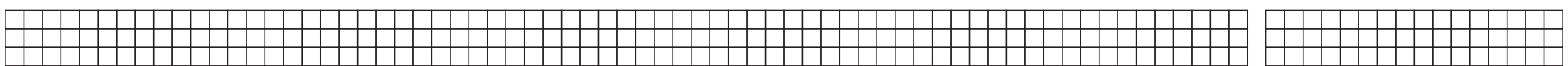
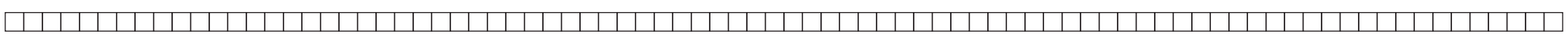


# DE STOKER

nr. 05  
juni 2020



Stichting Stad in de Maak — Pieter de Raadtstraat 35B — 3033 VC Rotterdam — [info@stadindemaak.nl](mailto:info@stadindemaak.nl) — [www.stadindemaak.nl](http://www.stadindemaak.nl)



## Pension Almonde — The New Normal

What constitutes normal life at Pension Almonde? After all, it is a street of urban nomads and neighbourhood initiatives. An international community that changes every week as people check in or fly out. This issue has therefore been written in English, with a Dutch summary on each spread.

The old residents have all found new homes by now, although some of them still visit regularly. Now there is also a Homesick House for them to come and

reminisce about their former lives on the street. All at a safe distance, of course. Who would have thought that life on the street would change so abruptly with the outbreak of Coronavirus? We went into lockdown and now eat our soup at a metre-and-a-half distance. The crisis immediately revealed the value of living and working cooperatively. So it was good to learn that we can stay until October, meaning that we can still perform a 'Slopera' ('Demolition opera'), which is planned for the end of September.

### Het Nieuwe Normaal (NL)

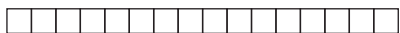
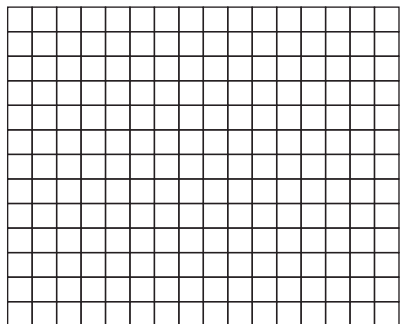
Een normaal leven in Pension Almonde, wat houdt dat precies in? Inmiddels bestaat de hele straat uit stadsnomaden en buurtinitiatieven. Een internationaal gezelschap dat elke week weer wisselt omdat mensen inchecken en weer uitvliegen. De voertaal van deze krant is nu dan ook Engels, met op elke pagina een Nederlandse samenvatting.

De oude bewoners hebben inmiddels allemaal een nieuwe woning gevonden,

maar sommigen komen nog regelmatig langs. Sinds kort is er ook een Heimwee-woning om herinneringen aan een voorbijgegaan leven in de straat op te halen.

Wel op gepaste afstand natuurlijk. Wie had ooit gedacht dat het leven in de straat opeens zo zou veranderen door het uitbreken van het Coronavirus? We gingen in lockdown en eten nu soep op anderhalve meter afstand. Opeens bewees de waarde van coöperatief wonen en werken zich in het omgaan met een

crisis. Het komt dus goed uit dat we tot en met oktober mogen blijven. Zo kunnen we toch nog een 'Slopera' opvoeren, die nu eind september gepland staat.



Community in times of corona

p. 2-3



Lockdown in the street

p. 4-5



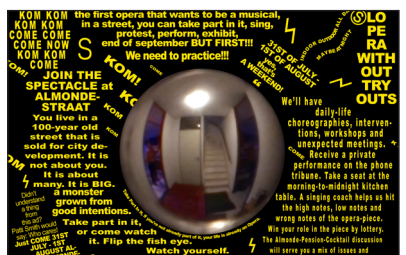
The everyday commons

p. 6



Learning from Almonde

p. 7



Looking ahead: Slopera

p. 8





# Community in tijden van crisis

Op 17 maart, toen bleek dat Corona was uitgebroken, kwam diezelfde avond de hele Almondestraat bij elkaar om te bespreken hoe wij als community met dit plots opdringende gevaar zouden omgaan. Uiteraard online, via zoom. Het begin van samenleven op afstand. Een bizarre situatie die snel werd omgezet in iets positiefs. Er kwam twee keer per week noodhulp met soep en voedselpakketten vanuit Keju Kitchen. Bewoners van het pension bezorgden deze pakketten door de hele wijk. Mensen keken naar elkaar uit en hielpen elkaar. Er ontstonden waardevolle initiatieven in de straat. Juist nu bleek de waarde van coöperatief wonen en werken. Deze twee pagina's geven in het Engels een beeld van de waarde van het pension in crisistijd.



