local residents. But these processes are heavy and difficult to manage from the distant administration of the city. Inspired by the processes of temporary use of vacant spaces, the city is considering the possibility of setting up temporary

representations of the Urban Regeneration Services in vacant premises in the very area that is the subject of an urban renewal program. Installing public officials, for example, in an empty commercial space in the middle of a declining street would have many advantages: putting both agents of the administration on the ground in contact with the inhabitants, immersing them in the tangible reality of the neighbourhood, giving visibility to the renovation strategy, and easing the co-creation process of the renovation project.



In concrete terms, how does all this work? Let us take an example: the urban community of Lorient in Brittany, the city of Cluses in the Alps or the department of Gironde in the South-West bring together some forty stakeholders: a group of citizens as diverse as possible; agents representing the main departments of local government; elected officials involved in the sustainable transition of the territory. During the first day of the workshop, these stakeholders work together on a series of exercises aimed at co-constructing a plausible and desirable sustainable vision of the territory. The choice and methods of application of the various VISIONS+21 tools are left to the discretion of the stakeholders but most often the exercises are articulated in the following order:

A first exercise of “Contextualisation of territories in the strategic environment”: the stakeholders participating in the workshop are more or less familiar with the major future challenges of their territory. We present to them a set of fictional press releases suggesting to debate around a series of questions on their territory in 2035. Stimulated by this reading of the local newspaper with a horizon of twenty years, they discuss, eliminate the articles judged as not pertinent, generate new ones and create a shared representation of the territory’s strategic environment while mutually familiarizing each other with the challenges of their territory for the future.

A second exercise then proposes a “Test of robustness of the territories in transition or in transformation”: the participants evaluate together the capacity of their territory to face the blow against a set of potential future challenges. By team, they put themselves in the shoes of journalists who in 2035 should make a file on a major risk such as: “The bankruptcy of social action”; “The difficulties of representative democracy”; “Abandonment of rural territories”; “Climate precariousness” or “The inertia of public policies”. Through a “retro-prospective” posture participants examine the weaknesses of their territory while seeking what assets they could mobilize.

A third exercise proposes the “Creation of a scenario of ecological transition towards sustainable development”: the participants visualize 3 scenarios realized for the conference RIO+20: “ENGAGEMENTS 21” (Engagements 21) on the co-production of the public action with citizens; “DEMOCITIES 21” (Democities 21) on the practice of experimentation in territorial development and “PACTS 21” (Pactes 21) on the emergence of new models of value creation between public-private-citizen hybrid partnerships. Fortified by the first two projective exercises, inspired or otherwise dubious in the face of these 3 scenarios, the participants “tinker” with their own vision for their territory.

Finally, a fourth and last exercise allows to generate “Pathways of evolution of the territorial project of sustainable development”: in the manner of a process of “backcasting” the participants start from the desired future vision which they have just defined for their territory and look for what actions to take to move from the present situation to the desired vision. Over a long period of time from 2018 to 2035, they set projects, imagine new public policies, and invent services and infrastructure for sustainable lifestyles. They articulate and synergize them to establish a credible and achievable plan of action.

Unlike a classic prospective process, VISIONS+21 generates a collective projection, emerging from the consultation of a sample of stakeholders. Unlike an expert-only room-work, the visions generated are more embodied and actionable (Manzini, Jégou, 2000).

Beyond a toolbox, the co-construction of VISIONS+21 followed by a training-action process involved more than 10 territories, decentralized state support function, regional resource centres on sustainable development and private consultants who have appropriated the process to establish a community of practice (5 pilote territoires example).

### 3. Strengthening innovation capacities in city public administrations

“We then noticed a growing gap between what we bring to the economic actors who are our public, our users, and the way we operate as an administration,” comments Vincent Lepage, Director of Economic Policy for the Public Service of Wallonia . This gap is all the more salient as both companies and citizens’ initiatives demonstrate outstanding dynamism in the territories. In front, administrative structures are struggling to react because of a lack of a culture of change and adaptation.

