Cultural Participation Toolkit

Collections of Ghent
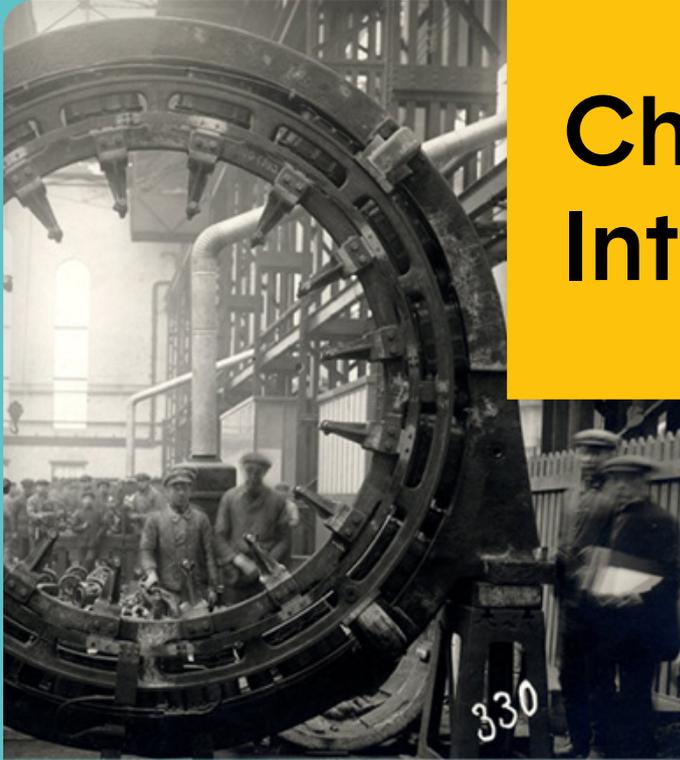
Contents

Chapter 1:
Introduction

Collections of Ghent: The Project

What if citizens, museums, and heritage institutions could freely and creatively share each other's objects, documents and stories? An innovative project makes this cross-pollination possible: Collections of Ghent.

Urban heritage institutions have a wealth of objects and stories. Despite digitization, valuable heritage knowledge often still lingers within our own walls. There is also another treasure hidden outside: how residents experience that cultural heritage and the stories they tell about it. "Collections of Ghent" brings these two worlds together.

"Collections of Ghent" unites the heritage of the Design Museum Ghent, STAM (Ghent City Museum), Museum of Industry, House of Alijn and Archives Ghent. Open (linked) data will make about 100,000 heritage objects public for the first time.

The creative sector is transforming the digitized collection into a spectacular visualization: a high-tech experience space, called the "CoGent box." Objects, documents and stories come to life before the eyes of residents and interested parties. The initiators of the City of Ghent, Design Museum Ghent and District09 are joining forces with other museums, knowledge institutions and companies from the creative sector: STAM (Ghent City Museum), House of Alijn, Museum of Industry, UGent (University of Ghent), Inuits, Fisheye, Chase Creative, Meemoo, Studio Dott and iDROPS.
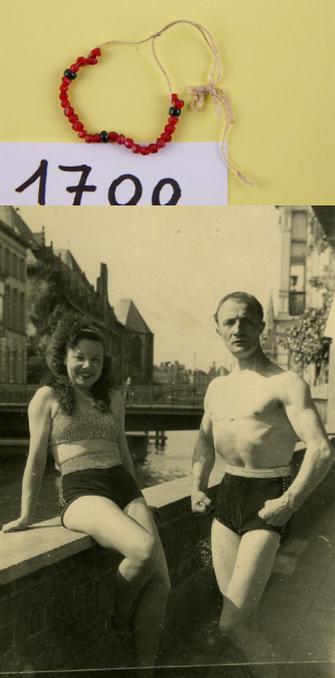
Ghent residents enrich the collection

Bringing citizens, museums, organizations and companies together is not the only goal of "Collections of Ghent." There is another ultimate goal: to allow residents of Ghent to participate more and engage in urban culture and thus strengthen social cohesion.

"Collections of Ghent" develops tools and methods to bring citizens into contact more quickly with the existing urban heritage and to enrich it with objects, stories, photos... From the beginning of 2022, the CoGent box will be placed in and travel between 3 neighbourhoods: Sluizeken-Tolhuis- Ham, Watersportbaan-Ekkergem and Wondelgem. And by June 2023 "Collections of Ghent" will be completed. Then the CoGent box will have a permanent place in DING, the new wing of Design Museum Ghent.

This project is subsidized by the Urban Innovative Actions initiative and is innovative within Europe in terms of digitization, co-creation and participation in the urban cultural heritage sector.

The Cultural Participation Toolkit

Are you interested in getting involved in the Collections of Ghent? This toolkit for cultural participation helps you to get people involved in cultural heritage.

Involving people can be done in different ways:

• participating in activities or organizing projects
• meeting and uniting people
• searching for objects
• visiting the collection
• adding to the collection

This toolkit is a modular guide with various methods and exercises. In this way we stimulate and inspire residents to actively engage with cultural heritage.

It is intended for professionals in community work, culture, museums, schools, organisations, key figures in a neighbourhood with interest in the themes, but certainly is not limited with them.

The methodologies in this document are based on the insights of the partners and stakeholders of the project:

• As iDROPS, we have learned from the experts amongst our project partners and applied their methods and tips in our process and in this toolkit. Under the "Ready-made Projects" chapter, we provide a selection of the successful projects of these partners, such as The Raconteurs and The Square Kilometre.

• iDROPS organised participatory and co-creative workshops, bringing these diverse parties together: from project partners to art institutions; from hard-to-reach residents in Ghent to representatives of neighbourhood organisations.

