



DELTA IN TIMES OF CLIMATE CHANGE II

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE, SCIENCE, CITIES AND BUSINESS
 ROTTERDAM THE NETHERLANDS, 24-26 SEPTEMBER 2014

Deltas in Practice, policy-practice sessions	
Deltas in Practice Theme 3. Urban design and infrastructure	
DP 3.3 Room for the River presents: learning from flood resilient cities Nijmegen and Mainz, combining flood management and urban development	
Chair	Jan van der Grift, Room for the River, the Netherlands
Organised by	Jan van der Grift, Room for the River, the Netherlands
Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Msc Matthieu Schouten, Room for the River, the Netherlands • MSc Heinrich Webler, City of Mainz, Germany
Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Craig Woolhouse, Environment Agency, United Kingdom
Session topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The workshop focusses on two examples of combining flood management and urban development: Nijmegen and Mainz. It was shown that water safety measures and spatial quality can reinforce one another.
Objective of the session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To create a mindset for collaborative thinking between engineers and spatial designers, to gain a new sense of thinking in technical adaptation strategies and urban design
Main conclusions and lessons learnt from the presentations	
<p><i>Introduction</i></p> <p>The 'Room for the River' project deals with 34 different locations in the Dutch river delta's. Its goal is to improve water safety for 4 million people <i>and</i> spatial quality. The project is being carried out under responsibility of the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment. The relevance of the program is illustrated by an attendee from India who stated that India has suffered seven disasters in the last 30 days as a consequence of depletion of room for the river.</p> <p><i>Nijmegen embraces the river Waal</i></p> <p>The old approach of raising dikes is not sufficient anymore, room for the river needs to be created. Nijmegen lies at a bottle neck of the Waal. Water safety is incorporated in urban development. The project goal was therefore dual goal: turning a threat into an opportunity. The city of Nijmegen made the design, the project was part of the national 'Room for the river program'. A lot of effort was invested in getting different parties to participate as well as inhabitants. The design itself was dictated by the natural flow of the river. Main success factors where the dual focus, the cooperation between national and local governments, international inspiring cooperation, early consultation with stakeholders and a transparent planning process.</p> <p><i>Zollhafen, the new city quarter of Mainz</i></p> <p>The aim of this project was to develop a new city quarter in the Zollhafen after relocation of the harbour activities. With this project the old harbour structure was made visible again. The urban planners and water safety engineers entered into cooperation and mutual respect and friendship arose. The new city quarter was adapted to flooding. Special guidelines regulate investment and the way buildings are designed. German law does provide for building in flood areas, therefore a special verifying team was formed by the City of Mainz. Without their approval, a building permit will not be given. The development of the Zollhafen has proven to be successful.</p>	
Main conclusions of the discussion	
<p>The discussion was based on three statements:</p> <p><u>1. Designers are not part of the technical planning, they are there for aesthetic purpose</u></p> <p>Disagreed. Many disciplines are needed to achieve an integral design. Urban planners are needed</p>	





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to get a design accepted by the public. Spatial design is also about communication with everyone involved, including the general public. In the end it is all about the whole design with all its layers and aspects. There is a need for someone to keep an overview of the design.

2. Designers only add to the expenses

Disagreed. There must be a balance between time, money and quality. Dialogue during the design process is needed in order to stay within budget. Input of designers becomes an expense when they are involved too late in the process.

3. In the end, safety is all that matters

Disagreed. Money is finite, therefore we have to deal with acceptable risks. Safety is often a drive for changes. The lack of safety is what *initiated* the projects, spatial quality is what the project *thrives* towards its end.

Main result or conclusion of the session

Since old techniques are not sufficient any more, water safety projects have changes for urban development as a consequence. Rivers in delta area's need more space. This can be done without making concessions to urban quality. On the contrary, it can strengthen urban spatial quality. In order to accomplish this all stakeholders need to be involved and disciplines need to be combined. This requires a new process. Involved parties should give each other space and allow for one another to fully contribute.

Most exciting insights or outcomes

- Intensive contact between stakeholders is crucial
- From isolated design to integral design
- Change water safety threats into opportunities for urban development
- There is a need for someone to keep an overview of the design
- An open mindset is required from all involved parties

