



Title	<i>BOOT – Neighbourhood stores for education, research and talent development (Buurtwinkels voor onderwijs, onderzoek en talentontwikkeling)</i>
Project start date	<i>October 2008</i>
Project end date	<i>Open ended</i>
Country	<i>The Netherlands</i>
City	<i>Amsterdam</i>
Summary	<p><i>A BOOT is a store where students from the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences (HvA) offer all kinds of advice and services (administrative, financial, judicial, educational, etc.) to residents of deprived neighbourhoods in Amsterdam. The involved students also organize various activities for the neighbourhood and its residents and conduct research into various socioeconomic issues.</i></p> <p><i>Students are guided by their professors and by professionals in the field. The project aims to be interdisciplinary, structural and complementary to existing programmes or initiatives in the neighbourhood. The neighbourhood stores are operating bases from which students, professors and professionals offer their competences, skills and expertise to neighbourhoods and their residents.</i></p> <p><i>With BOOT the HvA aims to contribute structurally to the socioeconomic improvement of deprived neighbourhoods in Amsterdam. So far, four neighbourhood stores have opened. BOOT is a cooperation between the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, the city of Amsterdam, city districts and housing corporations in Amsterdam.</i></p>
Issue	<p><i>The addressed issues are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>– Learning and growing up</i> <i>– Integration and participation</i> <i>– Economy and labour</i> <i>– Liveability and Urban Renewal</i>
Beneficiaries	<i>The City of Amsterdam, municipalities, housing corporations, students and professors of the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, residents of the involved neighbourhoods.</i>
Organisation	<i>HvA - Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences Urban Practice – Project BOOT</i>
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ABOUT BOOT

Content

- Interviewee, function and role in the project.

The interviewees are ms. Esther Haverkort, manager of the project, and ms. Wieteke Seelen, communications officer.

- Short explanation content project and main objectives.

BOOT has two main objectives: to organize educational projects in various neighbourhoods one the one hand, and to contribute positively to the city on the other hand. BOOT currently operates from 4 locations in various city districts in Amsterdam. The project is a cooperation



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between the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, the city of Amsterdam, several city districts and housing corporations in Amsterdam.

In the past four years over 1.000 students have contributed to the socioeconomic position of various neighbourhoods in Amsterdam through project BOOT. Some 250 students are currently assisting and providing services to over 500 residents of Amsterdam neighbourhoods every week.

BOOT neighbourhood stores have become bases from which professors, students, researchers and professionals put their competences and skills at the disposal of Amsterdam neighbourhoods and their residents. Whenever residents or project partners have requests or need advice, students give counsel or develop services and activities, while being supervised by their professors and other professionals.

A prime example are the societal and legal consultation hours, during which students give advice to residents or organizations in the neighbourhood, to solve legal or societal issues they are dealing with. School- and homework assistance is another successful subproject, in which students supervise and support primary school pupils.





Background information

1. What was the motivation for starting the project?

In 2007 the former minister of Housing, Neighbourhoods and Integration, ms. Ella Vogelaar, appointed 40 neighbourhoods in the Netherlands that were in bad need of improvement. Problems in these neighbourhoods were the following:

- Two times as many early school leavers
- Two and a half times as many low quality homes
- High rate of youth unemployment
- 25 percent lower average income per household
- Two times as many people in need of debt relief
- Poor integration of newcomers
- Poor emancipation and integration of particularly women of non-western descent
- Poor health standards
- High crime rates
- Sense of insecurity





The deprived situations in these neighbourhoods were of such a scope and persistence that national and local parties decided to start addressing these problems in a joint effort. The goal was to (re)create neighbourhoods that are safe and pleasant to live, learn and work in within 8 to 10 years. This program was called the *wijkaanpak*. All districts of the city of Amsterdam were involved in the *wijkaanpak*, that was divided into 5 themes:

- Learning and growing up
- Integration and participation
- Work and economy
- Housing and living
- Security

In 2008, the Executive Board of the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences decided to become a partner to the city of Amsterdam and to start contributing to the city's efforts to improve its deprived neighbourhoods. That's when project BOOT was born.

Initially only one neighbourhood store opened in *De Baarsjes*, in district Amsterdam-West (2008). In 2009, 2010 and 2012 three new ones opened in city districts East, Southeast, and New West.





Implementation of the project

2. Is this initiative embedded within municipal policy? If so, who and which department is responsible within the municipality? How did you experience the cooperation with other organisations?

The project was initially subsidized by the government. In 2012 however, national funding stopped. Some of the neighbourhood stores made agreements with the city districts in which they are situated about financial assistance. Likewise some of the stores are being supported financially by housing corporations. There is no single agreement about this. Some city districts are very dedicated to the stores and their activities, others show less interest.

3. During the implementation of the project, were there any obstacles? If so, can you name an example? Also the other way around, were there any unexpected positive developments, perhaps a spin off?

All partners to the neighbourhood stores have their own culture and ways of doing things. BOOT has to deal with all these parties. Getting them all 'in line' may take quite an effort. Moreover, BOOT is always looking for long term commitment, whereas most partners tend to focus solely on a year or so.

Results and lessons learned

4. Has the main objective of the project been achieved? If not why and what is the outcome of the project thus far?

Because of the project, various parties are working together to address urban issues and problems by providing assistance and services to residents and local organizations. At the same time the project is a practical educational program in which students get the opportunity to gain knowledge and real life experience. Parties with shared interests seem to cooperate better. Positive investments in the neighbourhoods become more visible because of the activity in and experiences with the neighbourhood stores.

5. Which aspects have made the project successful?

4 aspects in particular:

- The fact that involved parties seem to realize that they share certain interests and are joining their forces.
- The enthusiasm and commitment of students and their professors.
- The local scale and the practical dimension of the projects.
- Local ownership and support is ensured because the neighbourhood stores act upon the requests of residents and local organizations.

6. What would you advise other cities, organisations and universities when setting up such project?



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First and foremost, create support and enthusiasm for the project within the own organization. At the management level as well as the executive level. Second, start looking for and thinking of possible partners and projects. Third, ensure that practical activities match the theoretical curriculum.

The next steps, future plans

7. Are there any plans to extend the project to other urban areas?

Three other universities in other parts of the Netherlands are planning on starting neighbourhood stores.

8. What will happen after the closure of the project?

We hope that the investments in the involved neighbourhoods, the partnerships and the curriculum of the university will continue to exist and if possible will be further developed.

