

Observatory Case update

Navy Yard, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

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The Navy Yard Amsterdam

Built in 1655, **The Navy Yard Amsterdam (Marineterrein)** is a 13-hectare historic area close to the Central Station in Amsterdam. The Navy Yard functioned as an area for constructing warfare ships for the Dutch East India Company. Due to its military character, the navy base has been sealed off from the rest of the city for 350 years. In 2013, the Municipality of Amsterdam and the Dutch government collaborated to carry out a development strategy of the Marineterrein led by the historical importance of the area aiming to create long-term value for the city and the country. In 2015, the government started the official development of the site, gradually opening it to the public as a new city quarter. Today, the Navy Yard is home to many innovative companies in various fields of media, sustainability, technology, and social development. <https://www.marineterrein.nl/>

The COVID-19 pandemic was a challenging time for the Navy Yard. The Marineterrein building was offered as a testing facility and a vaccination center, but eventually, it was unnecessary as the municipality found other places. The Navy Yard programming was heavily affected, and most projects had to be stopped entirely. The collective hosts a large community of 40 companies. Many of these companies faced difficulties paying rent during COVID. Nevertheless, the Marineterrein identified the needs of the community members, and they found collectively ways to help them during these difficult times. Everything moved online in the harsh periods of the pandemic, which took Marineterrein some time adjusting to the digital tools and figuring out what works best in their context.

Specifically, with the pandemic restrictions, the indoor gyms had to be closed, and only the outdoor gym was working. But soon it had to be closed as well. After a couple of months, when everything was remained closed, the Navy Yard decided to open the outdoor area and implement a project to test if people would still desire to work out if there were rules. With a light installation, which turned red if people came to close, they managed to comply with the social distancing rules. Another awareness campaign made use of circles to be put on the grass around the participants to signal the minimum distance from each other.

With the end of lockdown, the Navy Yard started carrying out projects again, but still had limited access and a limited number of people. They hosted only events with maximum 40 participants in the past two years. After the lockdown, the engagement of Marineterrein's with community work was rewarded with increased interest from the citizens. The organization could diversify their activities and comply with the rules, which allowed a variation of age groups with diverse interests instead of a finite group.