If we note this shift externally, it also exists internally: “young agents push to get out of the constraints, to do otherwise: to keep these new forces alive we must develop innovation and creativity in public services” confirms Daniel Collet, Inspector General, at the Directorate-General for Economic Affairs, Employment and Research (DGO6) of the Public Service of Wallonia (Jégou, Gouache & Bonneau 2017). As part of the 2016-2019 Administration Contract, the DGO6 is committed to becoming the showcase of the Public Service of Wallonia through, in particular, the implementation of New Ways Of Working (NWOW) in the administration and setting up an innovation function within the administrative apparatus.





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Figure 4. CREATING HYBRID COALITIONS

The city of Ghent is exploring a new posture of public action where the administration creates favourable conditions for meetings and exchanges between the actors of the territories in order to obtain a higher quality of response to the calls for communal projects.

In 2016, the City's Public Policy Participation Unit organized a first major meeting process between local stakeholders likely to propose a temporary occupation project for the vacant building of the former municipal library. The objective is to experiment a new approach between the constraints of the

European Code of Public Contracts and the difficulty of the many citizen initiatives to form coalitions sufficiently robust against the requirements of this Code of Public Contracts to which the city must conform for providing any public good. For this purpose, the city is experimenting with a process of helping to form hybrid coalitions: a large hall is available to host an exchange market where 147 initiatives volunteers to mutually present their actions, seek complementarities, define a meta-project within which they are complementary and, at the end of the evening form several consortia potentially candidates for the temporary occupation of the old library. The city administration takes on a new position of support in order for inclusive and sustainable citizen coalitions to be formed.



## Design of a Public Innovation Lab

Committed by the DGO6 to build this innovation function we are setting up a process of co-design of a public innovation laboratory. But what is a “public innovation lab” except what seems to be lacking in the administration to be more flexible, responsive, agile and able to produce new public services and new public policies in the face of an ever-changing and integrated territorial context and set of actors? We therefore propose to discover it while walking, to co-build with the agents of the DGO6 and the actors of the territory this famous Lab. The purpose is to define a new service, a service whose purpose is to innovate within the administrative machine. The approach we are implementing follows a service design process articulated in three phases.

### Step 1: The Stakeholder Tour

At first, it's about opening up the process on the outside, to take the pulse of the territory, to listen to all the actors who could encounter close or far related difficulties with the future laboratory.

The principle of the Stakeholder Tour is to meet at their places the key players potentially linked to the future DGO6 Lab or impacted by it in order to understand their expectations, difficulties, postures, etc. It makes it possible to express the actors, the users, etc. and thus to reap contradictory, contrasting and divergent points of view. But the Stakeholder Tour - as its rather unfamiliar appellation seeks to evoke - is also, first and foremost, a community building process, both of engagement and a form of consultation.

That lead to a week of touring moving from offices to offices, on all levels of the building and of the hierarchy, between departments, travelling around the city of Namur where the DGO6 is located and the surrounding area to hear the external players potentially users, interlocutors, or only observers of the future Innovation Lab.

Finally, a good thirty people met face to face and three of the walls of the Labo project room covered with posters of analysis: profiles of interlocutors of the future Lab corresponding to the mapping of stakeholders, their ways of work, which is easy for them in terms of innovation and what is less so. Finally, what is the result of this exercise beyond the information and engagement mechanism described above? Basically, one might think that there is not much to be gained by listening to a panorama of actors discussing a future Innovation Lab, of which they have no experience or even no idea of what it could be. What we are capturing here, rather than feedbacks or functional specifications of the lab, are above all evocations and positive but also negative mental representations: “the projects hosted by the lab would be a bit off the radar, in a zone of authorization (even of no-law) spared by the heaviness of the administrative machine”; “The lab must be an open place (at the passage of the agents, projects of all kinds...) but without being too exposed (to critical look, clichés that stick to the administration...)”; “the Lab must instantiate in a physical place neither too far (easily accessible) nor too close (out of influences and routines)”; “the creation of the lab must mark a change, celebrated and inaugurated, it must take advantage of the alignment of political will and but it must remain agile, mobile, evolving, constantly reinvented to avoid the risk of ever-present institutional sclerosis”, etc.