The two challenges in the design of the toolkit are:

- How can we stimulate the interests of residents on cultural heritage? How can we encourage citizens to contribute to the vast collection of Ghent's heritage institutions?

- How can we make social cohesion and social inclusion stronger among residents in the neighbourhoods?

The toolkit:

- mobilises citizens and professionals to organise activities.
- gives inspiration for new participative project ideas.
- provides an easy-to-implement structure for projects.
- allows for adaptation for higher engagement of different target groups.
- adaptable to meet different needs and dynamics in various neighbourhoods.
- pays attention to accessibility.

This toolkit is a 'living document'. It is the first significant step in the process of working with residents in creating participatory projects about cultural heritage. It will be modified based on the feedback from citizens and expertise of heritage professionals.

In Chapter 2: Get Inspired & Get Started, you will find three approaches to organise your own projects:

- We start with a game which gives inspiration for co-creative projects.
- In the second part, we provide more defined project ideas, from which you can choose and adapt for your organisation and your community.
- Finally, we provide a few examples of successful projects from Ghent, with tips from the experts. These are proven and reliable methods that you can apply and adapt to your project.

At the end of the toolkit, you will find an empty project canvas to fill in on your own.

For every project, please take these 4 points into consideration:

How to use this toolkit

The 2 pillars:
We strive for cultural participation of the residents: How can the working methods stimulate the residents' interest in cultural heritage, and provide us with additional interesting stories?
We aim to strengthen social cohesion: How can the working methods lead to more social connectedness?

Pay attention to accessibility:
City of Ghent pursues accessibility and has signed a charter[1] to this effect in 2010. The aim is to give all residents and visitors of Ghent equal opportunities to develop and participate in society. In Collections of Ghent and this Cultural Participation Toolkit, we follow this ambition closely and aim for all projects and environments to be accessed, understood and used by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without adaptation or specialized design.
Please check the principles[2] and goals[3] of Universal Design. These will give you further insights and provide a guideline for accessible projects.
For more information over possible physical functional limitations, please see The Enabler Concept[4].

Get consent for information:
Copyright and privacy rights are important. Please ensure that you are compliant with the law and ask for a written consent from the contributor when you collect information and audio-visual data.

Define what you want to achieve:
From the beginning, think about what your deliverables are, and how and where you want to use them. This helps you define who you need to involve in the project and may lead to teaming up with local institutions, experts, artists, residents and volunteers with specific talents.

If you collect or share stories: what do you want to achieve with it? Do you want to add it to a museum collection, do you use it as a way of communication in the project, or is it a way in which you want to increase social cohesion? By thinking about these in advance, you will have considered:
- the scope of expectation of participants, and how to deal with them.
- the expectation of museums and cultural institutions.
- the involvement of or a social worker or a historian.

[1] https://stad.gent/sites/default/files/media/documents/19_01391_toegankelijkheid_CHARTER_L_A1_05_LR.pdf
[2] https://projects.ncsu.edu/ncsu/design/cud/pubs_p/docs/poster.pd
[3] https://www.wbdg.org/design-objectives/accessible/beyond-accessibility-universal-design
[4] https://www.researchgate.net/figure/The-Enabler-from-Steinfeld-et-al-50_fig1_262645902

Chapter 2: Get inspired & Get started

Part 1: The 5 Building Blocks method

The intention of this method is to allow everyone that is interested in social cohesion in their neighbourhood and local cultural heritage, to come up with projects. Whether you are a community worker, a school teacher, a collector, a resident who wants more social connections in the neighbourhood...

Everyone is welcome to play.

You can pursue a variety of objectives: attracting hard-to-reach groups of residents, addressing specific needs of the participants, making use of opportunities in the neighbourhood to collect information...
The possibilities are endless with this method.

These are the 5 building blocks that every activity needs:
• **type of activity**: what will you do together with the project-team and your participants?
• **theme**: what is the focus, what are the activities about?
• **ways to collect stories**: how will you capture the input of the participants?
• **target groups**: who do you want to work with, who do you want to reach, from whom do you want to hear stories?
• **deliverables (outputs)**: what do you want to have in hand after the activities? What results are you aiming for with your project?

How to play: *Choose, Mix and Brainstorm*

Step 1: Choose 1 element from 3 out of 5 building blocks from the table below.

How many cards to choose?
It depends on what you feel most comfortable with. It doesn't necessarily have to be 3 out of 5. You can also choose 1 element from 1 block, or something from all 5.
 It is an open and creative process: experiment with it.

How to choose?
The choice of cards can:
• be conscious (having a specific purpose)
• be random (not giving it much thought)
• be blind (like drawing a card from a deck without looking. If you didn't print the cards a random number for each building block and then read off the table).

If you and your community need something specific, it is advisable to choose the cards consciously. If you are looking for out-of-the-box ideas, we encourage you to play with random or blind choices. By these you are more likely to have unexpected combinations of cards.

This is a great way to involve your community in the process. It provides an opportunity for co-creation and participation: invite a small group of neighbours to play together, and you will arrive at projects that they feel ownership of and thus invest in.

Step 2: Note down the chosen/drawn elements on a board or on a large blank paper.

Step 3: Brainstorm for new project ideas, using the chosen/drawn elements as inspiration.

(The list on the following page is not exhaustive. You can always add new elements, either on the table or the empty cards.)

