



Archive for an Inclusive City



Crowdsourcing Intangible Heritage



Participatory governance of cultural heritage



ROTTERDAM



1.2 million



Challenge

Rotterdam is a large city in the Netherlands renowned for its rich cultural heritage. Despite the large collection of the Rotterdam City Archive (Stadsarchief Rotterdam) - one of the oldest in the country and part of the municipality – part of the city’s intangible heritage was overlooked by formal government records. Memories, stories and oral traditions were at risk of oblivion as citizens are not sufficiently involved in heritage collection, preservation and dissemination.



Solution

The collaboration between the grassroots cultural heritage organisation DIG IT UP and the Rotterdam City Archive enabled a formalised cultural heritage collection process involving local communities to enrich the city’s historical archives through crowdsourcing. Citizens were able to record, describe, and give context to elements of collective urban culture and identity which otherwise could have been overlooked by formal government records.



How ?

- 1 Identification of the most suitable tool to collect data and memories (2019): DIG IT UP, leader of the initiative, and the Rotterdam City’s Archive identified the features needed in a digital tool. The chosen open-source ‘OMEKA-S’ is adaptable and would facilitate digital exhibitions and data sharing.
- 2 Developing user-friendly templates suitable collecting and archiving personal memories, using the international cultural heritage description protocol and formats, and creating an instruction manual. At the same time, training volunteers.
- 3 Crowdsourcing intangible heritage and memories: the practice was introduced to different groups, communities and individuals in Rotterdam, who collected videos, photos and audio. The conservation and preservation of the inhabitants’ cultural heritage will be assured by the collaboration with the city archives.
- 4 Other entities have expressed interest in the project both in the Rotterdam area (e.g. Museum Rotterdam, Bibliotheek Rotterdam) and at the national level (Stadsarchief Amsterdam, Dutch National Photography Museum).

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Budget/Financing

€ 31,260

- €20,000 from the city
- €7,680 from the Rotterdam Archive
- €3,640 from DIG IT UP

Management

- Dig It Up, a grassroots cultural heritage organisation, managed the initiative in cooperation with Stadsarchief Rotterdam, the city's archive. The archive is part of the municipality of Rotterdam and falls under the cluster 'Services'.
- The Rotterdam department of social and cultural development sustained the initiative with three members of its staff.



Transferability

- Think about the initial investment for the database - templates and other working documents just need to be translated and adapted to other local scenarios!
- Do not be afraid to involve different institutions and get advice.
- Monitor and record communities' feedback. This will help to adapt your methodology.



Impact

- Reinforced collaboration between citizens and local cultural institutions through a common methodology and techniques.
- Improved data collection and cataloging of inhabitants' memories and intangible heritage.
- Raised awareness on the importance of heritage preservation in local communities.
- Reinforced citizens' engagement and empowerment in collectively contributing to safeguarding common heritage.



Links

<https://stadsarchief.rotterdam.nl/>

<http://digitup.nl>

Pandoras Musicbox: <https://digitup.nl/pandora/>



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