



# Project Working Group Report

## Field Visit Report Document

Inter-regional Project Working Group meetings  
Amsterdam, October 2004 and Vienna, April 2005

Amsterdam - Vienna, July 2005

## **1. Background of the study visits**

The joint study visits took place during or immediately after the PWG workshops in the POSEIDON partner cities. The study visits helped to deepen outcomes of theme-specific exchange of experience from the project phase I and the project working group of phase II of POSEIDON. They provided a deeper insight into the socio-economic situation of the areas, the current developments of the area and communication between and within the communities living in these areas. The study visits provided a comprehensive picture of the community-building and neighbourhood management initiatives already running in the areas.

The study visits in the target areas of the POSEIDON pilot projects also aimed to provide project partners with comprehensive background knowledge of the target areas which is important for understanding the aims and further developing the chosen working approaches of the pilot projects.

This section provides an overview of the study visits in the pilot project target areas in Vienna and the Geuzenveld-Slotermeer district of Amsterdam during the project working groups on theme II in Amsterdam and Vienna dealing with community consultation and participation within neighbourhood management projects.

The visits to Amsterdam covered several participative urban renewal projects in Geuzenveld-Slotermeer (co-production in urban renewal) as well as the presentation of participation processes in Geuzenveld. Visits were also made to the construction site of the Amsterdam pilot project (community school), a youth project and an empowerment project for the elderly. The study visits in Vienna covered the target area of the pilot projects ANKER 10 and WOLKE 7.

## 2. Study visits: Urban Renewal, Participation and Neighbourhood Management in Geuzenveld-Slotermeer, Amsterdam

Two Poseidon Project Working Group study visits on Thursday 28 October 2004.

### 2.1. Introduction to the neighbourhood (the theoretical itinerary)

Geuzenveld-Slotermeer is one of fifteen local council areas within the city of Amsterdam and numbers about 41,000 residents. Approximately 60% of them have a non-Dutch background. Most of them are first or second generation members of immigrant communities, among which there is a substantial proportion of (mixed) Moroccan or Turkish descent. Approximately 43% of the population in Geuzenveld-Slotermeer is above 40 years of age, about 30% is even older than 50. There are about 5,400 young people (13- 23 years old).

The necessity for urban renewal arose from an increasingly obsolete housing supply and poor quality of public space; the demand for existing housing saw a steady decline. The multifaceted and challenging social context of the regeneration plans include vast unemployment among the youth and immigrants living in the area, and the area is facing a deteriorating image of its districts.

The Geuzenveld-Slotermeer local council is striving to make the areas attractive again for living, working, recreation and investment, and to create a welcoming entrepreneurial climate. The urban renewal programme therefore focuses on three main issues: physical renewal, social renewal and economic renewal.

### 2.2. The itinerary of the walking tours



The urban area of Geuzenveld-Slotermeer is subdivided into ten districts. The two arrows point out the routes of the two study visits.

### 2.3. Focal points of interest

The PWG participants were shown the following points of interest.

#### *Part I:*

- Project 'De Geuzenbaan': offering an example of urban renewal well under way in district 8 (the welfare centre 'het Pluspunt', the modernised shopping area and public square Lambertus Zijlplein, examples of the water and park theme, art as a way of enhancing the neighbourhood, modern housing, new amenities);
- The 'Bakemabuur' neighbourhood: examples of urban renewal and participation in district 8;
- The Service Point for local residents in districts 6 & 7;
- The newly opened youth project 'De Basizz' in district 8;
- The project 'De Brug': an example of empowering the elderly.

#### *Part II:*

- The construction site of the community school 't Koggeschip in district 9;
- The green area of the 'Eendrachts' park in district 4;
- A meeting with two groups of residents of the Sloterveerhof urban renewal area in district 4: examples of co-production and participation.

### 2.4. Urban renewal - 'De Geuzenbaan' Project

During the first part of the tour, the PWG participants were given an example of urban renewal that is well under way in Geuzenveld-Sloterveer's 8th district. The public space of the 8th district features an abundance of greenery between new buildings.

The Geuzenveld-Sloterveer local council and its main urban planning partner, 'Bureau Parkstad', will jointly take up the renewal of districts 6, 7 and 8 in the years ahead. The Geuzenbaan project is the first part of the renewal plans already well under way. At the heart of the 8th district and the Geuzenbaan project lies the square Lambertus Zijlplein. It has been modernised as part of the integrated urban renewal programme.

In the middle of the square, the tall tower of the new multifunctional accommodation 'Het Pluspunt' attracts much attention. Inside the tower there are a many social amenities for the convenience of residents. Among these are a library, a community centre, an institution offering basic medical advice and referrals ('GG&GD') and a service point for local residents ('Steunpunt voor Leefbaarheid en Veiligheid'). All these facilities are accessible by public transport.



