

The Open Coalition: Participation at the Core

On both a global and local level, we are facing immense challenges that impact everyone, highlight inequality across society and widen generational gaps. The world as we know it is changing, instigated by human behaviour. These challenges are too big to endure and solve on our own and are not confined within our nation's borders. They call for creativity, solidarity and collaboration on a European scale.

Being Dutch, we stand for open, innovative and inclusive collaboration. We already have extensive experience in practicing participation, having battled the elements of nature for a long time, in our co-existence with water and the rising sea level. Combined with the human-centred approach of the cultural and creative industries in the Netherlands, this experience is a perfect fit for an innovative approach towards these challenges.

In recent years, the 'topsector' of cultural and creative industries has been part of an inspiring public-private programme to change innovation policies across the nation. We develop and deploy innovative ways of working to increase quadruple helix collaboration. This leads to new skills and insights, new structures for collaboration and a more participative society, taking on hyper-complex challenges together.

Today, with The Open Coalition, we reach out to look for new collaboration opportunities, fortify existing ones and share best practices as building blocks for the New European Bauhaus. Moreover, we want to contribute to a strong European foundation for large-scale innovation, with further developed and validated methodologies, structures and insights: a prerequisite for the success of the New European Bauhaus.

The Open Coalition: building on collective experience

A group of representatives of the Dutch cultural and creative industries, consisting of Federation Creative Industries, CLICKNL, Dutch Design Foundation and the Centre of Expertise for Creative Innovation, has come together to initiate The Open Coalition. This is a growing network of Dutch organisations that builds on the collective experience of running collaborative innovation programmes.

Creativity, inclusivity, emancipation and empowerment are at the heart of The Open Coalition. We feel it is our duty to amplify, promote and facilitate the positive actions we see people taking all over the world. We aim to inspire and connect like-minded individuals so we can move things forward.

The initiators of The Open Coalition harness the power to research, organise, mobilise, inform and educate the professionals within the cultural and creative industries. We look forward to fortifying the change of consciousness that can and must be made for the collective good, through working and reflecting on our collaborative assignments over the next few months.

The Open Coalition: sharing and improving best practices

The Open Coalition participants have extensive experience in developing and running programmes in which society takes the lead and the empowerment process plays an important role. The following examples show some successful approaches.

Key enabling methodologies are the core element in all these best practices. To develop interventions or solutions that shape the process of social change, creative professionals use a toolbox that directs and structures their way of working. Consisting of methods, models, strategies, processes and tools, this toolbox is referred to as Key Enabling Methodologies (KEM) as described in the KEM [research agenda](#).

Through experimental environments such as living labs, these best practices deploy tools and methods for visualisation, imagination, participation and co-creation, and strategies for behavioural change and empowerment. By applying and improving these in the New European Bauhaus, their impact and validation will increase.

All Open Coalition partners take part in the Dutch Design Week; an open Research and Development design Laboratory XL, built by designers and partners. Inspiring hundreds of thousands of people with forward thinking ideas, practices and action. A powerful inspiration, co-creation, participation and dissemination platform.

The following best practices can be found in the annexes:

IDOLS*: a programme focusing on hyper-complex challenges, breaking the traditional client-contractor relationship.

Living labs for Society: living lab environments that embody the triple-loop learning process, empowering citizens to participate and create opportunities for businesses to develop innovative solutions for social challenges.

CIRCO: a design-driven programme that teaches companies and designers circular design principles and activates them to apply these to their (new) propositions (products, services and business models) and become change agents in their field.

World Design Embassies constitute of alliances of partners from governments, businesses, knowledge institutions, social organizations and designers to develop and test with audiences, new perspectives and concrete solutions on broad societal challenges.

What if Labs take an organisational or public challenge as the starting point for a visionary development and prototyping process with different organisations, people and designers.

We are open.