	Activity types	Ways of collecting stories	Deliverables (outputs)	Target Groups	Themes
1	storytelling	social media posts	video's	children	traditions
2	strolling, walking	use of intersections or central points in the neighbourhood	VR video's	families with children	(mother) languages
2			dictionary		
3	workshop	idea-container/box	booklets	mums	dialects
4	matching with a "buddy"	scanning and sending/uploading photos (everything 2d)	digital/printed photo albums	youngsters in the neighbourhood	(local, thematic) vocabulary
5	read-alouds	recordings (with elderly, with a collector, on a heritage site..)	maps	elderly residents	(traditional, ethnic) recipes
5			online timeline		
6	story-catching	shared anecdotes	tour guides	young and old together	cuisines
7	collecting	written information	short documentaries	day-cares	interactive art
8	guided tours	(structured) interviews	neighbourhood postcards (of people, locations, activities)	schools	open-air art
9	singing	(digital) presentations	on-location exhibitions	youth organisations	unknown objects
10	dancing	idea-bus (mobile)	window exhibitions	ethnic-diverse residents/families	art (by residents, children ...)
11	playing instruments	using the locations of neighbourhood (hobby) organisations	a social media account (a page, individual or group account)	former and current business owners(and families) in the neighbourhood	(traditional, disappearing, local, ethnic) crafts
12	competitions	info via show and tell	VR-exhibition	assisted living homes	recent history of the neighbourhood
13	(loose) conversations / chat	sharing photos/videos/sound recordings during an event	digital presentations (photo/video and text/sound)	residents with specific vulnerabilities	old fashion objects
14	movie screenings	via windows (stickers, posters, displaying items, written messages)	playground with heritage component	local artists (musicians, painters, graffiti artists, collage makers, movie makers..)	old fabrics
15	debates	social media groups	neighbourhood games	local art institutions	old games
16	recitals	as homework	neighbourhood museum	museum staff	old household items
17	recreating ceremonies, rituals	organising family meetings	neighbourhood radio	local historians	family traditions

	Activity types	Ways of collecting stories	Deliverables (outputs)	Target Groups	Themes
18	cooking	house visits	book of neighbours	collectors	famous characters from the neighbourhood
19	sharing (e.g. food)	get-togethers for socializing (loose conversations)	theatre play	social workers	music for special moments (lullabies, music from weddings ...)
20	interviews	via slow-post: letters	neighbourhood calendar	religious communities	the most bizarre object/story
21	dive-ins (experiences)	via the weekly marketplace	online quiz	local businesses (cafe's, bars, markets)...	culture-specific objects
22	playing games	by utilizing the participation platforms of the city	website	hobby and free-time organisations	postcards
23	concerts	passing on a notebook between two streets	apps	immigrant and migrant communities	local festivals
24	shows	dialling into a voicemail inbox	neighbourhood TV	intercultural groups	old music
25	festivals	a bulletin board at the supermarket	podcasts	women	theatre
26	exhibitions	poll via Facebook or via Google forms	radio channel or radio program	market/park/shop	immigration
27	photoshoots	chalkboard with the starting: "once upon a time..."	newspaper	visitors	architecture
28	show and tell events	stand/stall at the flea market: pay with your story	family tree(s)	passer-by	(old, hand-made, rare) instruments
29	comparisons	Collecting photos via a wildlife camera	music album	recently moved-in residents	graffiti
30	slide/photo projections	speakers corner in a park (with sound recording)	a series of social media posts	former and current employees (and families) of local industrial sites	(religious, ethnic, lifestyle) rituals

Some examples from our workshops, where participants tested this method:

Participant A chose these 3:

- Theme: rituals
- Target group: ethnic diverse residents
- Deliverable: street museum

The idea: "A museum day in our street". We ask the residents to bring one object that is related to a ritual in their culture or family traditions

Participant B chose these 2:

- Theme: old songs
- Target group: children

The idea: We collect *input* from elderly residents in assisted living homes, such as old songs they used to listen to. Then teach these songs to little children in day-cares or kindergartens. We organiser visits to assisted living homes; where the kids would put on a show (*activity*) by singing the songs for the residents. The *deliverable* is a CD: old songs sung by young voices.

Part 2: Projects to adapt

How can you easily organize co-creative projects around specific themes? The workshops of iDROPS provided some sample projects that you can apply and adapt yourself:

1. Memories from our shared history *(stories of industrial and business-related history in a neighbourhood).*
2. Youngsters on the Go *(motivating and activating teenagers in a neighbourhood).*
3. Tales Nearby *(utilise commonly used locations in a neighbourhood and trigger the interest of residents and passers-by).*
4. From where I come from, from when I come from... *(bringing women from different generations, ethnicities and backgrounds together).*
5. Bridge of Generations *(connecting different generations together).*

Moments from our shared history

For Whom?

- Employers of a local industrial site
- A group of neighbourhood business-owners
- Owners, families, clients of disappearing businesses in the neighbourhood

The Concept

(Former and current) employees of local worksites, factories, industries, or (former and current) local business owners get together to exchange stories and photos/videos from old worksites, factories, (old) neighbourhood shops.

Possible activities can be:

- A storytelling evening.
- A guided walking-tour in the industrial area or between the business locations; (former) employees as guides.
- An exhibition on the aforementioned sites, with volunteers present to share their stories.

Timing per activity
1 to 2 hours

How many people?
up to 10 storytellers
up to 50 people in the audience

Materials and preparation:
- location to gather
- screen and voice systems for storytelling and presenting photos
- microphone and camera
- chairs and tables

Deliverables (post-event):
- A video recording of the events.
- An exhibition on the (former) industrial site, former or continuing old business locations, community centres, on a busy street in the neighbourhood...
- A printed booklet with photos and text.
- A video of the photos with added text and voice recordings.

For Whom?

- teenagers (ages 13 and 19)
- youth organisations
- families with teenage children

Youngsters On the Go

The Concept

Connecting young people in the neighbourhood with each other in a fun and active way, and sparking their interest in the (local) cultural heritage.

