

will become clear quite late in the game. Over the last twenty years, many organizations have discovered the value of these inquiries, and the Young Designers foundation has become well established within the Dutch cultural landscape.

In comparison, the practices of the Designing Out Crime center are much more prestructured, time-restrained, and goal-directed. Yet the DOC projects also radically break away from conventional problem-solving practices in their own manner. The starting point is often different, in that many projects the DOC center has taken on are “old” problems, problems that the partner organizations have already been trying to deal with for a very long time, but that have proven impervious to their conventional problem-solving strategies. Prevalent problem-solving strategies in the area of safety and security are very much focused on the creation of countermeasures, through erecting defenses (putting up fences), introducing CCTV camera systems, and resorting to strong-arm tactics to force people’s behavior away from unwanted (illegal or otherwise), unfortunate patterns. Efforts in crime prevention have led to a subfield within criminology, crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED), which sets design principles for public places to make them less amenable to criminal activity. These principles generally make sense, but as is often the case with conventional problem-solving, they suffer from the twin sins of oversimplification and overgeneralization. In its projects, the Designing Out Crime center is careful to avoid this mistake and to look very broadly at the problem and develop situated solutions. A key strategy in the Designing Out Crime center is to focus on designing to facilitate behavior that we want more of, instead of focusing on the negative. Intensifying the good use of public spaces will crowd out their misuse (see case 8, the entertainment district example, above).

While the practices of the Designing Out Crime center are much more structured and methodical than the approach of the Young Designers foundation, they embody many of the same principles. The key common thread through all the projects is that the complexity of the problem and context are embraced as the inspiration for revolutionary solutions. The six case studies in this chapter show the strength and possibilities that a designer’s approach can bring to a wide variety of problems. We can also see that the initial questions formulated by the commissioning parties are a direct result of their earlier problem-solving attempts—and that these questions are almost always aimed at symptoms, rather than core problems. Reframing these questions is the key to achieving innovative solutions.