The Open Coalition is initiated by

Dutch Design Foundation
www.dutchdesignfoundation.com



Federation Dutch Creative Industries
www.dutchcreativeindustries.nl



CLICKNL
www.clicknl.nl



Centre of Expertise for Creative Innovation
www.coeci.nl



The Open Coalition: Best Practices

In our mission statement, five best practices are introduced: possible examples for future New European Bauhaus programmes. They were chosen because of their innovative approaches and impact.

The keywords and involved categories of Key Enabling Methodologies (KEM) explain why the programmes work the way they do.

CIRCO

Keywords: Creating business through circular design | science-based knowledge on designing for the circular economy | for companies and designers | train the trainer | community

Key Enabling Methodology Categories: Value creation and upscaling | Behaviour and Empowerment | System change

Living labs for Society

Keywords: Iterative processes | research & development | public knowledge | creating business through innovative solutions for social challenges

Key Enabling Methodology Categories: Experimental environments | Monitoring and effect measurement | Co-creation and Participation

IDOLS*

Keywords: Equal partners | coach as a new role | validation of programme by research | business perspective | community

Key Enabling Methodology Categories: Participation and co-creation | Institutional change | Value creation and upscaling

World Design Embassies

Keywords: Challenge-focused embassies | new connections and cooperations | multi-year programmes | state of affairs | designs for future prospects | communities

Key Enabling Methodology Categories: Vision and Imagination | System change

What if Lab

Keywords: Community of practice | matchmaking | specific answers to current issues | What if...

Key Enabling Methodology Categories: Experimental environments | Value creation and upscaling

CIRCO

Creating Business through Circular Design.

[The CIRCO programme](#) teaches companies and designers about circular design principles and activates them to apply these to their (new) products, services, business model and/or value chain. It also stimulates and empowers designers and managers to take the lead as a circular Change Agent in their company, value chain and sector.

Keywords:

Creating business through circular design / science-based knowledge on designing for the circular economy / for companies and designers / train the trainer / community

The CIRCO approach is grounded in the vision that successful business models are crucial to get the transition towards a circular society rolling. Entrepreneurs are willing to look for alternatives if that allows them to run a sustained business.

The objective of the CIRCO programme is to accelerate the emergence of a circular economy by:

- developing and distributing the knowledge of Circular Design;
- activating and training (manufacturing) companies and designers to apply this knowledge in their daily practice; and
- building and empowering a Circular Design community to learn together, stimulate each other and attract more people and organisations to join the movement.

In order to speed up the transition towards a circular economy, the goal is set at reaching 10% of the manufacturing industries in the Netherlands, assuming that this will be a tipping point where the industry will keep itself going instead of needing to be helped or pushed.

More than 1,000 companies (start-ups, SMEs and corporations) and 500 designers have already participated in CIRCO in the Netherlands alone. They came from various sectors such as plastics, building/construction, consumer goods and manufacturing.

In 2020, CIRCO started a sub-programme to reach out to the future generation of designers and students at applied universities by training teachers and developing a 'curriculum kit'.

The programme

CIRCO's 'way of working' can be summarised as follows:

1. *The CIRCO Circular Design methodology* is a circular design methodology based on scientific research from Technical University Delft (Bakker & den Hollander: 'Products that Last'). This is the kernel of all CIRCO activities.
2. *Training companies* (via 'CIRCO Tracks') *and designers* (via 'CIRCO Classes') in applying the CIRCO methodology within their business and profession. The format of these trainings consists of:
 - a. whole-brain learning: combining rational knowledge transfer and facilitating a creative design process; combining text and visuals, empowering participants