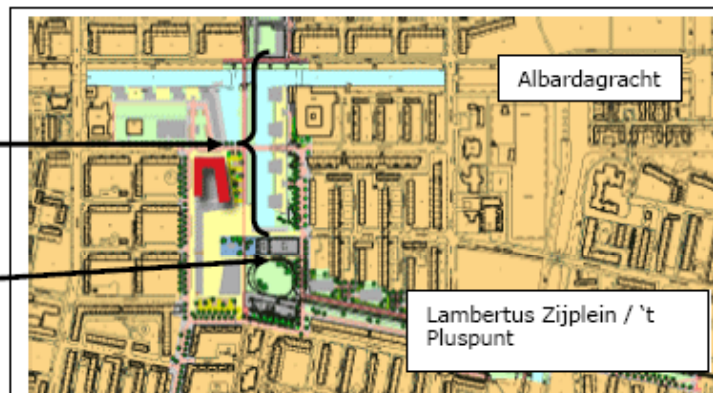
The high rise tower of the social amenities centre 'Het Pluspunt' on the Lambertus Zijlplein; the upper floors are owner-occupied properties.

Throughout the years, a theme of living surrounded by water in a green, verdant environment has pervaded many visions for the renewal of this part of Amsterdam's garden cities ('Westelijke Tuinsteden').

The theme of water, greenery and spacious living can be seen in the layout of a series of new, modern apartment houses built along a newly dug canal that runs north from the Lambertus Zijlplein. For this innovative project, an existing canal that runs west to east, the Albarda Canal ('Albardagracht'), was extended with a tributary that now runs north to south through the 8th district. Many new modern houses have been built along the new canal.

The canal the Albardagracht, that runs in de direction West-East along the northern border of the 8<sup>th</sup> district, was extended. Along the newly dug North-South running tributary of the existing canal, modern housing has been completed.

The innovative project is known as 'De Geuzenbaan'.



Space is reserved in the new neighbourhood to allow for new expressions of art and culture. On 21 September 2004, weeks prior to the PWG visit, a work of art known as the 'Beach Animal' (Animaris Rhinoceros Transport or 'Strandbeest', by the internationally renowned artist Theo Jansen) was unveiled beside the new canal. The 'Beach Animal' is a very versatile object. It has been launched into the water and will now move around when the force of the wind gets behind it.



The work of art 'Beach Animal' relates to the theme of living on the waterfront.

Geuzenbaan is an example of the success of urban renewal. In the past, there was a busy traffic thoroughfare on the very location where the new canal was built. Not only has the traffic been diverted, the residents of the new, modern flats can now enjoy living spaciouly, and are surrounded by pleasant water and a green bank.



New houses on De Geuzenbaan



The Geuzenpoort project

During the PWG visit, Geuzenpoort, yet another combination of housing and neighbourhood amenities, was still under construction on the Lambertus Zijlplein. Above, one can see a computer image of this complex. The planned amenities on the ground floor of this new building will include a general practitioner's surgery (GP) and a supermarket. For more information on Geuzenbaan, see <http://www.degeuzenbaan.nl>.

## 2.5. Participation – the 'Bakemabuur': examples of participation in Geuzenveld-Slotermeer's 8th district

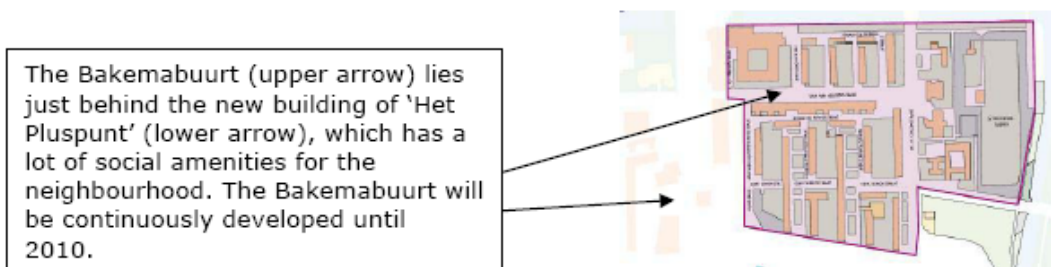
During second leg of the walking tour of the 8th district, Saskia Kaper (project manager renewal Bakemabuur) took the PWG participants through the Bakemabuur neighbourhood that lies directly behind Lambertus Zijlplein. The Bakemabuur is an integral part of the larger area of South Geuzenveld ('Geuzenveld-Zuid'). The participation process of residents who influenced plans for the urban renewal of this neighbourhood can be described as follows.

*Pre 2003:* the first plans for the renewal of the Bakemabuur were articulated in a large renewal draft scheme for Geuzenveld Zuid. Initially, all the 582 houses of the Bakemabuur were destined to be demolished.

2003: after the first plans were rejected, architects were asked to devise ways how parts of the existing housing could be rescued from demolition. Many architects submitted alternative proposals for the Bakemabuurt, and participated in a 'European' prize contest that was set up.

March 2004: the Amsterdam central city council agreed with the revised plans for the regeneration of Geuzenveld South (Geuzenveld Zuid). In summer 2004, weeks prior to the PWG visit, Geuzenveld-Slotermeer local council began drawing up a new implementation plan for the Bakemabuurt. In this second phase of the process, Geuzenveld-Slotermeer local council invited residents of the Bakemabuurt and the adjoining wards to provide input for the revised implementation plans.