### Step 2: Expo-action

“... But then they are really going to do this lab...” says a civil servant of the Public Service of Wallonia who is going up in the elevator to his office after going into the entrance hall of the building where the Expo-Action of the future Lab of the DGO6 was installed for two days. This little remark is emblematic of the objective of an Expo-Action: to make the concept exist, to mock it up in full size, to embody what is still only a project so that it begins to exist.



The different scenarios of the future lab developed and visualized in the form of models represent stimulating and communicative material in order to return to the stakeholders and continue the process of collaborative co-construction. For two days, the visualized scenarios as well as the other intermediate results of the co-development process (stakeholder mapping, diabolical creativity, mapping of uses, etc.) are organized in a light or hanging exhibition and installed in the main entrance of the Service Public of Wallonia building. The lobby is transformed, mid-expo mid-lab, transfigured and invaded to ensure that none of the agents going to his office can fail to spend there at least a few moments.

Emerging actors (the most significant, involved, seekers, etc.) in the co-construction process are invited during the two days to visit the scenario exhibition and react. The installation in the hall prefigures in half tone the innovation Lab as an open space, where different profiles of actors cross to work together, etc. According to set appointments for visits, the innovation Lab team show around to small groups of agents. Hierarchical decision-makers get their hands dirty, prompting their teams to come for a ride, arguing one scenario over another.

The interest of an Expo-Action lies in the contradiction between the two terms: an exhibition is usually a presentation which visitors generally enjoy in a more or less passive way. On the contrary, the commitment of participants in an action supposes a strong implication of these to generate the results.

### Step 3: Proto-lab

A functioning Public Innovation Laboratory is the result of a process of progressive establishment and acculturation, of acceptance and positive contamination of the civil servants, of interrogations and transformation of the ways of working, of trial and errors and adoption of new paradigms. A dynamic and agile Innovation Lab is therefore not the result of a project conceived and then delivered-finished but a continuous process of incarnation of the idea in the real world, of co-evolution with uses without ever to freeze. The projective and interactive methods used until now make it possible to collaboratively define the uses and specifications of the laboratory. They must

be supplemented by full-scale tests of the main functionalities of the lab by involving the internal and external actors in moments of simulations and micro-experiments. In the previous phases, the project team has flagged the good project opportunities. The Expo-Action made it possible to identify requests involving several internal civil servants and external entities, to engage mixed teams generating visibility to the Lab project, etc. It only remains to start by creating a scalable ProtoLabo.