- to design their company-specific circular value proposition and a concrete and feasible implementation plan; and combining theory and practice;
 - b. from 2020: blended learning: learning via a combination of e-learning and physical meetings;
 - c. group learning: working together in groups (10 companies, 20 people), so participants can also learn from each other and discovery, including serendipity, can flourish; and
 - d. all learning processes facilitated by educated, certified and highly motivated CIRCO trainers.
3. *Train-the-trainer*: to facilitate the growing number of companies to be trained, the number of CIRCO trainers needs to increase. This is why CIRCO developed a special 'train-the-trainer' programme, which has been executed several times in the Netherlands and abroad. There are currently 45 active CIRCO trainers. To ensure quality, all trainers are certified.
 4. *Development of CIRCO hubs (in the Netherlands and internationally) and empowering regional ecosystems*: to scale the CIRCO activities even further, CIRCO is delegating the organisation and execution of CIRCO trainings to regional, so-called 'CIRCO hubs' supported by the main CIRCO organisation. These hubs activate companies in their region and execute CIRCO Tracks facilitated by their own trainers. Hubs are responsible for their own funding and cooperation with regional government, knowledge institutes, development companies, sector organisations, etc.
 5. *Knowledge platform Circular Design*: CIRCO collects and shares all circular design knowledge and learnings via its knowledge platform. To exchange learnings, all CIRCO hubs are connected to this platform. All CIRCO participants (companies and designers) can also share and learn here.
 6. *Community building*: systems innovation is also a social process. CIRCO is aware of that, and builds and empowers its Circular Design community every day, not only via online/social media platforms (website, webinars, knowledge platforms, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc) but also via physical events (pre- and post-Covid).

The impact of the programme was analysed by an independent party (Technopolis) in 2019. Main conclusion, validating the chosen approach, is that two-thirds of the participants continue their efforts on creating a new sustainable business after participation, and another 20% is willing to. The lively alumni community is proof of the energy generated in the programme.

CIRCO is closely connected to national CE programmes and getting more in touch with policy-makers.

CIRCO is a [CLICKNL](#) programme and is funded by (ao) the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management.

Living labs for Society

Accelerating change through triple-loop learning

To boost the development of solutions for societal challenges while allowing companies to develop innovative ideas, products, systems and services that contribute to these and give citizens the opportunity to participate, [CLICKNL facilitates living labs](#): environments where design research & development takes place.

Keywords:

Iterative processes / research & development / public knowledge / creating business through innovative solutions for social challenges

The complexity of societal challenges such as the transition towards a circular economy requires a multi-faceted response.

- An iterative step-by-step approach. This allows not only the result but also the nature of the question to be understood more profoundly. A prolonged study on its own is not enough to solve or understand complexity: the situation will have changed by the time the solution for the (old) situation has been found. It needs to be broken up into bits and pieces that can contribute to a systemic solution: an agile approach.
- A methodological way of working that integrates (new) technology and insights coming from the social and human sciences. The Key Enabling Methodologies agenda gives an insight in the main categories of methods, tools and strategies available to the changemakers.

Together, this results in better, if not optimal, solutions.

The living lab way of working facilitates such iterative processes in a sustainable and proven way because of its set-up:

- Living labs are preferably hosted by or founded in partnership with a research facility such as a (applied) university and are overseen and guided by researchers;
- They are set in an environment which allows for testing in or near to real life situations;
- Companies such as SMEs and corporations work together with researchers on innovation challenges in these living labs;
- Citizens are involved in setting the challenges, providing feedback on all levels of development and giving insight in early adoption issues;
- Ideas and knowledge are exchanged on several levels between citizens, researchers and companies, using co-creative and participative methods;
- This way, state-of-the-art available technology is combined with insights from social and human sciences;
- Taken to the societal and business level; and
- Resulting in adoptable, integral innovations and new knowledge on all sides.

Triple learning

It is important to notice that living labs provide more than just new concrete solutions; a first level of learning. Again, understanding the issues at stake is the second level for all involved. Thirdly, living labs give rise to the improvement of skills and competences among participants and stakeholders, and to understanding and improving methodologies and insights in, among others, human behaviour, in empirical and generic knowledge for researchers, creatives and citizens. Hence, not only results for contemporary challenges are found, but also a stronger foundation in knowledge and skills is built, arming us for future challenges.

Business and economy

By making them accessible to companies such as SMEs, start-ups and corporations, the living labs contribute to knowledge and solutions for challenges, but also to business. Those who are able and willing to innovate their products and work with researchers within these Living labs can elevate their product to new heights – using contributions to solutions to create business, strengthening the economy around solutions for societal challenges. This double goal-setting gives rise to social enterprises and is fundamental to speeding up the societal transitions.