15 June-14 July 2005: during this period, the council's executive board finally endorsed a new plan for the Bakemabuurt, and has publicly supported it as a concept. Residents were given the opportunity to cast their final vote, that they now helped co-produce. Only after this final round of participation, will the local council be asked to make a final decision on the Bakema implementation plans. Thus the council will be asked to take the views of the residents into account.



Images above: Saskia Kaper (photo left) leads the PWG participants through the Bakemabuurt and explains the various models for participation and consultation that are followed. The tour went past some sites of houses that are destined for demolition. On the photo on the right, a computer image shows new play areas, some renovated houses and the tall Pluspunt tower in the background.

## 2.6. Participation - the Slotermeehof in Geuzenveld-Slotermeer's 4<sup>th</sup> district: examples of 'co-production' in urban renewal

In part II of the walking tour, the PWG participants were transferred by coach to the 9<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> districts. The goal of this leg of the tour was to introduce PWG participants to a unique form of participation, known as the

model of co-production. In the Sloterveerhof, the participation deal of 'co-production' was explained and demonstrated.

Kees Vissers (project manager urban renewal) introduced PWG participants to Mr. Massink and Mrs. Montijn, who represented two groups of Sloterveerhof residents, each with opposing stakes to defend in this regeneration area.

In co-production with the city district council and the housing corporation, local residents grasped the opportunity to design a new location and type of housing and new public space.

The following co-production story unravelled before the eyes of PWG visitors.

The regeneration plans for the Sloterveerhof included a scheme to demolish existing low-rise social housing and to replace it with high-rise (partly social housing) flats. Directly opposite the low-rise social housing that is destined for demolition there is currently a series of high-rise flats made up of owner-occupied properties. The representative leaders of the low-rise social housing and of the high-rise owner-occupied flats both vehemently opposed the urban renewal plans, but each had their own reasons for doing so.

A resident of the owner-occupied high-rise flats, Mrs. Montijn, explained to the PWG participants why she was against the demolition plans for the low-tier social housing opposite her flat. The residents she represents fear that after demolition they would lose the wide panoramic view they now all enjoy.

After she had made her case, Mr. Massink, a resident of the low-tier social housing, explained to PWG participants why he was against the same regeneration plans. Mr. Massink explained that he had invested a lot in his rented house; he had bought a new kitchen, and has enjoyed living in the Sloterveerhof for years. The group of residents he represents also opposes the regeneration plans, but mainly because they do not want to switch to living in a high-rise flat.

A few years ago, a participation round was held to involve the residents in a fundamental decision-making process about whether or not to go ahead with the renewal plans for the Sloterveerhof. This notwithstanding, residents recently felt confronted with the far-reaching scope and nature of the regeneration plans for their neighbourhood.

Both groups of residents expressed the view that the local district council placed more emphasis on the quantity of new housing rather than on the quality of life and aesthetic appeal of their new neighbourhood.

In earlier participation processes the residents had a say on some issues such as the lay out of a connecting cycle path and some greenery. The bureau Tr3um Advies had been guiding residents through various stages of participation since the summer of 2004. During the afternoon of the PWG



visit, the residents expressed the view that they were still hoping for an even more influential say in the process.

*What happened on the evening the PWG participants left*

On the evening of 28 October 2004, after the PWG participants had left, bureau Tr3um Advies effectively mobilised the groups of Sloterveerhof residents once again. During this special gathering a few more alternative options for regeneration were discussed with the residents.

That night, the residents discussed a new model, whereby some of the low-rise social housing would not be demolished at all. At the end of the evening, both groups of residents agreed upon a new alternative model. During the evening, representatives of the participating housing corporation and the local council promised to make new project calculations based on the residents' latest proposals.

*The co-production process after 28 October 2004*

After the study visit:

- A new participation group was formed from residents' representatives, the housing corporation and the local council;
- The group reached agreement on where the new housing was to be built in the Sloterveerhof, and which of the existing low-tier houses were to remain standing;
- The group agreed that in phase I, 88 new houses will be built, and a group of 11 houses will initially be rescued from demolition;
- In phase II, the remaining 11 low-rise social houses will then be replaced by 12 new low-rise social family homes;
- The maximum height of construction will allow only three to three and a half floors.

The PWG participants were thus witnesses to the final workings of a unique co-production model.

From the legal point of view, this unique co-production model was made possible by a law allowing for such a far-reaching participation deal. This law is known as the *Participation Law of Geuzenveld-Sloterveer* ('Participatie Verordening stadsdeel Geuzenveld-Sloterveer', passed by the district council on 4 November 2003).

Thus, the graded models of increasing forms of participation in Geuzenveld-Sloterveer are:

- *The information model*
- *The consultation model*
- *The co-production model* -> successfully applied in the Sloterveerhof.



Geuzenveld-Slotermeer's 4th district is famous for its green open public space, as here in Eendrachtspark.



The Slotermeehof in its current situation: in the green environment of the 4<sup>th</sup> district.

The PWG coach made a stop at the planned construction site of the new community school 't Koggeschip.