You collect from youngsters:

- stories of their parents, grandparents... (e.g., if the family migrated, stories of their immigration and adaptation in Belgium)...
- traditions in their household or in their family (e.g., yearly family traditions)
- stories of old household items (e.g., objects that are not used or produced anymore, or objects that are culture specific)...

This, you do via organising games in the neighbourhood or about the neighbourhood:

- Social Media Game: Youngsters form a team and collect information about a theme in a limited timeframe. They share the photos and called-for information on social media with a specific hashtag. Teams with the most (valid) posts earn an attractive prize (e.g.: a ticket to an activity in the project Collections of Ghent).

- Heritage Currency (inspired by Torekes): Calling for participants for "Show and Tell events", where they bring an object/photo and tell about it, and the organiser pays them back with "Heritage Currency". With this currency, the participants will be able to pay for workshops and activities from the City of Ghent, or for tickets to museums in Ghent.

- Treasure Hunt in the neighbourhood: Through a series of clues, participants take a tour of heritage sites in their neighbourhood. At each location they can take a picture with their smartphone and at the end they earn a prize.

Timing per activity

- Social Media Game: with monthly themes
- Show and Tell: 5-10 min per participant; total timing for the event: 2-3 hours
- Treasure Hunt: 2-3 hours

How many people?

- Teams of 3-4 members
- Show and Tell with 10 to 30 participants

Materials and preparation:

- Social media game:
    - an account (e.g. on TikTok or Instagram) and related hashtags to reach out to the youngsters
    - posters with QR codes in the neighbourhood and in schools
    - flyers into mails with QR code

- Show and Tell:
    - preparing/printing the Heritage currency
    - contacting with related organisations to explore possibilities of paying with this currency
    - for the Show and Tell event: location, chairs or benches, table(s) to present items, microphone and camera

- Treasure Hunt:
    - information about heritage locations from museums and cultural institutions
    - preparing the clues, printing and hiding them in locations

Deliverables (post-event):

Organiser shares the followings with residents, involved organisations and other relevant parties:

- book of the neighbours (with personal stories of the residents)
- neighbourhood calendar, filled with family traditions of various families
- neighbourhood theme books, with stories of hidden/old objects from the residents
- treasure hunt game digitized: Online quiz with the clues and interesting information from the treasure hunt game, gathered as a downloadable document

Tales nearby

For Whom?

All residents and passers-by in the neighbourhood

The Concept

You create opportunities for residents in the neighbourhood to share stories, anecdotes of their lives with each other.

You make use of the social gathering points in the neighbourhood to reach out to as many residents as possible (no specific target group). E.g.:

- You take place in the weekly open-market, in a "Booth Of Tales", where random market visitors are welcome to share some personal/familial stories in exchange for some baked goods.

- Marketplace of Stories: Organise a market, where no products are sold but instead, people bring heirloom objects or old photos from their homes and exchange the stories with each other. An activity of "taking a story and leaving behind a story" (=> or a Tale Box to exchange stories)

- Story-Corners: Define some points in the neighbourhood where there are a lot of passers-by. Place a booth or tent to welcome and interview residents. The aim is to collect personal anecdotes about the neighbourhood.

Timing per activity

Half a day for all three types of organisations

TIP
work with volunteers for the baked goods.

How many people?

- Booth of stories: aiming for 15 stories/day
- Marketplace of stories: up to 20 people who bring input, visitors unlimited
- Story-corners: aiming for 10 stories per corner per day

Materials and preparation:

- a tent, a booth, a stand...
- semi-structured interview
- camera and microphone
- voice recorder

Deliverables (post-event):

- neighbourhood book of family stories (also to be shared with new residents)
- photo album of the heirloom items
- radio program (via story-corners)
- podcast series with recordings

From where I come from.. From when I come from...

For Whom?

Women* from all ages and cultures in the neighbourhood

with focus on women, but open to everyone.

The Concept

Women from every generation and/or from various ethnicities in the neighbourhood bring personal items or stories from previous generations. These are items with which they feel connected to (crafts, textile heritage, songs and instruments, folk dances, rituals, folk tales, culture-specific objects)...

They present the items and share the information with each other in an interesting way. E.g.:

- a workshop on the crafts;
- an exhibition of culture-specific objects, where owners of objects can provide information;
- a storytelling event where participants tell folktales;
- a party with ethnic or old music and folk dancing;
- a friendly competition for the most original textile heritage;
- a game to match the items to information on printed on cards...

Information can be gathered before or during the event, according to the type of activity.

Timing per activity
2 to 3 hours

How many people?
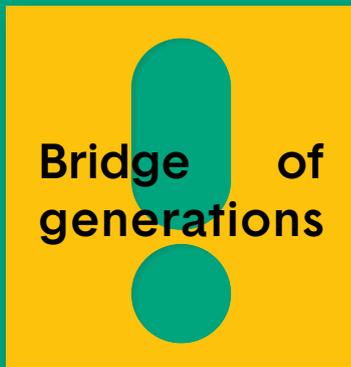10-30 participants

Materials and preparation:
Depending on the event type:
- camera for photos and/or videos
- microphone
- sound system
- screens
- tables, chairs
- food & drinks (try something new)
- printer for printing the information

Deliverables (post-event):
- a booklet or photo album of the items (and the owners) with the relevant information;
- short documentary about the folktales (or instruments)
- a window exhibition (participants present the item and information inside their windows), coupled with a map with locations;
- video or music album of the old songs.

Bridge of generations

For Whom?

- elderly residents (e.g. in assisted living homes)

depending on the selection of event:
- pre-schools and day-cares (2,5 to 5 years)
- primary school children (6 to 12 years)
- local artists

The Concept

You ask the elderly about what they did to have fun when they were young: games, songs, dances... This can be gathered via short interviews or questionnaires with residents assisted living homes or elderly residents in the neighbourhood.

