



## Reflections on Covid & our Pilot case St-Joseph church

As most of you know, we had planned to launch our open call for the church in spring 2020.

After the launch, we were going to make site visits with the interested parties, we were going to organize meetings with the neighbourhood organizations and the candidates, we were looking at how we were going to compose the jury - and we definitely wanted the people from our ULG to play a role in it.

**Unfortunately Covid-19 came** and we had to deal with two problems:

1. the impossibility of organizing live meetings
2. financial uncertainty

### **1. the impossibility of organizing live meetings.**

In this colourful neighbourhood, the Rabot, with all its diversity and several hard-to-reach groups, working with zoom or other online meetings is impossible. You need to be able to speak to people in person, at the door, on the street, or at events where they are gathering. This was impossible, even forbidden, during the lockdown.

By the way, people also had other things on their minds. People got sick, lost their jobs, children could not go to school. It would bear witness to an enormous strangeness to the world that we, as civil servants, would suddenly wave an open call for the use of the church...

Other things had priority, also in our job: good communication about the covid-measures, food supply, providing laptops for school-age youth etc.

### **2. financial uncertainty**

During covid, the entire citybudget was “frozen”, so we didn’t know if our original budget could stand or go on. We had to wait till September... Now the budget is fixed once again and we are now able to go on. We were able to discuss more of the legal issues, but we weren’t able to receive feedback from the commoners/citizens. We weren’t sure what we had to offer, so it was difficult to hold discussions with citizens.

All this made it impossible to launch the open call in spring 2020. But we didn't let our heads down. Pending the process of the launch of the open call, we are going to put the church in a city tool called “room finder”. It means that up to 12 times a year, citizens will be able to use the church. A perk of using this tool is that the insurance issue is covered. The call is almost finished being written, by November it should be finished and also translated into English.

In springtime 2021, we will launch the open call for a manager in the neighbourhood – except if covid throws a spanner in the works again...



## **Transfer** Diary – Eleke Langerlaert – October 2020



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