## Timeline of events

Pension Almonde responded quickly to the crisis:

17 March

Online get together, as well as dancing and singing from the balconies

**18 March**

## Start Keju Cares and balcony soup nights

19 March

First socially distanced radio show by  
Good Times Bad Times

22 March

Communal cleaning and disinfection measures. 'Microrave' with headphones and on the balconies together with online ravers all over the world.

**28 March**

## Launch of Blank Space Online for yoga and meditation from home

1 April

Balcony activities still going on. Media coverage of Open Rotterdam, RTV Rijnmond and article in de Volkskrant

# At least there is still soup

Due to Corona, Keju Kitchen, the cafe and second living room of the street, had to close their doors at short notice. But what would the Almondestraat be without this colorful place where people are always gathering and where you can get some comforting food and coffee? Luckily, the initiators Bryan and Jaleesa immediately started cooking soup. Not only for the people in the street, but also for vulnerable people in the neighbourhood.

Normally on Tuesdays, we ate soup as a community in the common living room. Now it was take-away at the counter of Keju Cares on Tuesdays and Fridays. Many residents volunteered to bring the soup and care packages to elderly and sick people, wearing plastic gloves and facemasks. There was a huge demand,

because many neighbourhood initiatives closed their doors. As of the 15th of June, 2823 meals have been handed out and we are still counting.

Now that life is slowly starting again, Bryan and Jaleesa are in search of a new way to be of service for the neighbourhood and Pension Almonde as a social enterprise.



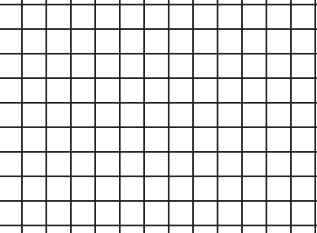


[illegible]

Suddenly, everyone is staying home. Studies and internships are paused. Many foreign residents head home.

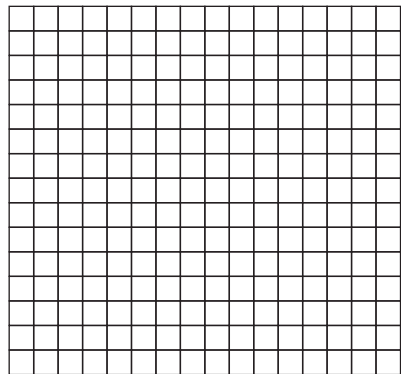
Systems theory shows that resilience is generally increased by diversity, complexity in mutual relationships, and surplus – all elements to be found in Pension Almonde. The urban nomads form a diverse group: artists, students, couchsurfers, freelancers, expats and families in the midst of a renovation. It is hard to find a common denominator,

In short, there are enough people. Not everyone has to take part in order to get a lot done. Ultimately, the resilience of the collective is greater than the sum of its individual residents. Together, we can do more. And the value of this collective resilience comes to the fore in times when the usual order is disturbed – like now.





Wat gebeurt er als heel Pension Almonde plotseling thuis moet blijven? Tijdens de lockdown ontstond er een radiostation, een nomadische stadstuin, protesteerden en dansten we vanaf het balkon, leerden we de kinderen in de straat kennen, maakten we keramieken voorwerpen en reflecteerden we op het leven in de straat. Fotograaf Frank Hanswijk fotografeerde de Almondenaren in hun huizen. Ook kwam het nieuws dat Pension Almonde tot oktober mocht blijven. Met als voorwaarde dat iedereen moest verhuizen binnen de straat, omdat we anders huurrechten zouden opbouwen. Een lockdown en verhuizing tegelijkertijd! Op deze pagina lees je in het Engels meer over alles wat er in deze gekke tijd ontstond.