Afterwards, working together with schools and day-cares, you teach the outcome of your results to kids in a playful manner and create opportunities for different generations to come together. Possible activities are:

- Organise visits to assisted living homes with kids. Everyone plays old games, sing and dance together.
- The kids put on a performance singing/dancing with the once-favourite music for the elderly (an option if joining the activities for the elderly are mostly inappropriate).
- Working together with local artists for a street/neighbourhood festival, where they play covers of the old songs, draw illustrations or graffiti's about the songs, and residents from all generations are welcome (with extra attention to involve elderly and children).
- Organise get-togethers where older people teach some games to secondary school children. Then the children develop newer versions of the games with current possibilities (e.g.: changing the game-materials to something that is nowadays easier to find; digitising the game or some aspect of it...)

Timing for the event

- 2 hours for a visit to an assisted living home
- half a day for a street/neighbourhood festival
- half a day for learning, playing and updating old games

How many people?

- 10 to 20 elderly
- Children joining as a class

TIP
Ask for a cookie recipe
from one of the elderlies

Materials and preparation:

- microphone and camera
- location to gather
- scene and music system (for the shows of the kids or for musicians/artists in street festival)
- logistic: Chairs, tables,
- food & beverage

Deliverables (post-event):

- a recording of the show of the kids. You can send out this to other schools and assisted living homes.
- a 'neighbourhood music/illustration/graffiti album' with kids singing and/or with the local musicians cover versions of the old songs. You can share these with assisted living homes, schools, other musicians and music-related organisations.
- a booklet with old and new versions of the games to be shared with museums, schools and youth organisations

Part 3: Ready-Made Projects

In Ghent, there are several examples of successful ongoing projects. Each has its own approach. These are the tips from our project partners.

by Policy Participation Service, City of Ghent

Raconteurs Ghent

For Whom?

Citizens with an interest in (making) stories in an urban context

The Concept

The Raconteurs are Ghent residents who like to conduct their own interviews, write stories, take photographs or have a passion for audio or video. They volunteer to work as 'neighbourhood reporters'. They look for stories that bridge the past and the future in urban renewal projects. They also collect testimonials from people who share how they experience life in their neighbourhood, because these stories provide valuable signals for the city council and the urban policy. And they work on specific urban themes, such as poverty, urban densification, informal care, ... Sometimes they also start from themes that citizens themselves put forward.

We strengthen the bond with the neighbourhood by collaborating in a co-creative way with people from the district themselves. Meanwhile we tap into people's talent and passion, in terms of interviewing, writing, photographing, making podcasts and video. In addition, we investigate how we can strengthen social cohesion in a neighbourhood by means of stories.

Timing per activity?

The Policy Participation Service has been using stories since 2003 as an instrument to involve citizens more closely in the development of their city and neighbourhood. The idea of the Raconteurs arose in 2016. For this we systematically went looking for Raconteurs in the various Ghent neighbourhoods.

Most story projects are limited in duration. That is necessary, as the Racounters are often busy people who only want to commit for a short time.

- An interview takes an average of 60 to 90 minutes.
- Processing an interview averages 4 hrs

How many people?

The number of Raconteurs differs from neighbourhood to neighbourhood and their commitment varies. There are currently small teams of Racounters in 12 neighbourhoods, an average of 5 per neighbourhood. Where necessary, we launch specific calls to start up new teams or to strengthen the teams.

- Raconteurs: (more or less) 5 per district.
- Number of interviews: Depends on the theme. Try to get a balanced story by interviewing different profiles.

Materials and preparation:

Working with the Raconteurs requires little material: only voice recorders and headphones.

Working with stories does require the necessary preparations, including field reconnaissance and research, looking up relevant witnesses, compiling the (historical) context...

Deliverables:

When it comes to deliverables, there are many options. With the Raconteurs, we work tailor-made to the theme and the neighbourhood and we look for how the stories can best come into their own: on our online story platform www.raconteurs.gent, in a storybook, ... usually in combination with a 'show or experience moment' on the site (for example, a storytelling tour, testimonials with sound clips and portraits, podcasts on MP3 players in a swimming pool, video fragments in a factory to be renovated)...

Tips from the organisers

- Where possible, give the stories a sustainable place on the site where they relate to.
- Where possible, look for a personal experience with your stories. These ensure a greater reach, closer involvement and more effect.
- Allow enough time for your preliminary research.
- Cooperate as much as possible with the people from the neighbourhood, not only in your search for the (historical) context and relevant witnesses, but also for the production of your stories. It increases your support and leads to interesting connections.
- Work in 2 directions: (cultural) heritage is located at the museums and in the neighbourhoods.
- Searching and tapping into unprecedented heritage in the city can yield a wealth of information and stories.

More information at www.raconteurs.gent.

by Policy Participation Service, City of Ghent

Storytelling project 'De Porre'

For Whom?

Residents of the district 'Moscou-Vogelhoek' and former employees of the De Porre textile factory.

The Concept

Context

In 1980, the De Porre textile factory closed its doors for good. But with the company the community life in the neighbourhood slowly disappeared. In addition to the fabric in the factory, the "social fabric" in the neighbourhood was also found to be worn out. At the start of the story project, Moscou-Vogelhoek only had a limited and outdated social life. The urban renewal project De Porre would change that.

Central to this project was the demolition of most of the destroyed factory and the construction of a central neighbourhood park in its place. The demolition of the factory (a meaningful place for many elderly residents in the neighbourhood who had worked there for many years) gave rise to the start-up of the storytelling project, linked to an exciting neighbourhood project.

