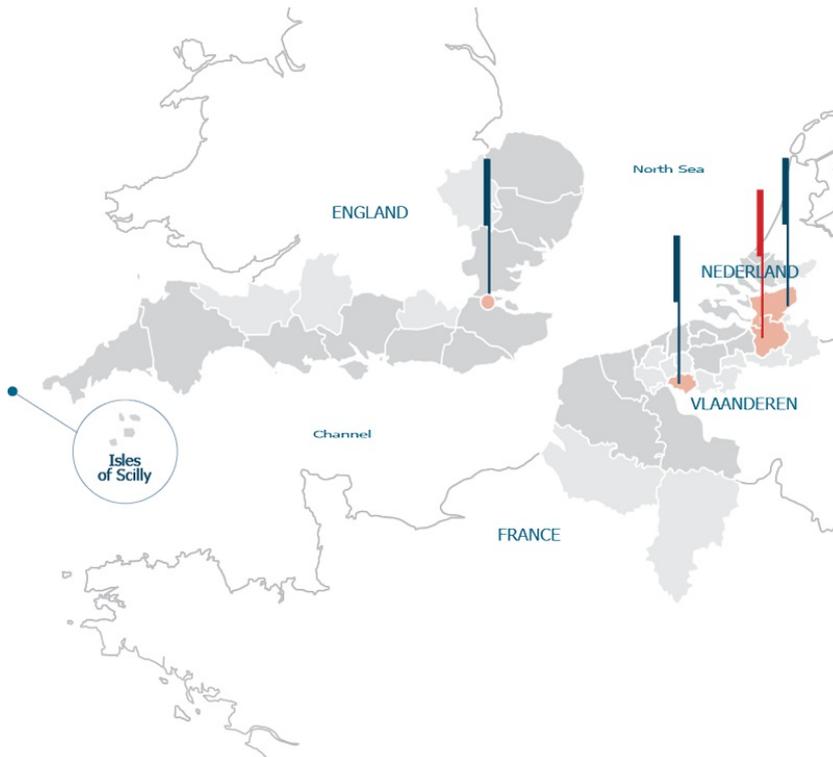


DNA

Deprived Neighbourhood Approach through the Creation of Ownership



■ Project summary



The DNA project responds to a need to improve the quality of life of people living and working in and visiting deprived neighbourhoods, in the 2 Seas area. It will contribute to an innovative solution, based on the empowerment of citizens, to take more ownership of the future of deprived areas. DNA will stimulate this heightened sense of ownership through initiatives in community safety, health and well-being and management of public space. In each activity, cross-border study visits will be organised, linking with workshops and local pilot schemes. By giving people the chance to take responsibility for their neighborhood and create opportunities to develop initiatives and to execute them

themselves, the partnership wants to reinforce for a sense of ownership for the place these people live in. The long-term aim is to create safe and attractive neighborhoods which are nice places to live, work or spend free time in. The DNA project is based on a shared regional strategy focusing on the co-operation between citizens and local governments to find creative and new solutions. Emphasis will also be placed on the involvement of national and regional authorities.

■ Activities

What was the project trying to achieve?

The long-term objective is to create safe, attractive neighbourhoods where people enjoy living, working and relaxing. The idea first and foremost is to restore the social fabric in vulnerable, deprived neighbourhoods. DNA capitalises on the need to improve the quality of life for the people who reside in these neighbourhoods. The project wishes to strengthen the sense of ownership vis-à-vis one's own residential environment by offering the residents the opportunity

to take responsibility for their own neighbourhood and develop and implement initiatives. The City of Antwerp (the LP), OCMW Kortrijk (Kortrijk's Public Social Welfare Centre), Medway Council and the City of Breda joined forces for three years in a series of local and cross-border actions in order to achieve this objective. Within the context of these partnerships a productive dialogue was gradually established between all kinds of professional employees of local governments and local residents. Letting initiatives originate in the community and developing them into something that receives more widespread support - this bottom-up working principle constituted the backbone of the DNA project. Local residents were given the opportunity to choose the themes and angles for developing projects. The low-level entry option was stimulated by founding neighbourhood committees, study visits by mixed teams of professionals and local residents, local workshops, a transnational taskforce, local pilot projects and the dynamics of a cross-border competition called the European Ownership Award.

What were the activities implemented?

These are only a few examples of initiatives and projects that were developed around these themes in the course of the DNA project in the various cities: Activity 1: Community Safety Workshops and pilot actions about nuisance, drugs, alcohol abuse, social cohesion, prevention, neighbourhood arbitration and community involvement. Activity 2: Health & Wellbeing Pilot projects, local taskforces and a transnational taskforce on Wellbeing, which developed an overarching cross-border definition of 'neighbourhood wellbeing'; based on local surveys. An instrument that measures the perception of wellbeing. This instrument will be used as a supplement to the existing Neighbourhood Monitor (Buurtmonitor) of Kortrijk, which measures the objective wellbeing criteria. Activity 3: Public Space Local taskforces about Public Space. Pilot projects about the development of facilities for children, the use and management of Public Space in deprived neighbourhoods, attractive streets and squares, the make-over of unoccupied buildings and places into vibrant meeting places, based on the input of residents and local traders. Partnerships with local stakeholders to effectively organise an offer. The partners created and coached local committees/taskforces and workshops on each activity. Mutual study visits were organised for residents and professionals.

■ Results

What were the key results of the project?