## A woman with long dark hair, wearing a black tank top and olive green pants, sits cross-legged on a bright yellow sofa. She is smiling at the camera. The room has a vibrant orange wall. To her left is a wicker side table with a silver kettle and a lamp. To her right is a large potted plant on a wooden stool. In the background, there is a large arched mirror reflecting a window with red curtains, and a small table with various items. The room is decorated with various plants, a sun-shaped wall ornament, and a colorful painting on the floor.

While time passed by a door had opened to all creative solutions in the name of helping. The help from the community appeared in different forms of care. “What is needed?” became the main question. Before I knew it Keju Kitchen had transformed into Keju Care and the care circle was created. Zoom felt like the new medium to connect.

[illegible]

*Like many others around the world, I've felt isolated over the past three months. I've been searching for connection through different means than being in a physical space with others. Luckily, I'm no stranger to the digital world: I spent much of my youth playing games with friends online, talking over instant messengers, and using social media platforms. I've been connecting with those who aren't physically close to me for a long time. But for the past months and for some time to come, I'm trying to find connection with my neighbours and fellow residents in Pension Almonde who are close to me. They are on the other sides of the walls of the room I'm currently sitting in.*

Since February 2020, Jack Bardwell, Kirsten Spruit and myself have been organising a community radio station that gives residents from the Pension and others the chance to express themselves through their own radio show. This station, initially called Radio Almonde, ran every Wednesday afternoon and featured a variety of shows, from 'Tea-Time with Keren' to 'Drawing with Olaf'. It was based in the laundromat of the street, a small room in the communal area that housed the shared washing machine and dryer in a wardrobe, and a table with two benches.

This physical space was small but the social space that the radio created was much larger than that. It gave people a chance to sit down and talk, create, play music and express themselves audibly. We realised that this social aspect of the radio was just as, if not more important than the broadcasts themselves. Of course we wanted our broadcast to sound good, but the content didn't matter much to us. It was about creating space for the people of the street.

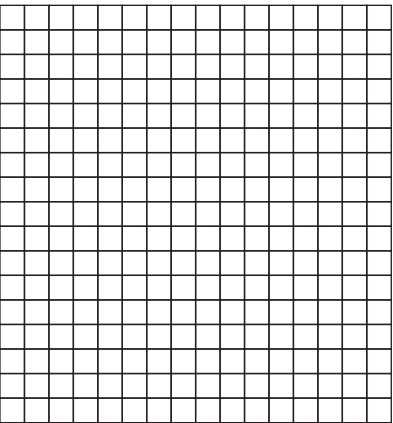
At the end of March, Covid-19 came to the Netherlands. We could not continue the radio in its public location or facilitate its use by multiple people. The equipment moved upstairs to our apartment. We were no longer physically connected to the rest of the street. But we wanted to continue to broadcast – now that we were isolated, we felt the necessity of the radio more than ever. We built a website, set up our own radio server and began broadcasting from our living room. Along with the physical changes, there was a change of identity as Radio Almonde became Good Times Bad Times. Initially the name of a show hosted by Kirstin, this gradually came to encompass all that we did on the radio.

Although these changes gave us creative freedom and control, the physical isolation made it harder to get contributions from others. We continued with some of the regulars while also establishing new ones, but the interaction with the street was much diminished. The format evolved to explore more explicitly how we spent our time in isolation, and gave us excuses to talk to others through the radio. We had phone conversations with guests whilst also being joined by regular listeners who would contribute to the conversations we were having. Somehow, it didn't feel so isolating to talk in this way.

In a period of Zoom calls, Skype meetings and Facetime catch-ups, somehow the radio made me feel closer to the people in the street than any of those other platforms. Our voices, carried from the back of our throats, are picked up by a microphone, travel down a cable into a mixer, through an audio interface, into

I can't explain why this is, but I have come to understand its importance in connecting with others in times of social isolation. We will continue to broadcast from our living room until it is safe to open up the radio to the public again. When the time does come to reopen, when we do finally emerge from our living room, we will begin to rebuild the social space that we had before and the function of the radio will change again. But we will know more about why we are doing it and what we are striving for.