*Photo right:* children gathered during the start of the building of the new school, November 2004.



*Aerial photo (right) and detail drawing (left) of the area of the Slotermeehof that is to be renewed.*



*Images above:* in the latest plans for the Slotermeehof, there are no more high-rise buildings. The maximum construction height is limited to only three to three and a half floors. This is due to a very successful co-production process.

## 2.7. Neighbourhood Management - Visiting a 'Service Point for Neighbourhood Wellbeing and Safety'

During the third leg of the walking tour, the group stopped at one of the service points for residents, called 'Steunpunt voor Leefbaarheid en Veiligheid'. These service points play a pivotal role in the neighbourhood management of Geuzenveld-Slotermeer.

All residents of Geuzenveld-Slotermeer's ten districts are serviced by a service point. Some districts have a service point of their own, while other districts, such as districts 6 and 7, share a service point.

A service point is a co-operation between the local council of Geuzenveld-Slotermeer, the police, social housing corporations and neighbourhood residents. In a service point, there is always a neighbourhood worker/coordinator ('Buurtconciërge'), who is employed by the local council. The idea of a service point is that local residents can go there at any time, whenever they have a question, wish to express any problems or complaints, are seeking information, or want to meet fellow neighbourhood residents to discuss issues.

All in all, there are six service points in Geuzenveld-Slotermeer's ten districts. Each service point has the following tasks:

- to improve the safety and wellbeing of the neighbourhoods at district level;
- to, enable, facilitate and encourage residents to take up shared responsibility to address issues that are important for the area and to solve problems that arise;
- to encourage co-operation between residents on neighbourhood issues;
- to make an inventory of complaints and to pass on the complaints if they are too complicated to solve immediately;
- to provide information to residents on any issues or developments that concern the district;
- professionals of participating parties (the police, the housing corporation, etc.) offer fixed consultation hours, but they all also maintain a low threshold and welcoming policy.



*The service point for districts 6 and 7.*

The employees of a service point confer on a regular basis with the coordinating neighbourhood managers, who work at the local council office, and also with groups of residents (residents' platform), neighbourhood professionals (professional platform), and others. At the service points, conferences and workshops on various themes are frequently held for

residents. Finally, service points provide wide-ranging neighbourhood networking facilities.

## 2.8. Neighbourhood Management - The newly opened youth project 'De Basizz'

During the fourth leg of the walking tour, the PWG participants paid a visit to the newly opened youth project 'De Basizz' (lit. 'base') in Stadsdeel, Geuzenveld-Slotermeer's 8<sup>th</sup> district.

In the Geuzenveld-Slotermeer local council area there are about 5,400 young people between 13 and 23 years old. The Basizz offers a series of activities run from a fixed youth work location. The project runs the following facilities:

- *Skillzfactory* (encouraging young people's talents, via internet access, games, discussions, etc.);
- *Youth press agency* (kids learn how to become a photographer or journalist);
- *Garbage collecting project* (youths help to clean up the neighbourhood and can collect points for excursions);
- *Teenager girls' activities*;
- *Pocket money project* ('Zakgeldproject', kids do temporary tasks/jobs and can earn their own pocket money);
- *Low threshold activities* (rap-workshops, etc.).

Besides these activities that take place at a fixed location, the Stichting Dock foundation organises activities in a mobile youth work setting. The mobile youth work project is housed in a former public transport city bus that has been refurbished as a mobile youth work base that can be driven to any district location.



*Teenage girl at the Basizz*

## 2.9. Neighbourhood Management - the Multicultural 'Living Room' Project, 'De Brug', in Geuzenveld-Slotermeer's 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> districts

During the fifth leg of the walking tour, Ronald van der Steen guided the PWG participants to a project for the elderly run by the foundation 'De Brug' (lit. 'the bridge'). De Brug runs a low threshold centre, where elderly residents can drop by at any time they wish. De Brug organises joint activities for the elderly, and offers cheap, healthy meals in an attempt to combat social isolation.

De Brug's extensive and varied programme includes activities such as:

- *a games afternoon* (playing rummykub, clay moulding);
- *a bereavement group* (sharing the loss of a deceased partner, relative or friend);
- *a reminiscence project* ('growing old with the war');
- *a theme group on 'war children'*;
- *Dutch language skills lessons* (for members of the Turkish and Moroccan communities);
- *an 'Indische middag'* (an afternoon especially for the relatively large group of residents from the former Dutch colony of Indonesia that settled in the Geuzenveld-Slotermeer area in the late fifties, and who share community values. The participants come together to chat, make music and eat).

Finally, our host at De Brug explained the new 'Dubbelklik' ('Double Click') project to PWG participants.

Dubbel Klik is a project run by the Geuzenveld-Slotermeer local council and De Brug. In the project, the elderly attend computer lessons and learn how to publish stories on a website, named 'The Memory of (Amsterdam) West' ('Het Geheugen van West'). The website is like a historical bulletin that provides a documentary insight into the past 50 years in Geuzenveld-Slotermeer. For more information, see <http://www.geheugenvanwest.nl>.