Availability and spread of knowledge

Because the living labs are hosted by universities, the knowledge gained and strengthened is publicly available. Even if companies do not participate in the living lab itself, they can still benefit from them by learning from their peers who did participate or reading the research papers.

Living labs example: Virtual Reality Design Methods Lab

When products and ideas are too big or new to be 3D-printed, other techniques are required to provide an immersive experience that allow clients and users to experience different design options. during the making of the object, buildings, public space or landscapes for instance. VR is likely to be such a technology that can become part of the design practices of the creative industry.

The VRDML living lab (Virtual reality design methods lab) focusses on the use of virtual reality in the process of designing, modifying, and re-using new and existing buildings, city districts and landscapes.

Reimagining VR Space

Virtual space often is used as a tool that relies on a mere replication of the physical domain whilst the laws of physics as we know them in the physical world, are completely absent in the virtual one. Therefore, UNStudio proposed an experiment in which the user doesn't move through space, but by letting the space revolve around the user itself. By making the VR-user stationary and eliminating traditional types of navigation, one would make optimum use of the strengths which the virtual medium embodies. To make this work this, several concepts were explored.

IDOLS*

In the [IDOLS*](#) (Increasing Demand by Offering LearningS) project, creative and cultural parties work together with public and private parties on complex social issues under the guidance of a coach. By looking at the issues as partners and through the lens of design, not only were new approaches found, but traditional clients also learned to better understand and appreciate the knowledge, expertise and strength of the sector. At the same time, creative parties learned new skills with regard to working on hyper-complex challenges and cooperating in complex settings.

Keywords:

Equal way of cooperation / coach as new role / space for innovative solution directions / validation of programme by research / business perspective / community

Vision, connection and intelligent design are prerequisites for achieving meaningful, scalable solutions that are widely supported and have impact. But to have these at one's disposal, skills and knowledge are needed on both the commissioning and the receiving side. That is why IDOLS* (2019-2020) has been developed as a programme to effectively connect social challenges and their problem owners with the creative and cultural industry.

Setup

By organising, stimulating and professionalising public and private commissioning around major social tasks and learning from it, IDOLS* made a unique contribution in 2020 to increasing the labour market for, and a more strategic positioning of, the creative and cultural sector.

IDOLS*, which lasted more than a year, consisted of ten projects ranging from home care to biodiversity, 30 public and private problem owners, 40 creative and cultural businesses and 8 coaches. The learning experiences were collected, documented and validated by researchers at TU Delft and are being summarised in a scientific publication.

During the lifetime of IDOLS*, an engaged "IDOLS community" has grown, convincing results have been achieved and important insights have been gained. IDOLS* has developed a unique user-oriented multi-stakeholder approach to hyper-complex issues in the context of continuous social innovation.

In this way, IDOLS* worked on several points:

- The lack of knowledge, experience and confidence of clients in working with the creative and cultural sector;
- Developing skills by and for the creative and cultural sector, to work on hyper-complex challenges in complex settings; and
- Helping to find new approaches to these hyper-complex social issues.

Keys to success

Much has been learned in IDOLS*, not only through its projects, but also in terms of putting together an innovative and effective programme. Partly as a result of research by TU Delft into IDOLS* as part of a programme for social innovation, the following points have been defined as keys to success:

- The key role of a coach in bringing together public and private stakeholders around a 'big' social issue; formulating an innovative tender; monitoring the implementation, adjusting the objectives, preventing the focus from shifting and economising the result
- Achieving an equal relationship between all stakeholders (problem owners, clients and users), creating space for truly meaningful social innovation
- Sharing learning experiences, per role, project and programme
- Continuous examination and validation of research results
- Anticipating the emergence of intellectual property and a business case

[The research report \(in Dutch\) can be found in digital form here.](#)

[IDOLS](#) was made possible by a contribution from the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and contributions from the problem owners. IDOLS* is in line with the ambitions of the [labour market agenda for the cultural and creative sector](#), framed in the mission-driven top sector policy and implemented by the [Federation Creative Industry](#) with support from [CLICKNL](#).*

World Design Embassies

In the [World Design Embassies programme](#) (WDE), alliances of partners (from governments, businesses, knowledge institutions and social organisations) work together with designers. They deal with social challenges and the role that design plays in developing new perspectives and concrete solutions.

