

# **Air for Schools**

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## **What is it all about?**

Air for Schools brings together parents, pupils, and school principals to draw the plans for twenty school environments that focus on more public space and a different kind of mobility. The insights are passed on to more than a hundred schools: everywhere at the same time, we are contributing to an environment with better air quality.

## **More**

In Flanders and Brussels, there is a heated debate about air pollution near schools. An apparently abstract environmental problem suddenly becomes very concrete when it comes to the health of our children. Everywhere in the country, worried parents take action at the school gates. The energy exerted here forms leverage to take a new look at the school environment with the network of schools, children, parents and designers, and by extension, about the urban mobility issue. The transformation starts, but is not limited to the scale of the school or the street in front of it. By making way for pedestrians, bicycle traffic and public transport in the school environment, car traffic becomes less

dominant. When we succeed in transforming a lot of school environments simultaneously, we also prepare our cities for a new kind of mobility.

We link the network of active parents (in almost 100 schools now) to design and imagination. Through a call, we map different types of school environments, each with their opportunities and challenges. Based on this, we select some 20 locations that will serve as a test case for research through design. This takes place in working sessions with parents and designers, which are then developed further in various architecture courses in the autumn. We address policy makers directly to really seize the opportunities for improving mobility, public space and air quality. We are developing and designing an approach for a viral transformation of many school environments at the same time in preparation to launch a program operation to support and finance this transformation at a Flemish level.

# Call for action: Air for Schools

## A call on parents, students and school management who want to transform their school environment to facilitate a better public space, mobility and air quality.

### What is it all About?\

In Flanders and Brussels, there is a heated debate about air pollution near schools. An apparently abstract environmental problem suddenly becomes very concrete when it comes to the health of our children. Everywhere in the country, worried parents take action at the school gates. The energy exerted here forms leverage to take a new look at the school environment with the network of schools, children, parents and designers, and by extension, about the urban mobility issue. The transformation starts, but is not limited to the scale of the school or the street in front of it. By making way for pedestrians, bicycle traffic and public transport in the school environment, car traffic becomes less dominant. When we succeed in transforming a lot of school environments simultaneously, we also prepare our cities for a new kind of mobility, and thus cleaner air.

### What is on Offer?

#### **Step 1, Selection of 20 school environments (15/06)**

The school environments will be chosen based on the specific problems they are encountering, and the opportunities they offer. The task is exceptionally complex and diverse: we want to map it and get to the bottom of it.

#### **Step 2, Investigative route (23/06 – 22/09)**

Every school will be guided and supported to achieve concrete proposals by designers and (mobility) experts. Through workshops, we will be working on many school environments simultaneously. That will provide tangible separate results for each school: reference examples, schedules, concepts and provisional plans.

We will publish the results of this exploratory phase during the Mobility week (16 – 22 September). We will make use of this public momentum for a debate with politicians. The 20 examined school environments offer the burden of proof.

#### **Step 3 Research through design (23/9 – 11/11)**

In a follow-up phase, we will zoom in deeper on each school environment individually. Students from different architectural courses are dedicated to the various locations. This way, we can test multiple scenarios per school environment. The wishes and requirements of school boards, parents and children, but also of local and regional authorities are taken into consideration through workshops and debates.

“Air for schools” is one of the sixteen work processes that are part of the workplace of the 23rd floor of You Are Here, the Brussels exhibition and program that takes place in the framework of IABR – 20181+2020 – THE MISSING LINK in the WTC 1-Tower. For more than five months, hundreds of actors are working here on concrete breakthroughs for urgent tasks supported by experts and designers. The exhibition translates abstract goals into structural transformations on the premises, ranging from the small scale of Noordwijk to the large scale of our Euro delta.

A work process in the context of You Are Here, set up through the partnership between Filter Café Filtré, Tetra architects and Architecture Workroom Brussels.

#### **Step 4: Program (7 – 9/11)**

We draw lessons and formulate concrete directives for each “type” of school environment. Thus, we develop a methodology to address the (air) quality around school environments structurally, in multiple places at once. We provide a series of developed pilot projects and the preparation to scale this up according to the policy.

#### **What is expected?**

- A brief description of the context that makes the (air) quality or challenge of the school environment unique.
- Mention of the active players involved: the (start of) a coalition
- The own expectations of the accompanying route, in the short and long term

**Send your answer to [youarehere@architectureworkroom.eu](mailto:youarehere@architectureworkroom.eu) to participate, before 15 June. We will inform each registered school of the selection no later than 20 June.**

**The first workshop will take place on Saturday 23 June in the exhibition You Are Here on the 23rd floor of the WTC 1-Tower in Brussels. Book this in your agenda already! The other dates are indicative, and may still change in the course of the further development of the work process.**

**We look forward to every submission!**