# Social impact strategies for Dutch priority neighborhoods.

**A developer perspective.**

P5
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# Colophon

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# Colophon

# Abstract

This research explores the role of developers in creating social impact within Dutch priority neighborhoods, where socioeconomic challenges such as poverty, unemployment, and inadequate housing compromise the quality of life. It investigates how private entities can align their social ambitions with social impact strategies to enhance livability and address social issues. Employing a qualitative methodology, the study integrates a literature review, multiple-case studies, semi-structured interviews, and an expert panel to develop a comprehensive framework for social impact strategies.

The findings emphasize the importance of collaboration between developers, housing associations, and municipalities in achieving meaningful social outcomes. Case studies from Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten, Van Deysselbuurt, and Van Meekeren neighborhoods illustrate strategies that foster social cohesion, enhance physical environments, and improve community amenities while addressing housing and sustainability challenges. Building safer, more inclusive neighborhoods requires integrated public space and social infrastructure investments, long-term commitment of the developer, and collaboration among stakeholders. Investments in public spaces and social initiatives strengthen communities, while effective relocation management minimizes disruption. Trust-building, resident participation, and collaborative frameworks are key to creating vibrant, resilient neighborhoods with lasting benefits.

Developers bring essential resources and expertise that housing associations and the government often lack, enabling improvements in housing quality and affordability, stimulating local economies, and fostering community cohesion and diversity. Recognizing their role in sustainable urban redevelopment can enhance community well-being and economic sustainability.

**Key words** – Social impact strategies, Developers, Livability, Priority neighborhoods.

# Executive summary

## Introduction

Urban sustainability challenges, including neighborhood deterioration, traffic congestion, socioeconomic deprivation, and health disparities, are increasingly urgent in European cities. In Dutch cities, certain districts face compounded issues like unemployment, poverty, and inadequate housing, threatening livability and safety. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive interventions and significant investments. Post-WWII neighborhoods designated as "priority neighborhoods" suffer from inadequate housing and infrastructure, further exacerbated by the housing crisis. Stakeholders recognize the need for action but face barriers to rapid implementation. Social segregation and instability across Europe emphasize the need for inclusive, resilient, and sustainable urban policies. Private developers and businesses increasingly play a vital role in urban development, incorporating sustainability and social responsibility into their practices. The Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) has heightened accountability for companies in reporting environmental and social impacts. Shared Value Creation (SVC) highlights the interdependence of businesses and communities, urging companies to enhance competitiveness while improving societal conditions. Social enterprises also focus on setting and achieving societal impact goals, demonstrating the potential for sustainable development.

## Problem Statement

Despite the recognition of livability's importance, housing associations primarily focus on property management, neglecting broader neighborhood improvements. Market parties rarely engage in urban redevelopment, while stakeholders often lack consensus on strategies. Collaboration among government entities, housing associations, market players, and community groups remains suboptimal, complicating revitalization efforts. Enhancing social impact and fostering better cooperation are essential for improving Dutch priority neighborhoods.

## Relevance

**Societal**: Developers possess resources and expertise to address socioeconomic challenges, improve housing, and foster community cohesion in disadvantaged neighborhoods.
**Scientific**: This topic intersects urban planning, sociology, and economics, offering opportunities for research into sustainable urban redevelopment strategies.
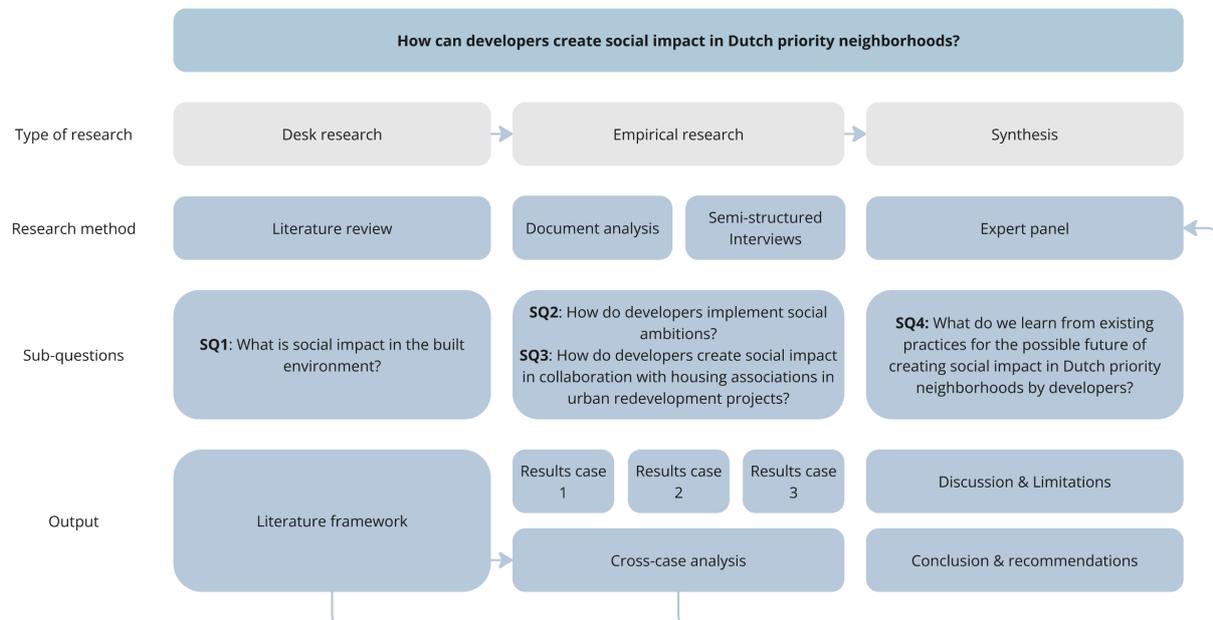
## Research Question

