

# School of Commons

Timelab /  
remodeling  
common  
ground

Change how you look at the world,  
enter the School of Commons.  
Learning about community and  
interactions will give another  
perspective on your role in systemic  
change.

“The quality of a building cannot be made,  
but only generated indirectly, by the action of  
people, just as a flower cannot be made, but only  
generated from the seed.”

- Christopher Alexander

together

systemic

learning

modular



*More info?  
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Developing a manual, a playbook, a method, a guideline on how communities work, is probably the most common quest for many communities, participatory projects, local governments and organisations who understand the complexity of human interaction. The conviction it is a matter of finding the recipe for cooking a bottom-up approach has turned out

an illusion for many trying to find the quick answer. In The School of Commons, we look for patterns in the way communities function and share resources. We turn these patterns into hands-on enabling tools for change. This is not a product/service design process, no design thinking, no business model canvas, but a systemic approach building on accessible resources and tangible

knowledge. At the end of the process, you will not have the 'best idea', but you will have a playful accessible structure that gives insight into how anyone can take part and how we decide. This approach will influence the systemic dynamics and have a sustainable result. Although the end stays open and therefore the structure is resilient.

### **We work in 3 steps:**

#### ***Develop the game***

based on the proven structure we develop all aspects of the game with a focus group

#### ***Play the game***

Playing the game will guide you through seven patterns of commoning. These seven perspectives refer to aspects to rethink or develop to create commons. For each of the seven patterns we developed a workshop breakout. The process is not linear, but developed upon the flow of the game as a metaphor for an unpredictable flow of events in real life. The seven workshops together touch on all aspects of developing a business plan, initiate change or set up a project idea or participatory process.

#### ***Emplacement of the game***

by turning the game into a spatial interactive installation, the process behind the systemic approach becomes an experience and a tool for communication.

#### ***Open ended development***

The School of Commons itself is in a constant state of flux. For each round of playing, we built the knowledge. Here is an example.

The first version of School

of Commons is made for facilitating local governments to find their role in urban spatial development and was part of the EU Creative Europe project Cultural and creative spaces and cities adding Cocities cycle to the existing project development method.

This means we integrated the 5 design principles van de [City as a Commons](#) (Labgov): And the 6 steps in de co-city cycle in creating a city as a commons are added to the game. These steps give a temporal dimension to the existence of commons in which, for each of the phases, there is a specific dynamic and presence of the 6-helix stakeholders.

#### ***A series of games***

We developed the second version with young teenagers using their language, cases, and characters in the game. We added depth to the characters based on storytelling. Currently, we are developing 2 new versions with our partners in social economy enterprises. We build all versions of the game on the same structure, but with unique language, realities, and experiences. This is what the School of Commons is about. Developing content based on the micro-level, building on a template that

opens up many perspectives. A template that exists from patterns of observations and functions as an enabler for systemic change.

Using the game of The School of Commons is an experience. By developing the game, you understand the systemic layers of your project. By playing the game, you learn many tools that will facilitate new habits and routines. By emplacing the game, you start an embodied dialogue with a larger group.

Let us know if you want to start a journey with us or dive into our calendar online to find brief introductions in some tools.