Storytelling project

In 2013, as a result of the redevelopment of the De Porre site, we collected 12 testimonials from former employees of the De Porre textile factory, which was defunct in 1980. Since then, the portraits and accompanying quotes have been attached to a number of preserved, restored factory walls in the new neighbourhood park on the site. In this way, new residents and children from the schools also learn more about that specific piece of the past. We notice that the neighbourhood takes care of this piece of cultural heritage in the neighbourhood.

The portraits and quotes of the former employees on the restored factory walls were unveiled during an open public day at the location. That moment was for them a pleasant reunion. The stories thus formed a link between the past and future of this site.

Neighbourhood project

The City purchased 100 pieces of fabric for this. An intergenerational activity was planned with a group of children (age 9-11 years) from the two adjacent schools and former textile workers from the Industrial Museum: the children learned to make their own designs using old techniques and apply them to the fabric as a template. So much for the semi-finished product.

To make it a finished product, we launched a call in the neighbourhood to join a new sewing club to be established. The support was immediately great. With dozens of enthusiastic residents, a new association in the neighbourhood was a fact, the start of a new dynamic and the strengthening of 'the social fabric'.

The members of the sewing club finished the edges of the pieces of fabric and with the designs of the children on it, we came up with 100 blankets. The circle was complete, from sheets (old factory) to blankets (new club life). The blankets were placed in the community centre and regarded as an open invitation to the neighbourhood: now organize your own outdoor cinema, neighbourhood picnics, ... and make eager use of the blankets.

Now, so many years later, Moscou-Vogelhoek has become a hip neighbourhood with a new, fresh influx of young families and the park is frequented by young and old. Initiatives are set up and festivities take place.

Timing per activity?

Storytelling project: spread over a few months (tracing witnesses, interviewing, writing stories, making portraits, compiling a storybook, having plates with quotes and portraits made and hanging on the factory walls).

Neighbourhood project: spread over a few months (purchase of fabrics, contacts with schools and museum, organization of workshops in the museum, organization of an information evening over the project, start-up of a sewing club, finishing the blankets,...).

How many people?

Storytelling project: 1 storyteller, 1 photographer, 12 former employees who told their story. Audience on the public day with information about the new content of the site and disclosure of the stories: about 200.

Neighbourhood project: about 40 children (spread over 2 schools), about 30 members of the new sewing club.

Materials and preparation:

Storytelling project: plates with quotes and portraits, storybooks (to hand out to local residents)
Neighbourhood project: 100 blankets, sewing machines and/or needles, threads, scissors...

Deliverables:

- storybook with the stories of the former employees and portraits (400 copies)
- plates with quotes and portraits of the former employees (about 30 pieces)
- 100 blankets with designs of the local children (schools)

Tips from the organisers

- Appreciate people who provides some input, however small the input is. Often, they are really proud of that contribution.
- An intergenerational project can strengthen the bond in the neighbourhood and offers the youth a historical awareness.
- Look for long-term (permanent) anchoring of the stories on the site. People show respect and care for the history and heritage of their own neighbourhood.
- Let people also make things themselves, so that it really becomes theirs.
- Some people feel really emotionally involved in a certain place (ex-factory where they worked for a long time). Keep those sensitivities in mind.
- People often struggle with change, especially in places where they feel emotionally involved. Valorise their story and inform them well about the future developments of the site. In this way you create understanding, sometimes even support for your project.
- Look for opportunities to expand your storytelling project into a social project for the neighbourhood.

More information at Verhalen van onder het stof.

by Policy Participation Service, City of Ghent

Storytelling project 'Badhuis Van Eyck'

For Whom?

For all residents of the City of Ghent and specifically for people with a connection to the bathhouse / swimming pool.
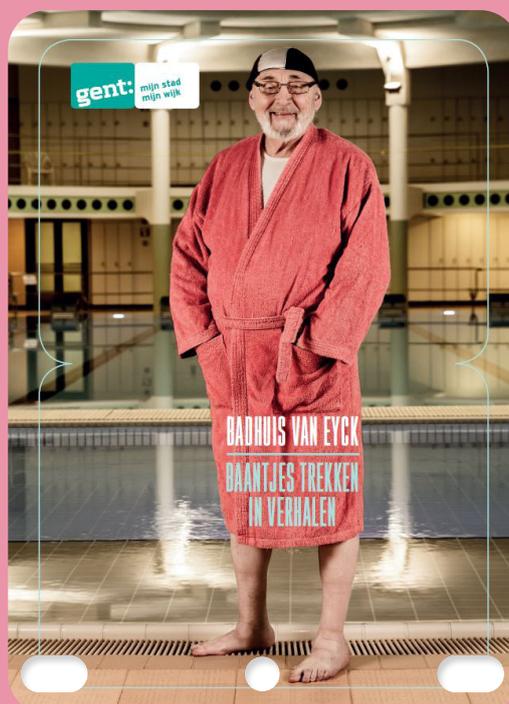
The Concept

Context

Bathhouse/swimming pool Van Eyck is an iconic place in Ghent. This oldest swimming pool in Belgium is a household name for many residents. After a thorough renovation, the time was right for a story project.

Storytelling project

In 2015 we collected the testimonials of former and new employees of Badhuis Van Eyck, following the reopening of the swimming pool after a thorough renovation. The aim was to bring the stories of the past and present to the surface and to invite people to share their stories.

We attached great importance to the experience value of the stories on the site itself. For example, we had the portraits and quotes from the stories printed on life-size stickers and applied them to the outside of the changing rooms. We also had the stories spoken in Dutch and in the Ghent dialect by a well-known Ghent resident who has a close relationship with the swimming pool. We placed those recordings on waterproof MP3 players. Swimmers could request a device from the lifeguard, attach it to the swimwear and so, while swimming, listen to the stories and view the portraits and quotes on the changing rooms.

