

## The connection built in Ghana is very strong and has a trade-off for the entire organization



Port of Amsterdam

**The Port of Amsterdam is the third largest economic driving force that keeps the Amsterdam municipality afloat. Being a small professional organization, the Port of Amsterdam is at the heart of the larger port community. In 2007, a management development program started to strengthen the bonds between all the different domains. A leadership team experience with Better Future was a successful experiment in this endeavour.**

A major challenge in an organization with such diversity of professional fields is co-operation. An important condition for co-operation is efficient communication: it is difficult to solve a business case when you don't know who to talk to, don't know your co-workers, and have little clue what it is they do. For this

reason the Port of Amsterdam set out to connect the twenty five people in middle management by way of a comprehensive management development track.

Several measures were set in motion. Lectures and workshops were held to learn about each other's work field, and a new interior design for the office is under construction to create an open work space in which communication is made easy. The former director Hans Gerson heard through his network how effective a leadership experience with Better Future can be. Not sure if this would fit a municipal service, he and his management team decided the change of scenery could really accelerate the kind of change they were looking for.



# Amsterdam

shipping goods, building connections

Ghana as a destination was evident: many inhabitants of Amsterdam came from this West African country. And working with Concern Universal ([www.concernuniversal.org](http://www.concernuniversal.org)) on water projects tied in beautifully with the city's focus in development aid: sharing knowledge and expertise in water management.

Hans: "Seven of our middle management people went to Ghana in November 2008. In my point of view it was a two way development project for both the local community and ourselves. We are very pleased with the impact it had. Our managers have made essential steps in their personal growth and effective leadership. The connection built in Ghana is very strong and has a trade-off for the entire organization."

Koen Overtoom participated in this first team experience. "This journey made a big difference for me and for my co-workers. It gave me a sense of pride that we were able to make a real difference locally. My insight in my own performance has increased and made me more confident and relaxed. The openness and appreciation towards each other is better than ever, and the co-operation benefits from the mutual trust. We've made plans for a second journey in 2010 for which several of our clients signed up eagerly. A wonderful development, it will strengthen the connections on the inside and the outside."