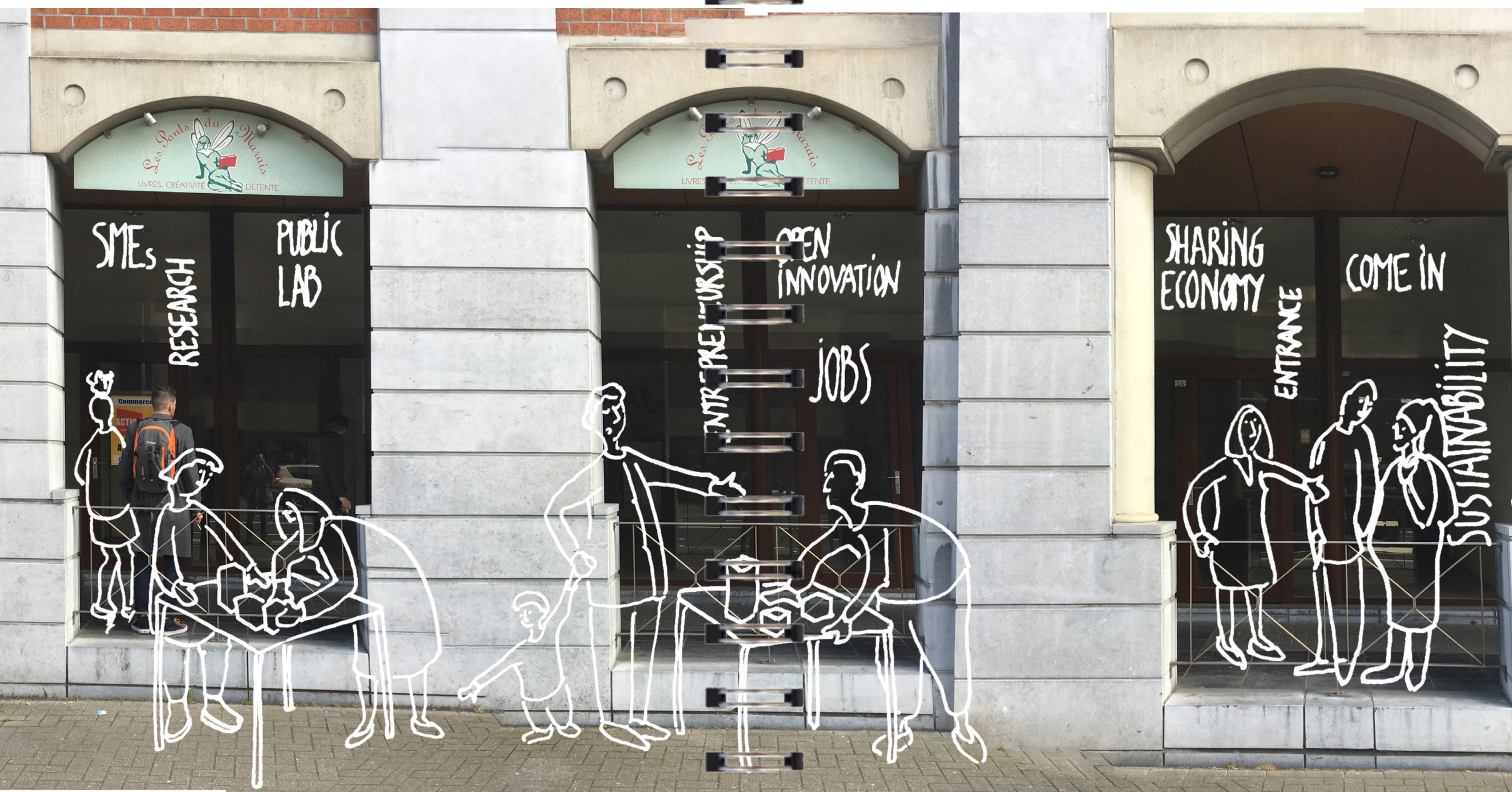
These micro-experiments are concentrated on a relatively short time to block and give the observers confirmation that the lab is already functional and let them know what this new resource of the Service Public of Wallonia will be when it is ramped up. What do we get out of it? First, a series of sequences of projects judiciously chosen to demonstrate different phases of the design process applied to public services and policies and generate some first "POC" (proof of concepts): to experience an empathetic approach of users of the SESAM employment support system with caseworkers; define the issue of the chemistry sector in Wallonia within the framework of the Interreg S3CHEM project; generate ideas between departments to improve the reception of new agents after hearing a sample of them; model the next steps for the development of the DGO6 Lab in different room options; to test and develop, with a sample of SMEs, the De Minimis simplified formular prototypes relating to cumulative State Aids. Then, in terms of laboratory specifications, the lessons are also very rich: privilege agility to best fit the needs of the field; to make the lab a "situated service", localized skills and resources but without the burden of a structure to finance and justify; establish a community of practice that progresses organically in the institution according to the opportunities and relying on the first civil servants convinced; instantiate the new innovation function in an emblematic form of its posture (see box: OPEN INNOVATION LAB); etc.



