

Summary of the Findings of the International Advisory Board 2013

The 8th International Advisory Board (IAB) Conference 2013 took place on 29, 30,31 May 2013. The 11 international members of the IAB spent three very full days visiting, observing, experiencing and analysing Rotterdam. Their task was to create recommendations for Rotterdam's future for the Municipal Executive.

At the moment, we are finding ourselves in a period of major and rapid transition. Not only does the prevailing crisis bring us challenges, but we are also facing sea changes to our environment in the fields of politics, governance, economics, technology, environmental issues and social contexts. The global developments may fill us with apprehension in some respect, but mostly we need to capture the opportunities that may arise from these major global developments. The role of governments both national and local is changing profoundly and existing structures and business models may not suffice to capture the wealth of opportunity that these changes can also bring us.

When devising new strategies for our future we must work with the multitude of uncertainties facing us and with the demands of our modern society. This means that strategic interventions must generate economic progress while at the same time adding value, in the broadest sense of the word, to society as a whole.

Based on progress made since the IAB recommendations of 2011, the members of the International Advisory Board came together with a very clear task of not looking into what needs to be done but most importantly how the IAB and EDBR can further support the local government in executing and implementing previously formed visions and strategies.

The members of the IAB not only spent quite some time on profoundly debating issues and domains, but also immersed themselves into various aspects of everyday city life. They visited several districts and neighbourhoods, met and spoke with various people at various different levels. From government representatives and city administrators, managing directors, architects, town planners and artists, to students and entrepreneurs. They were not only impressed by the tangible progress of all the physical changes in the city, but were particularly inspired by all the activities and initiatives they found at grass roots level in the neighbourhoods. The overall conclusion is that Rotterdam has real treasures, real dynamics and vibrancy and real sources for growth and progress available within its population. This is being created by the people. The members feel that Rotterdam is unique in the world in this respect. The real challenge is to unlock and accelerate this energy to benefit and inspire the city at a broader level.

The members of the IAB find that most of what is needed to reach the goal of creating and maintaining an attractive city exists within the fabric of the city already, but it needs to be expressed, externalised, accelerated, supported and connected in such a way that it becomes the clearly identifiable, recognisable part of the everyday identity of the city. The following five recommendations will support the city in reaching their goal of becoming and remaining an attractive city and building on this reputation.

1. Changing the Mindset

As stated before, the local government needs to take on more and more tasks, while having less and less funding available for the delivery of these tasks. The changing environment, the increasing complexity of societal needs and the scarcity of funds and other resources mean that the local government needs support from local citizens and businesses to deliver products and services. In other words, the local government needs to share responsibility, while ensuring and maintaining the high quality delivery of services.

The existing structures and business models that the government uses no longer suffice in supporting such a new way of working with the public, rather than just working for the public. It would be easy enough to recommend structural changes to existing governance models. However, it comprises a fundamentally different way of working which requires a change in attitude and mindset. The success of sharing responsibility is completely dependent on the willingness of existing government authorities to also share the authority that is coupled with sharing responsibility. The government authorities need to embrace local and private initiatives and actions and have an active attitude in supporting these. This does not necessarily mean financial support. Most often it means smoothing the way, connecting partners, facilitating execution and simply letting experiments happen. It means giving tools and space, rather than commanding actions from external parties. Also, it means being much more service-oriented than the civil servants are now. This change of attitude towards customers (citizens) and mindset needs to start at the top. They need to lead by example.

2. Marketing for the City

Marketing for the city is decidedly different from marketing of the city. Marketing for the city focuses on Rotterdam's own citizens. The IAB wants to stress the importance of better marketing for the city and better promotion of their activities on behalf of the citizens. This includes the importance of storytelling. Neighbourhood-based stories will add up to a new fresh story of all of Rotterdam, thus creating the 'Big Story'.

Marketing should be true and connected to the story of the city. It's not about fancy slogans but about highlighting real life examples of projects being done, products being made and initiatives being undertaken. In fact, we propose a campaign by, for and about Rotterdammers created with their own ideas, words, tweets, postings, comments. Potentially even at no cost, because it is their work in progress, exhibited, celebrated and promoted. The city's leadership should - together with the people - embark on a journey to create a story about the future. The leadership should engage people in a discovery process to find pockets of excitement. A mosaic of local initiatives should be drawn up, connected, and used as an illustration of the vitality of Rotterdam.

As examples, use 'web citizenship': gather individual ideas → group ideas → create ideas. Use social media, use apps.

3. Corporatization

The prevailing sentiment is that local governments are getting more and more responsibilities moved down to them from the national level, while having to operate in an ever more

complex environment while working with ever tighter budgets. In order to alleviate the increasing financial and other resource pressures on local government, in order to stimulate new and creative methods of funding and cooperation, and in order to improve the flexibility of movement for the local government, it is important for the government to corporatize/externalise those tasks which they can, while maintaining the direction on overall strategy.