The project Double Click is also accessible to younger residents who wish to build up computer experience to prepare themselves for a job. Volunteer reporters and teachers contribute to the project.

The project has been funded, among other sources, by a Microsoft grant (who gave the computers). In 2004 more than 160 residents completed a Double Click course. In May 2003 Prinses Maxima of the House of Orange presented De Brug with the prestigious 'Apple of Orange' award. This prize is presented annually to an institution that has taken up initiatives in the area of welfare and social cohesion.

The building that houses the social cohesion project De Brug in Goemen Borgesiosstraat



## **2.10. Learning points of the two Poseidon study visits on 28 October 2004**

There were many learning points from the walking tours through the districts of Geuzenveld-Slotermeer.

They included:

- PWG participants noticed that the area looked cared for, was clean and there was no graffiti. Although the group visited some construction sites, they noticed the presence of amenities even during the process of renovation. This fits with the ambition to keep the area safe and socially well serviced while construction is taking place (social concerns are a priority during the renewal, the idea is to build first, and demolish later, if possible);
- The group noted the graded and far-reaching interactive methods of participation in Geuzenveld-Slotermeer. PWG participants were particularly impressed with the progressive character of the co-production model;
- Neighbourhood management in the Geuzenveld-Slotermeer area drew attention. Key players in neighbourhood management are the neighbourhood managers, the neighbourhood co-ordinators ('concierges') and their assistants in the districts who maintain ongoing interaction with residents at the Service Points in each district;
- While building, it is important to acknowledge the needs of different target groups and to adjust approaches accordingly (as demonstrated by the teenager project 'De Basizz', the elderly project 'De Brug', the varied needs of house owners and social housing residents in the Sloterveerhof, etc.);
- Public space is of vital importance to residents, and attempts are being made to enhance it for the convenience of residents (through art work - 'Beach Animal', through cycle paths, low threshold amenities such as a library, a doctor's surgery nearby, public transport, etc.);
- The PWG enthusiastically embraced the idea of involving groups of residents in planned PWGs in other Poseidon cities.

# WOLKE 7

## 3. Study visit to the pilot project Wolke 7 - Vienna

### 3.1. Addressing the media and local stakeholders

At the very beginning of the study visit POSEIDON project partners addressed the media with an inter-regional press conference. The first part focused on a general presentation of the aims and activities of the POSEIDON project and the project structure. Dr. Wolfgang Förster, the representative of the lead partner, highlighted the importance of POSEIDON for improving the gentle urban renewal strategy in Vienna. Thomas Blimlinger, the mayor of the district, focused on the pilot project WOLKE 7 as an important measure for improving the situation in the shopping street "Kaiserstraße". Dr. Kurt Stürzenbecher focused on the need for improving deprived neighbourhoods to minimise segregation within the city and to improve social cohesion. Susanne Peutl, the POSEIDON project coordinator, presented the European perspective of the project in general, the structure and past and future project activities.

The second part of the press conference was organised as a 'bazaar' where all the POSEIDON partners presented their urban renewal strategies and their pilot projects at several information stands. Beside local media, a number of local stakeholders from Viennese administrative organisations (housing department, local agenda 21, area renewal office, economic development, European affairs, integration department etc.) were present.



Presentation of the project by Wolfgang Förster, Kurt Stürzenbecher, Thomas Blimlinger and Susanne Peutl



Information stand at the market place

### 3.2. Description of the target area

The target area of the pilot project is Kaiserstraße, situated in the western part of Vienna's 7<sup>th</sup> district (Wien-Neubau). The street, built at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, is on the border between the former suburb Neubau (incorporated into Vienna in 1850) and neighbouring areas which form today's 15<sup>th</sup> district. Kaiserstraße marks a border between the 7<sup>th</sup> district

Neubau, characterised by its art and cultural activities, and the connecting extra-urban 15<sup>th</sup> district, Rudolfsheim-Fünfhaus.

Kaiserstraße is one of the longest intra-urban city street blocks (1,6 km) in the 7<sup>th</sup> district, thus forming the traditional heart of the so called Schottenfeld. The street is characterised by a straight and narrow cross-section (made more noticeable because of tramline No. 5) and an impressive topography.



Aerial photograph of Kaiserstraße in the 7<sup>th</sup> district of Vienna

### 3.3. The current socio-economic situation of the street

There have been negative developments in recent years which have affected the economic situation of the entire area as well as the quality of life in the neighbourhood. As in other business streets and commercial districts the disappearance of small and medium-sized enterprises has become evident as they move to more profitable locations, leading to an increase in empty business premises.



Kaiserstraße



One of the many closed shops

The more popular shopping streets and newly-constructed shopping centres are attracting more and more spending power. The first and most negative effect for Kaiserstraße is that retail premises and other small service sector businesses are abandoned and remain empty. The deserted appearance of such premises has a devastating effect on identity, living quality and well-being of residents. The result is a tarnished image and a growing decrease in economic attractiveness and quality of life.