Figure 5. OPEN INNOVATION LAB

In the city of Namur, the Public Service of Wallonia is building a Public Innovation Lab open to the street and local actors. The DGO 6 - Operational General Directorate of the Economy, Employment and Research engaged in a process of co-development of an innovation function within the Public Service of Wallonia seeks to embody it in a place- laboratory within the premises of the regional administration. After considering several potentially available spaces in the building floors, the choice is to occupy vacant commercial

spaces at the street level and directly overlooking the weekly open market square. Although the DGO6 is not supposed to be directly related to citizens, this choice makes it possible to instantiate the innovation lab function in a place open to the public space. The configuration of several shops with windows gives the public innovation function a new posture, as a place accessible to users, a gateway into the classic administration, a function readable from the outside for citizens.





## Vilco, design of a process of co-construction of local dynamics.

In conclusion, we wish to show how the 3 processes presented in the previous pages are likely to articulate towards the co-construction of a more collaborative city in general and in particular how they inspired the VILCO project (VILCO team) (literally the acronym for “Collaborative City”) under development for a year in the Brussels-Capital Region.

“It’s not in town hall that the city is invented, it’s in the street,” says Daniel Termont Mayor of the city of Ghent (A journey through temporary use, 2018), pointing out how local governance today must necessarily be a form of co-construction between citizens’ initiatives and the public authorities of the city.

It is exactly from this hypothesis that the VILCO project is built whose central research question is: “how can local and collective citizens’ powers better collaborate to develop the resilience of local dynamics in favour of the environment?”.

In other words, the VILCO research-action project funded under the CO-CREATE program (see INNOVIRIS) led by the innovation agency INNOVIRIS (see INNOVIRIS) of the Brussels-Capital Region proposes to experiment a process where collaboration is co-constructed within what it identifies as a “local dynamic”. This new name, put forward as a hypothesis by VILCO, is emblematic of the posture that the project wishes to adopt: to no longer think in terms of relations (good or bad) between local and collective public authorities or citizen initiatives. But on the contrary, to prompts the hypothesis of a new territorial entity: the “local dynamics” resulting from a collaboration, a synergy between public actions and citizens’ actions (and by extension, actions of non-public actors). This shift in posture is not insignificant: it poses from the outset the vision of different arrangements between local actors, of specifically located synergies whose better cohesion would improve the city’s resilience level.

Four “local dynamics” are thus hypothesized and compared within VILCO. They are centred on the territories of the municipalities of Boitsfort, Brussels city, Etterbeek and Uccle plus a fifth “local dynamics” at the regional territory level this time consisting of the first 4 in interaction with the level of governance supra of the Brussels Capital-Region and more particularly Brussels Environment (see website), its the administration for environment and energy.

## What is the design of the “local dynamics” constitution process?

Finally, we describe the process inspired, among other things, by the 3 experiences described above, which we believe could be the milestones of a roadmap of co-construction of collaboration within a “local dynamic”.

The matchmaking process piloted within the URBACT REFILL network inspired the first step of the VILCO process: “IMMERSION: SEE, LISTEN AND SHARE”. The objective is to find synergies between citizens’ initiatives in the territory and the various departments of the city administration. This stage of the process includes “cross-visits” for a better mutual understanding within the “local dynamics” and the “vis-ma-vie” (live my life) exercise where citizens and public servants temporarily observe the role of the other to better understand her/his point of view.

The co-construction of a shared vision generated by the VISIONS+21 community of practice helped define the second step of the VILCO process: “DEFINING INNOVATION SITES”. The aim is to stimulate the development of a shared vision of desirable and achievable “local dynamics”. This second step includes moments of “self-diagnosis” and “robustness test” in order to point out the weak points but also the assets on which to build and consolidate the “local dynamics”.



The definition of an innovation function within the public action through the constitution of a form of lab at the service of the territory inspires the last three stages of the VILCO process: “CO-CREATION OF SOLUTIONS”; “EXPERIMENTS” and “MONITORING AND CONSOLIDATION”. The objective of these three steps is to mobilize the actors in a transforming process of the local public action. These three steps aim at imagining new ways of interacting between actors of the territory (partnerships, pooling of resources, hybrid models, co-production, etc.) to prototype and experiment them, to evaluate the effects in terms of resilience of the city and, where appropriate, to promote the conditions of adoption.