Corporatizing certain tasks and responsibilities has several advantages:

- It allows government to be more entrepreneurial and gives them more flexibility.
- It takes pressure away from the local government to be responsible for the organisation and execution of everything and frees up time and resources for the local government to devote to their core tasks and overall strategy and progress monitoring.
- It opens up ways for local government to tap in external resources including other financing methods, knowledge, networks, etc.
- It makes the delivery of certain services to the public more efficient and should improve customer service of the delivery and being more competitive on the labour market.
- It makes both the local government and the external corporation leaner and more flexible and should deliver efficiency in delivery times, costs, human resources, avoiding doubling of tasks and bureaucracy.

The forming of Rotterdam Partners is in this respect a good example which deserves full support. This is still an experiment and it is important to monitor its development by having quarterly progress meetings between city government and corporatized bodies.

4. New Resources

No recommendations can come to fruition unless we have the resources available to realise them. Funding is getting more and more difficult via the old methods (funding from national government, earnings from land exploitation, subsidies). Funding is available, it just needs to come from new sources and be tapped into in new ways.

Funding can be both financial and non-financial. To give an example of non-traditional funding methods: to improve the energy efficiency of its own real estate, the city should explore ways of off-balance financing. The use of energy service companies which provide a broad range of comprehensive energy solutions including finance should be explored. Another way to generate funds is to put effort in large-scale philanthropy. The city's leadership should consider starting a crowd-funded Rotterdam Fund with the objective to finance neighbourhood initiatives. Examples in other cities show impressive results. Besides financial resources there are many more non-financial resources to tap. There is cash that doesn't look like cash, to put it in other words. We encourage the city's leadership to actively explore ways to stimulate voluntary work. By accessing volunteers and setting up a time bank, time and energy can be connected with relevant projects. The city should also reconsider companies owned and divesting ownership.

Other ways to engage the citizens much more and to tap into new resources is for the city to encourage micro-philanthropy, which is where at neighbourhood level individuals get

involved offering time, expertise and/or small amounts of money, thus enabling large projects to come to fruition benefiting their own direct community.

5. Integrated Care as a Business Model

An attractive city is a healthy and vital city. Health and vitality is not just a matter of medical health. It is also a matter of social care, social support, good living conditions, future prospects, localised improvements, housing, and an integrated approach to delivering healthcare. We have the hardware and software in this city to create a new business model where we combine these aspects and create the very best delivery of health and vitality in an integrated way. Because Rotterdam is a large industrial city it is especially important to pay attention to healthy living in a vital environment. It may possibly not be perfectly obvious with its industrial image and a relatively poor population, but the IAB still believes that Rotterdam has all the ingredients and the potential to become the healthiest city in the Netherlands within the coming decade.

The essence of change that will take place everywhere in the coming decades is a development towards self-management by every citizen regarding his or her own health. For instance, the model for the last decades has been that people go to see a doctor if they feel something is wrong. This in itself is strange because it is extremely inefficient and (for the patient) often very dissatisfying. There are many other more modern ways for patient and doctor to communicate.

Better care must be realised, but we also need to deliver cheaper care. To make care cheaper, while at the same time improving the quality and delivery radical changes are needed. The decentralization of public health from the national level to the local level can –in this respect- be seen as an enormous opportunity to change the system and foster self-management. Cities consist of streets and neighbourhoods which have the right scale to realise this self-management.

IT (apps and other types of technology) and education (sometimes these two in combination) carry an enormous potential to realise the above mentioned self-management. There are many chronic diseases for which seeing the doctor isn't really necessary. A well trained layman can excellently deliver the necessary care, or even the patient can self manage his/her condition. Research in the UK has shown that for some chronic diseases like asthma, the help of a layman who has been trained just for a few hours is just as effective as the help of a professional nurse.

Why does Rotterdam have the potential of being a frontrunner in this development and why is it realistic for Rotterdam to become the 'healthiest city in the Netherlands' in the next decade?

- Rotterdam has –relative to other cities in the Netherlands- a 'can do'- mentality and should be able to act faster than others
- Rotterdam has a young population; 68 % of Rotterdam's population consists of 'native digitals' (children born in the digital age).
- Rotterdam already has a neighbourhood orientation in delivering care
- First steps are already taken to integrate care and living;

- The presence of the ErasmusMC and other world class hospitals, which are already working together in many ways.

The EDBR has offered to organise – together with the city executive and their networks (such as social housings corporations, pension funds, insurance companies, science, hospitals and other care organizations and professionals) two or three pilots at neighbourhood level. Pilots should include audits of deregulation.

These pilots should focus on:

- Specific chronic diseases (diabetes is a good example) in which results can be achieved in two years.
- Giving IT a much greater role in healthcare delivery (apps).
- Empowering patients and training lay people to deliver health education & (self) management.
- Closer integration of primary care, social care and voluntary sector.

If well organised, it should be possible to create a better and more efficient and thus cheaper system within 5 years.