Keywords:

Ambassadors from theme / new connections and cooperations / multi-year programmes / state of affairs and designs for and for future prospects / communities

The world is in transition. There are many developments in our society, such as technologisation, climate change, urbanisation, new forms of globalisation and individualisation. Some see them as a threat, while the World Design Embassies see them as opportunities for vision and pragmatism, perspectives and improvements. Together with specialists, makers, designers, users and change-makers, the Embassies take up the challenge of tackling these issues differently, because solutions chosen in the past offer no guarantees for the future. The World Design Embassies are therefore not embassies that represent national interests, but embassies that bring together social issues under one theme. And to develop new approaches within those embassies, new collaborations are set up between partners and sectors that would not normally seek each other out so readily.

Embassy setup

When setting up a new embassy, a social theme is chosen on the basis of developments in society and a first draft of a vision is elaborated on the theme and the role of design. Subsequently, a curator is appointed. The curator and the programme management of WDE take the initiative to find four to six core partners for the embassy who identify with the theme and wish to link the objectives of their organisation to it. In 2021, WDE will include the following embassies: Health, Circular & Bio-based Building, Water, Food, Safety, Mobility, Rethinking Plastic. In addition, a new theme is being developed with the working title Inclusive Society.

The core partners, under the leadership of the curator, jointly develop the content of the theme of the embassy and the narrative. On the basis of this narrative, the programme of the embassy is developed, in which the role of design is also discussed. The structure of the programme per embassy can vary, depending on the interpretation that partners give it. The partners often work together with designers on a joint issue.

Partners in the embassies can be private companies, governments, umbrella organisations, joint ventures, knowledge institutions and partners from the design field.

Dutch Design Foundation is a partner of all embassies and has overall responsibility for programme management, partnership development, development and realisation of the

year-round overall programme, communication and PR, and community and network development.

Dutch Design Week

The Dutch Design Week (DDW) is an important opportunity for exposure for the embassies. The embassies present an exhibition or installation based on the narrative and on the examination of the joint issue. In addition, the partners have the opportunity to present their own projects related to the theme of the embassy. The peripheral programme with talks, workshops and debates also forms an important part of the presentation of the embassy during DDW; this is where the networks of the partners meet.

In 2019, some 175,000 visitors, varying from general public to professional visitors, attended the embassies at the Dutch Design Week.

Vision & Impact

The partnership in an embassy offers organisations the opportunity to develop, together with other partners, new visions and future perspectives on a specific theme and to develop new networks with other parties and the design field. The presentation of the embassy on the international stage of DDW gives partners in the embassy visibility and exposure.

With leading and award-winning projects such as The People's Pavilion (2017), The Growing Pavilion (2019) and The Exploded View (2020 and 2021), WDE has put important themes on the agenda in recent years and managed to make new connections between policymakers and builders and the design sector. In the program, about 75 to 150 parties work together on the development of the embassy programs. This creates new coalitions between partners and between partners and designers. In addition, new collaborations have been established program-wide with the Atelier Rijksbouwmeester through the development of a joint vision resulting in an exhibition and with CLICKNL and Design United in the collaboration around the knowledge festival Drive.

The WDE year-round programme includes the organisation of [WDE Talks](#) in spring and autumn at Pakhuis de Zwijger, All Embassies meetings with all embassy partners, cooperation with CLICKNL and Design United in the [DRIVE programme](#) during DDW.

World Design Embassies is a programme organised by [Dutch Design Foundation](#) and partners.