As problematic as this current situation may seem, it contains an essential chance for socio-economic restructuring. As its point of departure the pilot project WOLKE 7 uses integral strategies and sustainable approaches and methods. Possible solutions are found through participation, giving new impetus by means of activities in collaboration with residents, numerous network-partners and public as well as private sponsors. Kaiserstraße and its neighbouring areas could benefit substantially from these integral and sustainable solution strategies.

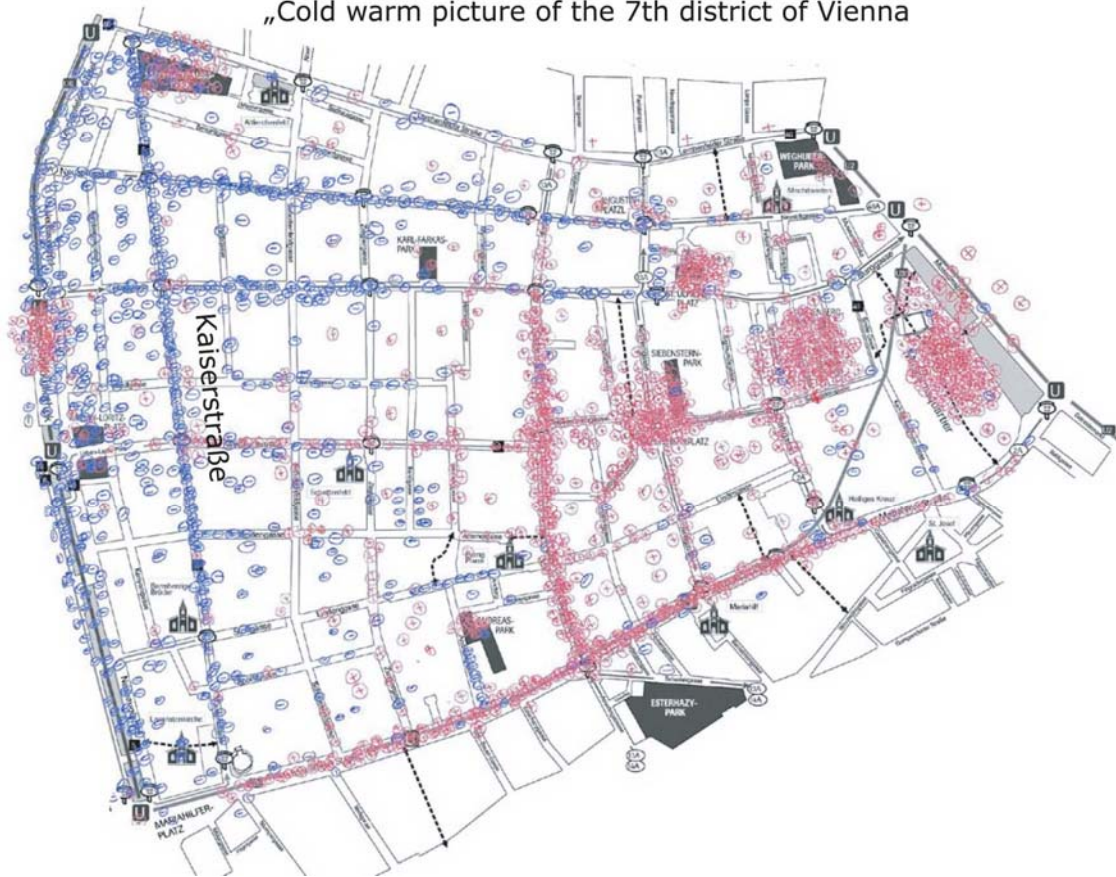
#### **3.4. The guided tours in the area using the 'cold-warm picture' method**

At the very beginning of the guided tours to the pilot project WOLKE 7 (CLOUD 7) target area a member of the WOLKE project team, explained a method used by WOLKE 7 which could be called a 'cold-warm picture' of the target area.

The aim of the method is to analyse and define the target area in terms of enjoyable and unpleasant zones. This analysis serves as a starting point for the project since it provides a framework for the project's interventions and activities and offers an overview of the endogenous potential of the area. The cold-warm picture of the district and the target area of the project - as a part of the district - was the result of a district-wide survey undertaken by actors of the project team on behalf of the district mayor during summer 2004. The residents of the district were asked to mark the enjoyable and unpleasant zones and areas on a district map. Enjoyable zones were indicated as 'red zones' (the warm ones), unpleasant zones as 'blue zones' (the cold ones). One result of the survey was that Kaiserstraße, the target zone of the WOLKE 7 project, was mainly regarded as a blue zone by the residents of the district, indicating the need for interventions to improve the area.

This method was picked up again by the project team for the study visit. Firstly, the existing cold-warm picture of the area was used to provide partners with an overview of the existing problems and shortcomings of Kaiserstraße as well as to give partners an idea of the street's 'hot-spots' and the potential for further development and improvement of the area. Secondly, both cold and warm zones are terms of reference for the project team, so POSEIDON partners got an idea of the WOLKE 7 project's range of activities. In a nutshell: the WOLKE 7 project team's activities are intended to warm the blue zones and make them red.