Benjamin Earl, resident of Pension Almonde.  
Good Times Bad Times can currently be  
listened (and spoken) to on Wednesdays from  
14:00, at [goodtimesbadtimes.club](http://goodtimesbadtimes.club)





# Community gardening: the nomadic way

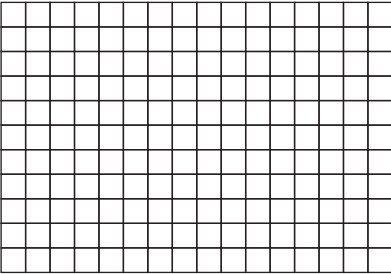


*'Under the pavement, the beach!' This slogan from the 1968 riots in Paris expressed the youth's dissatisfaction with the constraints of modern life, and their desire to transform it as they wished. Lifting up cobblestones to throw at the police, they found sand underneath...*

At Pension Almonde, we say: under the pavement, the community garden!  
One sunny morning in April, the community lifted some paving stones to make space for a nomadic vegetable garden. Led by initiators Piet Vollaard and Philippa Driest, we planted spinach, lettuce, peas, cucumber, pumpkins and more in white 25L bags. Next, some

neighbours turned up the paving stones in front of their homes to make improvised planters. 'Geveltuinen', facade gardens, for a greener street.  
The garden was inspired by the Prinzesseningarten in Berlin - a community garden on the previously vacant Moritzplatz in Kreuzberg, initiated and managed by residents as a commons. Piet wanted to recreate a similar garden on a smaller scale in the space available to the community.  
This not only makes for a more attractive street, but also provides fresh herbs and vegetables for shared meals, creates opportunities for collective

activity, and contributes to a more ecologically friendly city where insects and birds are welcome. The garden was planted in bags full of soil, which was not just a quick and convenient method, but also means it can be easily moved. Now the garden can be as nomadic as the residents.

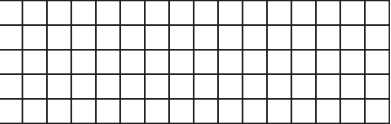


# Kaleidoscopic panorama of moving

To work around contractual issues and a change of ownership, we have to deal with the unusual fact that all of us have to move within the street from one apartment to the other in order to be able to stay on the street for longer. A change is coming. A change that is not visible from the outside. An internal change. An invisible change.  
Protocols have to be followed due to Covid 19. Protocols have to be followed to be able to stay longer in the street. Both collide. It is a puzzle of logistics.  
The advantage of a kaleidoscope, a panoramic picture is that you can make things visible that are not in your field of view.

An attempt to create an overview of the situation. Trying to zoom out. But does it get clearer?  
Representing the chaotic eye. Showing all the different perspectives and lights that shine on the moving situation. Lights that make a kaleidoscope possible to function, to reflect the image. But slowly all the perspectives are coming together, and melting into one.

Clara Harmssen, resident of Pension Almonde



# The kids of Pension Almonde: 'at first we thought this was a normal street'

*What is it like growing up in Pension Almonde? Blaze (14) and Brooklyn (12), two of the youngest members of the Almondestraat community, share their perspective.*

At first, we thought this was just a normal street, like any other. But after a little bit of time we realized it is actually a crazy place, and funny. We were surprised by how nice people were and the crazy things they do.

### Helping out

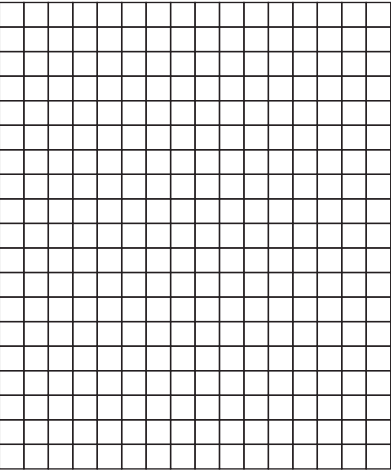
In this street there is more social connection. You see each other very often, more than in other streets. You don't only say 'hi' or 'good morning', you are hanging out every day when you aren't at work. And people work together too.

Things didn't really change that much with the Corona virus. People could still be quite social because they already live together. The main thing that changed was Keju Cares. At first it was just our parents and a few colleagues helping with the packages, then more and more people came to help. We've also helped with the packages and some deliveries in our block. When you see other people helping you are inspired to help as well.

### Hanging out

The best part of the street is how social it is. People are always hanging out together or playing ping pong outside, and there is always someone to talk to. That's what we'll miss - everyone hanging out together, if everyone lives far away

from each other. At one point we made a lot of things out of clay, and we had a competition to make the best ashtray. Brooklyn made ashtrays which said "Stop smoking". Blaze won the competition for the best ashtray.