## Local dynamics and collaborative cities

Collaborating: producing results and social values.

To put forward the hypothesis of a “local dynamic” implies from the outset the idea that citizen initiatives and public authorities form a whole in co-evolution. This idea goes beyond the notion of collaboration of distinct entities: the dynamic it generates on the territory is consubstantial of their capacity to think in complementarity and not in opposition, to seek overall synergies, to define projects where the strengths of the one come to fill the deficiencies of the other and vice versa as typically the integration between “Maîtrise d’œuvre (project flow) and “Maîtrise d’usage” (usage flow) (see for example box: SERVICE OF CO-DESIGN OF THE PUBLIC SPACE).

Bridging: connecting diversities

The process of forming a “local dynamic” naturally proposes to “bridge” between two worlds - citizen initiatives and public action – a priori in direct relationship but in fact struggling to understand each other. As described above, these two worlds do not know each other and have difficulty going beyond the stereotypes that stick to both administrative processes (heaviness, inertia, etc.) and social innovation (difficulties in transfer and up-scaling). “Bridging” therefore involves developing opportunities for coexistence, practices of immersion in the reality of the other, mutual impregnation (see for example the boxes: PUBLIC CHATROOMS and TEMPORARY OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATION).

Commoning: weaving people and places

“Local dynamics” is in essence an intermediate entity, a form of third-place distinct from the usual categories of private initiative or public domain. By its intermediary nature, the “local dynamic” entity aims to generate commons that does not participate either exclusively either from citizen’s initiative or from public action. Theses commons can only exist through the hybridization of the two, such as places of shared innovation combining social innovation and public innovation (see box: Open Innovation Lab) or collaborative public services that ingeniously combine public engineering and citizen capacities (see box: INFORMAL EDUCATION OUTSIDE THE WALLS).

Democratizing: supporting active participation.

Finally, “local dynamics” is conceived as a democratic space beyond the current forms of representative or participative democracy. The governance of this “local dynamic” is based on still experimental methods resulting from co-creation and participatory design practices, such as the instantiation of interaction formats of the democratic ecosystem (see box: CREATING HYBRID COALITION). The public actor ensures the quality and fairness of the deliberation by bringing together the stakeholders. As a stakeholder itself, it is part of the deliberative process it engenders, it “lets go” and plays the game by “sitting down as a citizen” and lets a solution emerge from this democratic ecosystem.

The design of the process described here is to be taken as a “piece to break”, a combination of promising practices that have been proven but fully open to redesign by stakeholders involved in VILCO experimentation. Far from instituting what might appear to be a new engineering of collaboration, the intention is to gain time by proposing a framework even if it is to modify it completely, to invite the actors to take part in a process to better enable them to redesigning it from the inside after experimenting with it, experimenting with tools from the practice of public policy design to bring out a community of practice.

This is what the next 2 years of the VILCO project will be dedicated to. We expect the emergence of “local proto-dynamics” certainly based on different models of collaboration, the adaptation of various tools and local rearrangements between stakeholders.





Figure 6. CO-DESIGN SERVICE OF PUBLIC SPACE

The urban intervention collective *Somes delivery* and the Traffic and Road Safety Services imagine collaboration for a mixed service between users and city services for the co-design and testing of public spaces.

The collective *Somes delivery* has developed between 2014 and 2016 a series of interventions to rehabilitate the edge of the river *Somes* neglected in the urban

centre of Cluj. Each intervention involves the surrounding inhabitants and aims to revive the uses of the river for the population of the city. For the Traffic and Road Safety Department, this approach could be used systematically to co-design the public spaces starting from a dialogue with the citizens and going through a temporary installation testing the ideas retained from the point of view of their technical and administrative feasibility.