„Cold warm picture of the 7th district of Vienna



In order to define the differences within the area and the ambivalent situation of the shopping street in terms of socio-economic and cultural activities, the project team organised two separate guided tours for the partners. One group only visited the area's 'cold' zones and the other the 'warm' zones. In addition, the two groups (about 20 people per group) were given red or blue eyeglasses like 3D glasses. Wearing the glasses was a symbolic element intended to indicate that the impression of an area greatly depends which kind of 'eyeglasses' the visitor is wearing – i.e. visitor's perception and 'mental filters', as one visitor may see only what is pleasant while another sees only the unpleasant things. Thus, the impression of an area not only depends on the objective situation but also on the visitor's individual perception.<sup>1</sup>

The project team selected four spots symbolising four problem fields for the 'cold' group's visits. As stated by the project team, these problem fields are not sufficiently noticed by the public and can be regarded as outside the mainstream. These were:

- small enterprises that are threatened in their economic existence because of purchasing power moving away (e.g. to shopping centres and a more important and attractive shopping street near Kaiserstraße),

<sup>1</sup> The socio-economic situation of the visitor also plays a role here. For instance, the local monastery with its soup kitchen would probably be regarded as a 'warm spot' by homeless people but rather a 'cold' one by well-to-do people in the area.

- aggravated rental agreements (significantly increased rents), problems with landlords and other problems;
- problematic handling of 'space', such as the creation of isolated and narrow spaces and neighbourhoods, half-hearted architecture etc.;
  - deprived, socially isolated and anonymous people (local monastery offering free soup for the homeless, the poor and ill people);
  - vacant ground floor shops in the street and run down public spaces (unattractive ground floors of buildings, jam of parked cars and a lack of resting-spaces for pedestrians).

WOLKE 7 has developed and is developing solutions for giving positive impulses for these problems such as:

- cultural activities in closed shops;
- local discussions about the condition of the Kaiserstraße shopping street as well as to prioritise public transport in the street (e.g. shuttle line 5);
- local communication: website, wolkofon (the project's mobile phone), project letter box;
- creating networks within the neighbourhood and decreasing communication barriers (festivities in backyards, bridges between backyards allowing movement between them and enabling people to communicate much better);
- creating networks with the local stakeholders (e.g. neighbourhood centre, house for pensioners, local area renewal offices, local agenda 21 and many others);
- local forums with landlords, shopkeepers, residents and other stakeholders;
- strengthening of the creative industries sector (e.g. multimedia, design, digital business etc.) in the street;
- building identity by highlighting the history of the area - perhaps also as a starting point for future developments by compiling an archive of stories about the area and the people living there.

The 'warm-group' visited four 'red' zones with positive characteristics. These were:

- well established neighbourhood structures in a block of flats around Kaiserstraße 30 and the cooperative structures between the residents of the different buildings of this block;
- prosperous shops in the street that are mainly specialised with a Vienna-wide reputation and partly unique selling positions;
- closed shops that are now used for temporary cultural activities (e.g. murmel comics);
- new buildings with high architectural standards and socially-oriented elements.

The impressions and the content of the guided tours were also discussed during the workshops after the study visits. Communication with members of the other group gave the partners an impression of the multi-layered and complex situation of Kaiserstraße and the local situation as a whole. The partners also discussed and criticised WOLKE 7's 'cold-warm picture'

method. The WOLKE 7 project team stated that the 'cold-warm picture' method also represents the working approach of the POSEIDON project as a whole. POSEIDON's aim and approach is also to leave behind the national, regional, technical and single-issue approaches of urban renewal and community development and to reach a multi-dimensional and integrative perspective – which may sometimes be ambivalent but always productive – and to set up an international Europe-wide exchange of experiences in the field of neighbourhood management.

## 4. Study visit to the pilot project ANKER 10 - Vienna

The first part of the study visit to the area of the Viennese pilot project ANKER 10 was a guided round-tour through the project area. The aim of the tour was to give the international delegation an intuitive impression of the state of repair of the target area and a general impression of the situation in the area.

### 4.1. Pilot project area

The target area of the pilot project is situated in the northern part of Vienna's 10th district. The area has a particular location in the 10<sup>th</sup> district: there are a number of "Gründerzeit" neighbourhoods (period of promoterism; Wilhelminian style), other public housing estates and a large local recreation area not far away. Additionally, the area is influenced by large urban planning projects in the surrounding neighbourhoods. The housing estate may be regarded as a prototype of a council housing area with a local mix of unfavourable as well as favourable structures and factors. It is characterised by many open spaces, relatively large flats and small retail suppliers. There are about 800 apartments and 2,500 residents living on the estate.

The local situation in the council housing area is characterised by numerous conflicts of interest between the various residents' groups living very close to each other (e.g. elderly – youngsters; people with migrational background and 'indigenous Austrians'). There is a need for living space for young people (e.g. playgrounds) and a need for peaceful and quiet places the elderly.



The area in the 10th district



Discussions during the walk through the area



Two views of the council housing estate

#### 4.2. Addressing the media

The second part of the study visit contributed to public relations for the pilot project by addressing local media. The major of the district and the project team presented the project in terms of aims, process structure (see below – the working approach) and the way “ANKER 10” is embedded in the POSEIDON project and its interregional activities.