This initiative ran for 8 months. In addition, we published the stories and portraits in a storybook that we distributed for free among the interested visitors to the swimming pool. In the entrance hall of the swimming pool we made a mini expo about the history of the swimming pool and the stories.

Timing per activity?

Preparation: several weeks
Project: 8 months

How many people?

We collected the stories of 12 employees.
Hundreds of people took notice of these memories which happened in the pool itself, through the storybook and through the local media (TV).

Materials and preparation:

Materials: MP3 players with headphones, self-adhesive sticker sheets for the life-size portraits, storybooks, exhibition material

Preparation: history research, tracing witnesses, conducting intake interviews, conducting interviews and processing them into stories, photoshoots, creating storybooks, recording and editing audio stories, creating mini expo, communication and announcement, ...

Deliverables:

- story books
- mp3-players with audio stories
- life-sized stickers with quotes and portraits
- mini expo

Tips from the organisers

- Collecting the stories of former and current staff can be interesting, because it can reveal the characteristics of time spirits and differences between them.
- The portraits are best made on the site where the stories take place.
- The elaboration and recording of the stories in multiple media (storybook, dressing rooms, MP3 players, mini expo) reinforce the power of the stories.
- If you are recording stories, find a storyteller who is also effectively connected to the site.
- If you are launching a public call for story submissions, make sure there is enough time and opportunities for sharing stories. In this case, you will get not only the stories of the staff, you will also get those of the public, which is a valuable addition.
- By working with the local dialect, you broaden your audience and also appeal to the older population.
- Provide the necessary media attention to get your initiative going and make it known to the general public.
- By working with image and sound forms, you reach a wider audience and you do not exclude anyone (e.g. blind, deaf).

More information at Badhuis Van Eyck: Baantjes trekken in verhalen.

by STAM - Ghent City Museum- & STAM's story collector and historian-in-residence Tina De Gendt

The square kilometre

For Whom?

Inhabitants of the 'transit areas' who are historically industrial outskirts of Ghent, now superdiverse areas.

The Concept

Square Km' is an ex-situ project by STAM, for which historian Tina De Gendt travels through the superdiverse transit neighbourhoods of Ghent in search of hidden urban histories.

The name of the project refers to the place where it was conceived: on the gigantic aerial photo floor at STAM, where each square kilometre of the city forms a separate tile. From the need to reach out to Ghent residents from all 209 tiles and the question of what urban histories lay hidden under each of those tiles, STAM embarked on this enormous project.

For the tiles of the 19th century belt, STAM is sending Tina De Gendt as 'historian in residence' to map out hidden histories together with local residents. In the method that Tina De Gendt developed for this purpose, she departs from fundamental participation. It is not a question of residents to participate in a project, but to democratise the urban heritage. In her vision text 'Principle Participation', De Gendt summarizes her method as 'negotiating the past, in the present, for the future'.

Tina stayed in the neighbourhood for 3-6 months to work with neighbourhood experts (the "rememberers") to track down blind spots in the history. She did this via walking interviews, meetings, neighbourhood walks and ad hoc interventions.

Timing for the trajectory?

3 - 6 months/neighbourhood or km²

How many people?

The project works in depth and in breadth.
In depth, we work with 10-15 people who know the neighbourhood well (the rememberers). We try to put together a multi-voiced group that reflects the diversity of the neighbourhood, in which different types of authority and different perspectives are present.
In terms of breadth, we reach between 100 and 150 people each time through visits, conversations and neighbourhood walks each time between 100 and 150 people.

Activities:

Gatherings with rememberers:

We organize monthly meetings with the rememberers from the neighbourhood. The group of rememberers is composed after an intense preliminary exploration of the neighbourhood. We do not address people as representatives of a community or a part of the population, but on their authority (knowledge) of the neighbourhood today and interest in the past. The meetings take place in different locations, in order to open up the negotiation as much as possible and to include as many perspectives as possible: in the mosque, in the community centre...

During the meetings, we first ask historical questions about the past. Then we look at them in greater depth and see how we can make the answers public. The remembers decide on every step in the project: from the chosen questions to the way they will be made public. These meetings are not information sessions, but group discussions. The historian takes on the role of the moderator.

Walking interviews:

During the residency, the historian goes on a walking interview with each of the rememberers. Afterwards, she does this also with other neighbourhood residents. During these walks, the rememberer is the guide, who leads the historian into his/her environment. On the basis of these walks, historical questions arise: about certain buildings, certain phenomena in the neighbourhood, certain current themes. These questions are explored in greater depth during the meetings.

Guided tours in the neighbourhood:

Every first Sunday of the month, we host 3 free neighbourhood walks for residents. These are not classic tours in which a guide provides the public with historical facts, but walks with more questions than answers. The main purpose is to engage in dialogue with those who are present. During the walks we will ask questions that were asked during the rememberers meetings, but also new questions from the public will be addressed.

Interviews/archival research:

Once the questions are formulated, the research can begin. Most questions lend themselves to oral history, supplemented by archival research. The rememberers have insight into and a say in the course of this process. They can take on an active role themselves (for example as a co-interviewer) or a rather passive one (for example by visiting a custodial institution). This not only contributes to the historical awareness of the participants, but also benefits the research itself.

The STAM Square:

At the end of each stay in the district, we present the results of the research to the general public through temporary exhibitions in the museum. The presentation is created participatively, in collaboration with the rememberers. In the museum, there is a separate room (the STAM square) where all inhabitants of Ghent can see the progress made and in the meantime, they can also participate. In the presentation we use storytelling as the method, because that leaves the most openness for interaction. There will also be lectures. During the corona crisis, these were done online.