In Pension Almonde wonen moderne Pension Almonde is eigenlijk een oefening

A group of people are gathered in a workshop or meeting space. In the foreground, several people are seated at a long wooden table, looking towards a large projection screen. The screen displays the word "Sociocracy" in a large, bold font, with a photograph of a building facade featuring graffiti in the background. The graffiti includes the words "STAD IN DE MAAK", "CREATIE", "SOCIETY", and "PEOPLE". Two people are standing on the left side of the room, one holding a document. The room has a casual, creative atmosphere with various items on the walls and shelves in the background.

[illegible]

*Pension Almonde*, as a part of the Stad









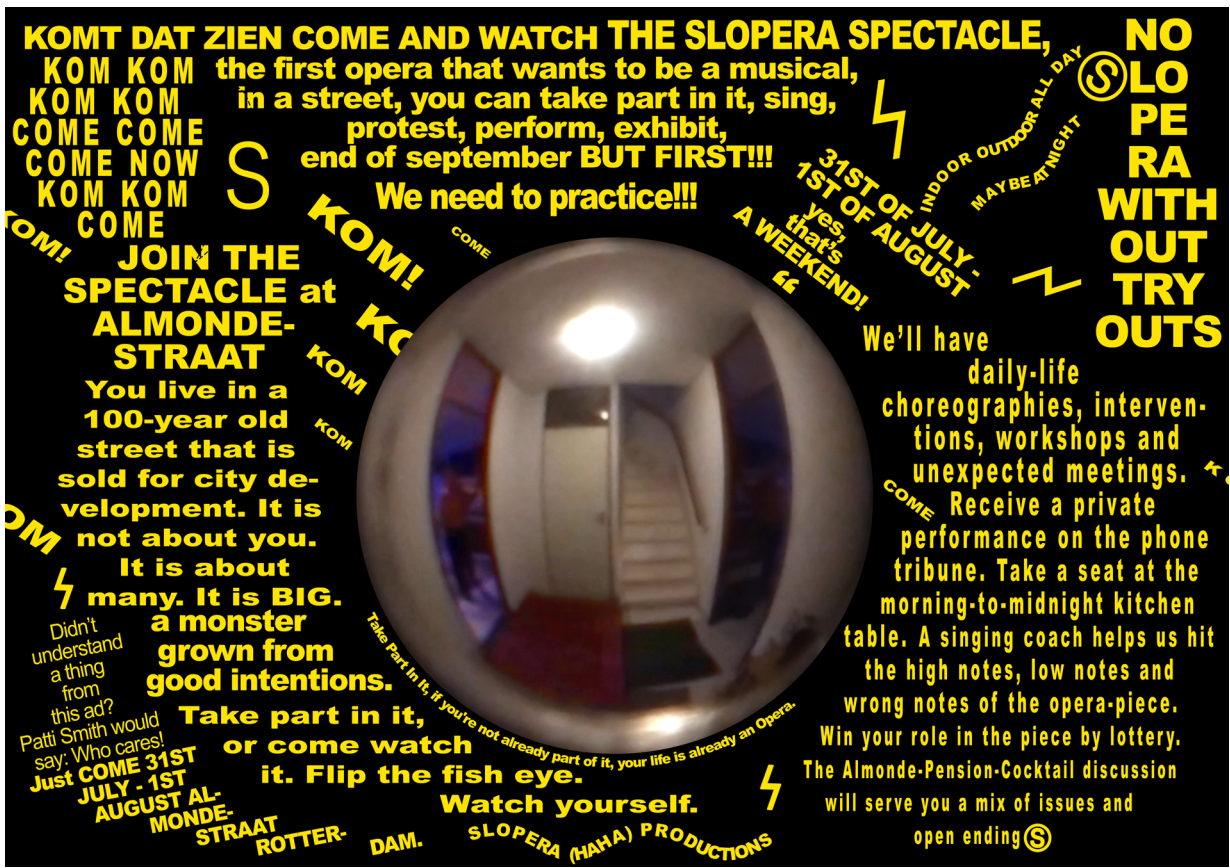
**KUM KUM** the first opera that wants to be a musical, is a not-for-profit company that takes root in a financial

Start of the staycation (straatvakantie): cutting out the first ‘demolition stone’ from Almondestraat together with the Slopera Act “Stone One” by (HaHa) Productions. Opening of the Heimweewoning (Homesick House). Street party at “appropriate distance”.