What if Lab

The [What if Lab](#) brings organisations and designers together to address concrete questions in the form of challenges. Designers in a What if Lab use concept thinking, alternative scenarios and prototyping to question the status quo and create space for development and impactful answers. The first step is to think in terms of possibilities. What if?

Keywords:

Community of practice / matchmaking | concrete challenges / What if...

Rapid developments create challenges that do not always have sustainable, future-proof solutions. Frequently, issues are so complex that they require a different way of thinking. This is the role of the world's best designers; they have the inventiveness and creativity to lay the foundation for innovations.

What if Lab challenges clients (governments, businesses and social organisations) and the design world to come together to come up with impactful answers to current issues. Through concept thinking, alternative scenarios and prototyping, designers in a What if Lab question the status quo and create room for development. The first step is to think in terms of possibilities.

The What if Lab works on challenges with a clear design question to reach impactful answers. The What if Lab guides the process using its experience and network.

Designers get the chance to get stuck into challenging issues, while clients get new insights into opportunities for the future. In this way, long-term collaborations are developed in which organisations and designers work on the changes that tomorrow's sustainable and socially just society demands.

What if Lab: community of practice

Experience shows that the working methods and language of clients and designers do not always directly correspond. The What if Lab was developed from the need to bridge these two worlds. The process in the What if Lab is constantly being refined by lessons learned from new collaborations. With the implementation of each new challenge, we not only work on concrete results but also research and share 'learning by doing'. The What if Lab can be seen as a product that is constantly being iterated and improved upon together with clients and designers. This knowledge and experience are important to optimise the impact of design power and make the cooperation between clients and designers more efficient. That is good for everyone.

The collection and sharing of this knowledge and experience is largely done in practice during a lab. The What if Lab also shares insights with the broader community. We record lessons and insights in articles and cases. Designers and clients can participate in specially organised 'What if: learning sessions' in which we discuss sector-wide issues that multiple parties face in innovation processes for social issues.

How does it work?

A What if Lab is divided into three different phases:

1. research and define;
2. concept development and testing; and
3. prototyping and iterating.

How these phases are fleshed out is customised for each What if Lab. Together with the client, the lab looks at the question, desired outcomes, experience in working with designers, and budget. A 'Lab Manager' shapes the cooperation in terms of content and guides the client and designers. The What if Lab uses a proven method with recurring contact moments to ensure successful cooperation.

What if Lab

In the preparatory phase, What if Lab helps clients translate their question into a design one and record this in an extensive briefing for designers. In addition, clear agreements are made between the parties involved (including a fair design fee) and laid down in the terms of participation. Depending on the set-up of a challenge, designers are invited to participate via an open call or approached directly. The client is then supported and advised in the selection of suitable designers. In the first two phases (research and definition; concept development and testing), several designers/design studios usually work on the same design question. For the third prototype phase, a selection is made by the client of designers who can translate concepts into final results. This can be a physical prototype, a prototype, a (digital) visualisation or an elaborated scenario. The final results will be presented to the client in a final presentation or demo day.

Results

After the What if Lab, clients and designers decide how to continue the collaboration: testing results with a broad audience with a presentation during Dutch Design Week, fundraising for next steps, or further developing results towards implementation. The goal is to achieve a sustainable ongoing collaboration. We evaluate with clients and participating designers, and use feedback on the process and content for improvements in future labs and learning points for the 'community of practice'.

Impact

Collaborations in the What if Lab deliver design assignments, concrete design solutions for social issues, contribute to the development of good commissioning practices and are the basis for collective knowledge gathering in the community of practice.

Clients and partners

Clients in the What if Lab vary from government departments (such as the Ministry of Health or the National Police) and semi-government bodies (such as housing corporation Trudo and Eindhoven Marathon) to companies (such as Hema, Fokker Elmo, Leolux and ABN AMRO). Several international What if Labs are held every year, for example with embassies from Korea and Indonesia and start-up KacKaa from South Africa.

What if Lab is a programme organised by [Dutch Design Foundation](#).