Addressing the media and presentation of the project

#### 4.3. Discussion with local politicians and a concierge from the council housing estate

The third part of the study visit focused on giving the international delegation a deeper insight into the situation of the area in terms of existing social and/or inter-cultural conflicts and local communication structures.

The concierge of the public housing estate highlighted existing inter-cultural tensions between estate residents. In the concierge's view these tensions arise because of a the influx of a growing number of people with migrational background who speak poor German. This view is supported by the fact that the local kindergarten is mainly attended by children from these families. There are also growing conflicts in the play areas in the area. It seems that these arise because of different habits of use of public space resulting in residents without a migrational background complaining about noise in the evening.



Discussion with local politicians and the concierge of the area

The following aspects of the situation in the area were identified:

- conflicts of interest between the various groups of residents;
- a broad range of prejudices between different groups of residents;
- a lack of properly equipped and accessible public areas;
- low qualification, especially of the young residents;
- a lack of leisure time opportunities and meeting points in public space for younger residents.

#### 4.4. Video Report and Performance of 'Hofrat Abseits'

'Hofrat Abseits' ('aloof counsellor) is an artistic character created by Thomas Wackerlig who performed during the study visit to the target area. 'Hofrat Abseits' is part of the pilot project's outreach, involvement and information-gathering approach. The character symbolises a counsellor who has left his office to make contact with local residents to get a better overview of the situation in the area.

By means of "Hofrat Abseits", who moves around the area with a video-camera, residents of the area were animated to speak out and explain their views and perceptions of the area. This approach aims to involve hard to reach residents using ordinary involvement techniques. The interviews will be made into a video clip (about 20 minutes) to be shown at community events as a starting point for discussions. The film will give an overview of the residents' very different and ambivalent perceptions and views of the area.

The international delegation was interviewed by the Hofrat and was asked about their impressions of the area (What do you like? – What don't you like? How would you improve the area?) These interviews will be part of the film about the area which will be shown and discussed at further local community meetings.



The performance of 'Hofrat Abseits'

#### 4.5. **The working approach of ANKER 10**

The last part of the study visit was a presentation of the working approach and methods and techniques used by the project, followed by a discussion with the international delegation.

ANKER 10's approach aims to:

- improve residents' living conditions;
- support empowerment processes which lead people to see that they can influence their environment;
- give incentives and support for a process of establishing and fostering sustainable communication structures;
- activate residents towards increasing personal autonomy.

From a methodological point of view the ANKER 10 project is strongly process-oriented and mainly focuses on bottom-up initiatives that will be supported by the project team, which assumes an intermediate position between the involved actors.

#### 4.6. **The working steps of the project team**

As a first step the project team conducted a series of expert interviews with people from institutions working in the area (e.g. kindergarten, council housing corporation etc.) in order to get a preliminary view of the situation.

The interviews focussed on the following questions:

- What is your perception of the area? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the area?
- What are the conflict fields in the area?
- What should be changed? What should be implemented?
- What are the chances of cooperation with the institutions they are working for?

As a second step the project team conducted a series of interviews with housing estate stakeholders (e.g. concierges). They were asked about their perception of the area and what should be changed or maintained. In order to determine local networks, stakeholders were asked about important



persons in the field, contacts and existing networks around which the project team could set up local activities. This led to the identification of existing local networks that can be regarded as the area's endogenous communication potential.

As a third step, ANKER 10 started talks with the area's residents, who were asked similar questions (their perception of the area, their experience with the problems they describe, their ideas for changes, other people with similar perceptions, contacts in the area, existing networks and initiative groups).

The talks with the residents were carried out with the following attitudes:

- acceptance of people's opinions and interests;
- not intentional: the project team did not direct, conduct or guide the talks;
- curiosity: the team wanted to hear the details behind generalised statements;
- esteem for the person: empathy, non-judgemental;
- activating: the team did not suggest solutions, it asked residents about their ideas, visions, solutions; they are the experts in their direct environment!

Based on the interviews the project team elaborated the following SWOT analysis which serves as an important tool for the next steps of the process:

- strengths: there are powerful local networks; there is cooperation with local institutions; local stakeholders organise regular festivities in the area;
- weaknesses: negative sentiments about the future of the area; there are no residents' representatives; no local facilities for young people; a lack of mutual understanding between different (ethnic) groups; garbage all around;
- opportunities: there is an unused area nearby; reduction of negative prejudices via detailed information and arranging opportunities for face to face talks seems to be within reach;
- threats: strong feeling of being left alone by the authorities; migrants moving in; Austrian inhabitants moving out; concierge will not be replaced.

The next steps of the project team will be:

- to support and monitor existing networks;
- to support residents in founding new initiative groups;
- to support a process of clarification of interests
  - intrapersonal: what is the real interest? What is behind the residents' concerns?
  - interpersonal: diverging interests.

The partners' impressions of the study visit also influenced the afternoon discussion in the workshops that are documented in the relevant sections of the report.