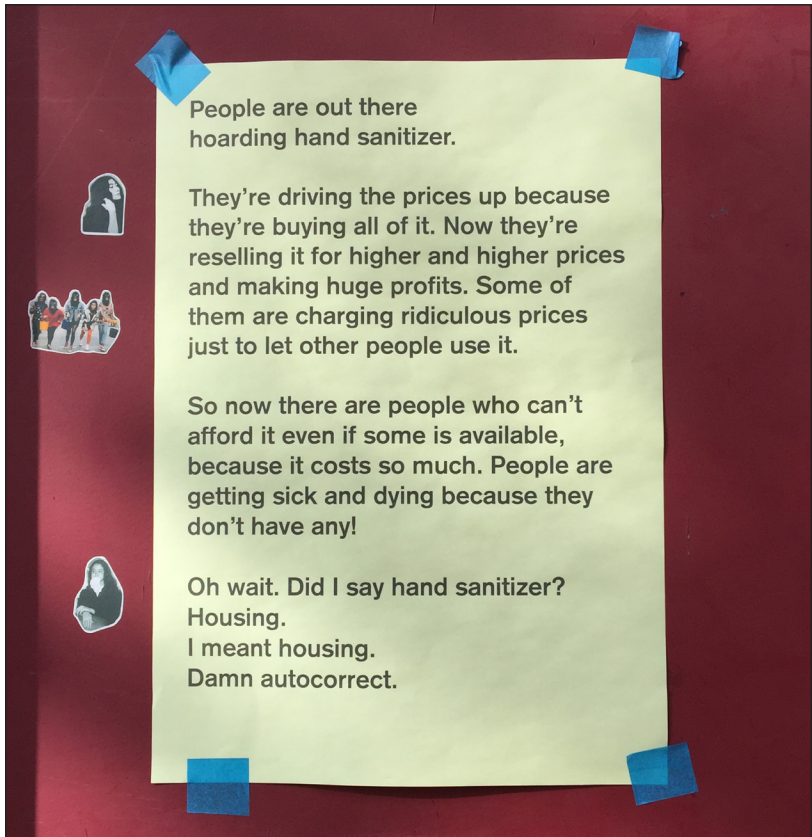
All residents to have moved house in order to stay until October

Slopera spectacle: no Slopera without  
try-out weekend spectacle!

## Preparing for the Slopera to be performed in the Autumn



Pension Almonde's community cafe, Keju Kitchen, is currently expanding into the newly-empty apartment next door. The extra space will allow them to keep operating as a business within social distancing guidelines, without losing space for community meals. They also hope to become an incubator for local initiatives and provide a platform for art and products made by residents of Pension Almonde. Watch this space!



Stad in de Maak, Louwrens Botha, Stichting Stad in de Maak Sinds 2014 heeft Stichting Stad in de Maak een aantal panden in

Stad in de Maak, Louwrens Botha,  
Daphne Koenders, Piet Vollaard

Louwrens Botha, Benjamin Earl,  
Yasmin Fris, Clara Harmssen,  
Daphne Koenders, Marc Neelen,  
Melle Smets, Piet Vollaard

Frank Hanswijk, Estrella van  
Holsteijn

Roxette Capriles, Clara Harmssen,  
Melle Smets

Kirsten Spruit

Repro.nl (oplage: 500 stuks)

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Pension Almonde is mede  
mogelijk gemaakt door  
CityLab010  
BankGiroLoterijFonds  
Stichting Doen  
Stichting Havensteder

Sinds 2014 heeft Stichting Stad in de Maak een aantal panden in Rotterdam onder haar hoede waar coöperatief wonen gecombineerd wordt met maatschappelijke voorzieningen en gedeelde ruimten. Dankzij deze panden komt er weer plek in de stad voor moderne stadsmaden, een groep die op de woningmarkt tussen wal en schip valt. De ambitie van de stichting is om panden uit de markt te halen en langdurig beschikbaar te maken voor een nieuwe manier van betaalbaar en duurzaam wonen en werken in de stad.

(Since 2014 City in the Making has been working with vacant buildings where passionate citizens combine living and working with commoning. The buildings are spaces where urban nomads live: a group of people that don't fit in the boxes of the housing market. The goal is ultimately to buy buildings and take them out of the speculative market in order to make space for a new way of co-operative living and working.)