Activity 1, 9 pilot actions have been implemented relating to nuisance, drugs, alcohol abuse, social cohesion, prevention, neighbourhood mediation and resident involvement in Antwerp (Wensen in de Wind, De Oogstoren, De Verborgen Kloostertuin), Medway (AIR Football initiative; The Mural in Chatham High Street; Recycling and bulb planting events at Luton library; the Community Safety Wardens), Breda (: Buurtvaders; Grote Broers; Grote Zussen Buurtbemiddeling Flat Alert; Buurtpreventie) and Kortrijk (Graffiti Jam in V-TEX; Traffic Safety Week in Lange Munte). Activity 2 (Health & Wellbeing), there are the numerous surveys, conducted in different partner cities. They resulted in four local definitions of wellbeing and a cross-border definition on wellbeing as outcome of the Transnational Taskforce on wellbeing. Furthermore, 8 pilot actions have been implemented. In Antwerp: De Coninck Sport; buurthuis deBuurt; The Soundtrack of our Square. Kortrijk: Lange Munte Baking Project; The Karamblas Vintage Market; wijkcomité Stasegemsestraat. Medway: The National Health Service Bus; AIR

Football; The ANNEX football team, new playground equipment for Luton Infant School; The Community Food Project; Breda: Women on the move; Kaboutergym. Activity 3 (public spaces): 6 pilot actions have been implemented. Antwerp: De Rapporters of De Coninckplein; Carte Blanche dance workshops; Life in the square; The Pub Crawls of Theater Vonk; The Multicultural 'A' exhibition in De Coninckplein Kortrijk: Kinderwijkparlement; Tuin zoekt Buurverhaal Medway: The Mural; Luton Infant School play equipment; Salvation Army area planting project; hanging baskets scheme in the High Street of Chatham Breda: Women's studio Amelia; ONS community house; De Buurttuin in Geeren-Zuid

Did all partners and territories benefit from the results?

As this project is fundamentally geared towards bringing together various stakeholders such as governments, wellbeing professionals and local citizens, the people for whom DNA can be relevant are naturally also very diverse. There is no doubt that the partner cities' target groups have benefited a lot from the results of the DNA project: the visitors and residents of deprived neighbourhoods, the members of local neighbourhood committees and taskforces, residents who are involved in local and cross-border activities, local entrepreneurs, traders, SMEs and potential start-ups. This story first and foremost focuses on them and their social emancipation. The professionals too gained a lot from DNA. This quote says it all: "This 'substantiated' knowledge and experience transfer across regional borders, learning from each other's learning processes, is probably one of the strongest results of the DNA project."

What were the effects / outcomes for the territories involved?

Thanks to DNA, in Antwerp, the situation in the square has definitely improved and the feeling of insecurity has clearly decreased. In Kortrijk too, people from V-TEX and Lange Munte experience that the situation in their neighbourhoods has improved in terms of safety and attractive public space. Thanks to DNA, a number of resident groups started up, which are still functioning today. In Medway, the Chatham mural, Theatre Royal Square, hanging baskets project, and planting project have all significantly improved the attractiveness of the area. In Breda, in case of safety, a number of activities have been implemented structurally in the local policy: buurtvaders (Neighbourhood Fathers), Grote Broers (Big Brothers), Buurtbemiddeling Flat Alert (Neighbourhood Mediation), Neighbourhood Prevention. In terms of Health & Wellbeing, residents continue with activities such as JOGG (exercise) and healthy food initiatives.

■ Distinctiveness

What was the real added-value of doing this cross-border project?

The DNA project, which reinforces social inclusion by restoring the social fabric in deprived neighbourhoods, was rolled out in four very different neighbourhoods and cities identities. The embedding of the DNA idea - stimulating ownership through a bottom-up approach - was largely defined by the various political policy contexts in which these partner cities operate. For several years, Great Britain has used 'The Big Society' concept as a guideline, phasing out the public sector and opening it up to citizens and private initiatives. In the Netherlands the local government is downsizing its role as a problem solver with a Community Approach that transfers the responsibility to the local residents. The local government's role focuses on

facilitating the initiatives of local residents. Flanders has made the least progress in terms of an umbrella policy for neighbourhood ownership and bottom-up work. These geographical, social, political and cultural differences made it very interesting for all to see how common issues are dealt with in the other partner cities.

Have any synergies been developed with other projects or networks?

Yes. Thanks to the decision for DNA to join the cluster project SNAP, the project partners from the existing 2 Seas projects CAFTA (Brighton & Hove and the City of Rotterdam) and DNA (the City of Antwerp and Medway Council) met and learned about each other's projects. At the 2 Seas Annual Event "Under Full Sail" (March 2013), we also met many other 2 Seas projects. It was interesting to see what a great variety of projects there are.

What are the key messages , key lessons learned you would like to share?

THE POWER OF 'WILD' IDEAS Often you can generate additional clout and impact by daring to build on ideas that fall just outside of the traditional thinking patterns. One of the strongest examples in this context is the way in which the original surveys of Antwerp's local residents were organised (with focus groups, working groups, using boards and so on). Whereas a traditional survey would have mainly yielded a paper result this approach generated a community-wide dynamic which resulted in a wide array of actions. This is also a good way of establishing contact with target groups that are difficult to reach. The Children's Neighbourhood Parliament and the baking project in Lange Munte in Kortrijk have succeeded involving the immigrant community as well as the neighbourhood's children in the DNA process.

■ Project Information

Title	Deprived Neighbourhood Approach through the Creation of Ownership
Total project budget	€ 2 862 960
ERDF	€ 1 431 480
Priority & objective	Priority 3 a. Promote and allow for social inclusion and well-being of different groups in society
Timeframe	2011-07-01 - 2014-09-30
Lead partner	stad Antwerpen
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