Deliverables:

The Square Kilometre is a total project that plays on all the functions of cultural heritage: tracing, preservation, research and accessibility. The 'stray heritage' that was traced is aimed at preservation. Images, objects, archives, and oral testimonies are housed in the STAM collection or linked to authorized archives and offered to the public. to authorized archives and are offered to anyone who wants to work with them. Various artists, associations and city services make use of the material in The Square Kilometre. For example, a historical graffiti project, a street name, the heritage walking plans of the Cultural Department and numerous socio-cultural events centreed around heritage.

More information at De Vierkante Kilometer.

Chapter 3:
The process
by iDROPS

How we work

In iDROPS, we organise and facilitate co-creative workshops using Human Centered Design method.

Human Centered Design is a strong participatory method to solving complex societal challenges. Its strength is derived from giving a rich variety of stakeholders a voice in the problem-solving process, and doing this from the very beginning.

More information on this method: https://www.ideo.com/post/design-kit

Discover other projects of iDROPS at: https://www.idrops.org/

Workshops for this Toolkit

In total, we have facilitated 8 co-creative workshops: 4 workshops x 2 sessions. In every session, we have worked with a different group of participants and made sure that we hear from a variety of profiles. We have invited residents of Ghent from various age groups, interests, ethnic backgrounds, language knowledge, digital skills, physical challenges… We have reached out to art institutions, neighbourhood organisations, local communities… The project partners were also present in the workshops.

Our workshops are always co-creative: we inspire and motivate the participants to share with and hear from each other towards a common goal. Because of COVID19 regulations, all sessions needed to be online. To ensure that sessions are interactive and accessible, we have made use of various channels of communication: specific (co-creative) digital platforms, more easily accessible apps and personal support where necessary.

Workshop 1

Method:
- Creating personas (= fictional characters) from Ghent

Outcome:
- 11 persona's, with diverse backgrounds, ages, lifestyles, different engagements in social cohesion, dissimilar relations to cultural heritage and various needs and desires.

Workshop 1 provided us with deep insights on several needs and opportunities. We based our next workshop on these findings.

Workshop 2:

Method:
- Further insights over the persona's (focus on interest in cultural heritage)
- Crazy 8: 8 ideas in 8 minutes per persona
- Selection of ideas which would connect different persona's with each other (focus on social cohesion)
- Developing chosen ideas into projects concepts

Outcomes:
- 72 loose ideas
- 12 project concepts, which connect different profiles of participants

Workshop 2 resulted in many attractive ideas to address the needs of the persona's, and several potential solutions on bringing different profiles together around cultural heritage themes.

After workshop 2, we have collected all the insights. We realized that these could be clustered into 5 categories: Activity types, themes, collection of stories, deliverables and target groups. We have come up with the game of the 5 Building Blocks, which we tested in next workshops (*this game is explained in details in Chapter 2).*

Workshop 3:

Method:
- Testing project concepts from Workshop 2: Story Market and theme-booklet
- Mix & Match with 5 building blocks for participative project concepts

Outcomes:
- 2 draft (thematic) booklets with shared stories
- 14 project concepts

Workshop 3 illustrated different types of involvements in the activities, when a theme is given in advance. We have learned what works better and worse when we ask for stories. This workshop was also the first test of the 5 Building Blocks game. We came up with project ideas by choosing elements from the lists of building blocks. At the end of the session, every participant shared their experience with the game and gave feedback for improvements.

For every project idea in the workshop, we gathered insights around the n*eeds for the organiser and motivations and challenges for the participants*. We took these into consideration in writing the projects in this toolkit.

Workshop 4:

Method:
- Mix & Match with Building Blocks to participative project concepts
- Evaluation Grids of the projects (in relation to CoGent Box)
- Roles in participation, and User Journeys

Outcomes:
- 10 project concepts, with insights on the needs to organise, and motivation/challenges for the participants
- 7 filled in Evaluation Grids
- 8 filled in User journeys

In these last workshops, we tested an updated version of the 5 Building Blocks game (with input from partners). Afterwards we explored the potential challenges and opportunities of some of the project ideas in relation to CoGent Box. Finally, the User Journeys exercise gave us a heads-up on possible user experience scenarios with regards to interacting with the project "Collections of Ghent".

Next steps:

A Train the Trainer document for this toolkit will be ready by summer 2021.

Starting in September 2021, we will begin neighbourhood activities in the 3 neighbourhoods of the Collections of Ghent. We will organize information sessions and facilitate Train the Trainer workshops.

Starting in January 2022, the CoGent box (an interactive exhibition space) will begin a tour of the 3 districts. We will continue with participatory projects and use the CoGent box, in collaboration with different partners and local residents.

Heritage belongs to everyone and is often hidden in many deeper layers in the city. Ownership therefore rests with the museums and the citizens together. For that reason, a project like Collections of Ghent only has a chance of success if we go for fully-fledged co-creation. With Collections of Ghent we choose to work closely with all stakeholders: the museums, the professional community workers, the citizens, heritage institutions, local organizations and associations.

The city belongs to everyone, including its cultural heritage. We can maximize Collections of Ghent's chances of success when, from the outset and throughout all phases of the project, we recognize each partner as fully-fledged and let them play their role, respecting everyone's knowledge, expertise, talent and experience. In that spirit, we bring the heritage and stories of the museums and cultural heritage institutions to the people and vice versa.

Addendum

Empty Project Canvas

Name of the project:

....

The goal of the project:

The Concept

What's expected from the participants?

....

Timing per activity: ....

For how many people? ....

How to reach the participants: ....

....

Preparation:

Materials:

Deliverables and communications (post-event):

Reflections (post-event):

What worked?

What didn't work?

Best thing about this idea was:

The biggest challenge was:

If I organise this again, I would do this differently:

This toolkit is a sub-component of the project "Collections of Ghent":

Contact List

Copyrights images