



FACTSHEET: MATCHMAKING WORKSHOP FOR AN EMPTY LIBRARY

WHAT?

Having moved its main municipal library to a new location, the City of Ghent was looking for a temporary purpose for the old library building before its redevelopment into offices for the municipality. The building offers over 6700 m² of vacant space. The city went looking for a single coordinator for the entire project who would propose an overarching concept and business model for the temporary use of the library during a period of eight months. At the same time, 147 potential initiatives were invited to join a matchmaking workshop to see whether their activities could fit into the overall concept.

Each candidate for the coordination role was asked to pitch their project, concept and business model on stage. Meanwhile, candidates for use of the available space presented their activities in small booths and on a message wall. This way, they could meet each other and the coordinators to discuss collaborations, either within the temporary use project for the library or outside of it.

WHEN?

2017

WHERE?

Ghent, Belgium

WHY?

- Finding a temporary purpose for an old library building
- Collective project for temporary use
- Supporting creative initiatives looking for temporary space

LESSONS LEARNT

The event, facilitated by the City, brought new and creative initiatives together to build a strong proposal to use and manage an empty place. The city administration played its brokering role creating the opportunity of match-making and lets it go to the citizens. The network event significantly increased the quality and relevance of bids for the temporary use of the library.

HOW TO TRANSFER

This concrete question—offering space to new initiatives and ideas—was a good momentum for the city to facilitate a network event.

The network that was created and the links within the administration and between the projects still goes on. Initiatives that have not taken a role in the empty library, have found other matches and projects.

• **Organise an informal networking event**

• **Explore a brokering role for the city administration**