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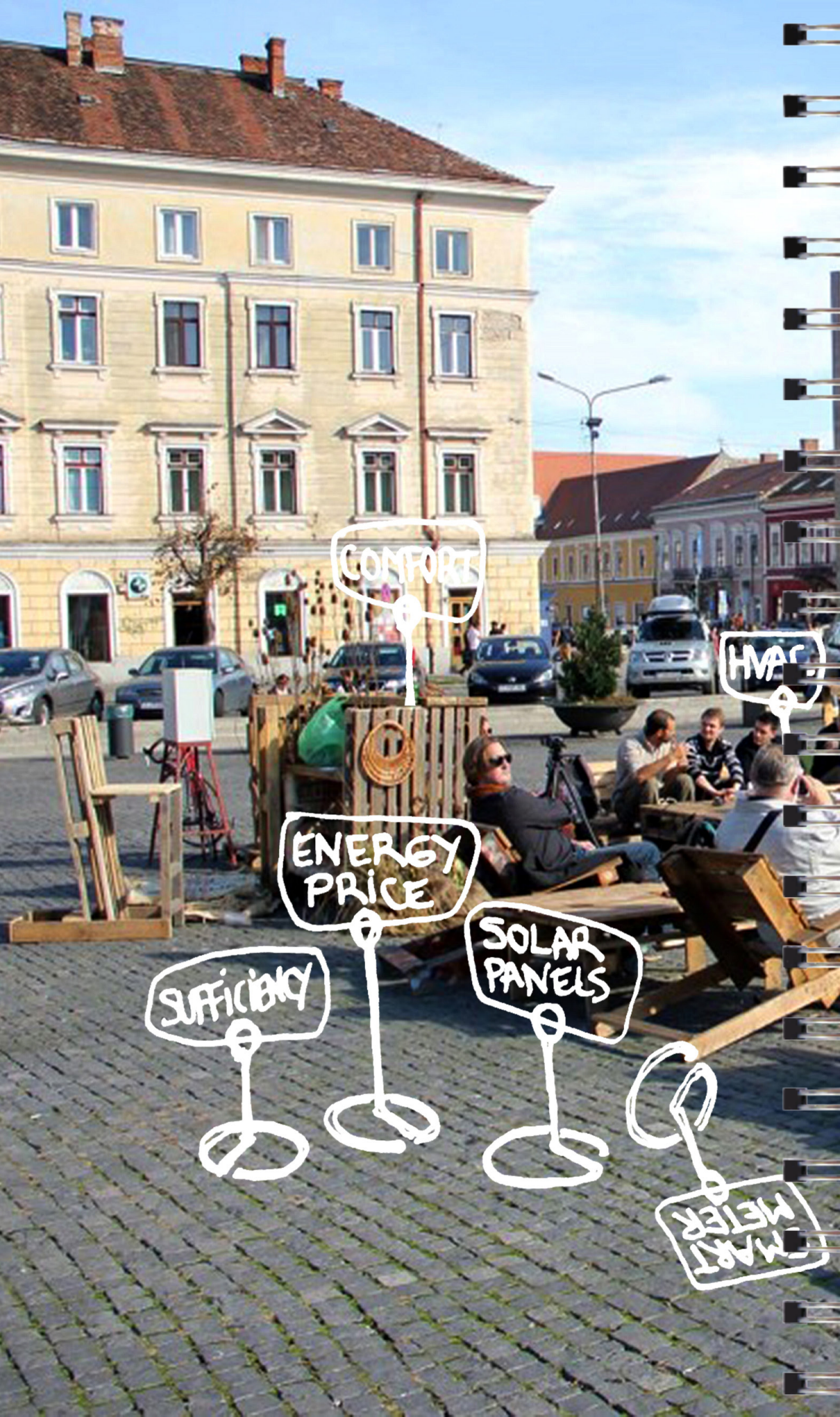
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Strategic Design Scenarios : [www.StrategicDesignScenarios.net](http://www.StrategicDesignScenarios.net)  
contact : [François.Jegou@StrategicDesignScenarios.net](mailto:François.Jegou@StrategicDesignScenarios.net)





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