**Main Question**: How can developers create social impact in Dutch priority neighborhoods?

**Sub-questions**:
1. What is social impact in the built environment?
2. How do developers implement social ambitions?
3. How do developers create social impact in collaboration with housing associations?
4. What lessons can be learned from existing practices for future social impact creation?

## Methodology

The research employs a qualitative approach segmented into three phases: **desk research**, **empirical research**, and **synthesis**. This structured methodology addresses the main research question through literature review, case studies, interviews, and expert panel discussions.

| | How can developers create social impact in Dutch priority neighborhoods? | | |
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| **Type of research** | Desk research | Empirical research | Synthesis |
| **Research method** | Literature review | Document analysis / Semi-structured Interviews | Expert panel |
| **Sub-questions** | **SQ1**: What is social impact in the built environment? | **SQ2**: How do developers implement social ambitions? **SQ3**: How do developers create social impact in collaboration with housing associations in urban redevelopment projects? | **SQ4:** What do we learn from existing practices for the possible future of creating social impact in Dutch priority neighborhoods by developers? |
| **Output** | Literature framework | Results case 1 / Results case 2 / Results case 3 / Cross-case analysis | Discussion & Limitations / Conclusion & recommendations |

## Type of Research

A qualitative methodology is used to explore complex phenomena and understand the experiences, attitudes, and behaviors of stakeholders involved in urban redevelopment and social impact strategies.

## Research Methods

### Desk Research

A **literature review** establishes the foundational understanding of social impact and strategies, forming an analytical framework for subsequent empirical research.

### Empirical Research

**Multiple-Case Study**: Three Dutch urban redevelopment projects involving developers and housing associations are analyzed using document analysis, semi-structured interviews, and cross-case analysis.

- Document Analysis: Extracts insights from project documents like strategies and business cases.
- Semi-Structured Interviews: Involves developers, housing association representatives, municipal representatives, and social impact managers to explore how developers implement social ambitions and create social impact.
- Cross-Case Analysis: Compares cases to identify patterns and strategies, producing insights on collaboration for social impact.

**Expert Panel**: Findings from the cross-case analysis are tested with experts, including constructing and investing developers, an academic researcher, and a social mediator. The panel evaluates and refines strategies for practical application in Dutch priority neighborhoods.

## Desk research

### Impact Thinking
Impact refers to the ultimate net value or societal changes (economic, environmental, and social) caused by corporate actions. The impact value chain links actions to societal consequences through five steps: Input, Activities, Output, Outcome, and Impact.

### Impact Measurement Methods
Environmental impact measurement is more advanced than social impact measurement, which still struggles with a variety of approaches. Impact Measurement and Management (IMM) integrates learning from measured impacts into company management, aiming to align actions with purpose and improve or prove impacts over time.

### Impact Strategy
Mintzberg's 5 P's for strategy (Plan, Pattern, Perspective, Position, and Ploy) provide a framework for understanding strategy. Impact strategy involves:
1. Identifying social problems.
2. Defining mission and vision.
3. Setting impact goals using a Theory of Change.
4. Operationalizing these into an IMM system.
5. Iterating to refine and enhance impacts.

### Social Impact
Social impact, part of the broader sustainable development context, lags in measurement sophistication compared to economic and environmental impacts.

### Social Impact Measurement Methods
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): A global framework for addressing key challenges with social and environmental indicators.
Social Return on Investment (SROI): A method for valuing social, environmental, and economic benefits by establishing scope, mapping outcomes, and calculating impact ratios.

### Quality of Life and Livability
Livability focuses on the alignment of the environment with human needs, encompassing housingstock, physical environment, amenities, social cohesion, and disturbance & insecurity.

### Social Impact Assessment (SIA)
SIA involves systematically managing the social consequences of development projects. It aligns with international standards and emphasizes sustainability, equity, and stakeholder engagement.

### Social Strategies

#### Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

CSR involves integrating ethical, social, and environmental concerns into business practices. Its dimensions include:
- Ethical operations
- Social equity
- Environmental sustainability

#### Environmental, Social & Governance (ESG)

ESG criteria help investors assess a company's environmental stewardship, social practices, and governance structure, linking social responsibility with long-term financial performance.

#### Shared Value Creation (SVC)

SVC integrates social and business benefits, focusing on overlapping corporate and societal value. It differs from CSR by aligning directly with core business goals and strategies. The four-step model includes:
1. Identifying social issues.
2. Making a business case.
3. Tracking progress.
4. Measuring results for continuous improvement.

#### Social Innovation Framework

Social innovation addresses societal challenges through collaborative efforts across public, private, and non-profit sectors. It emphasizes collective learning, value co-creation, and adaptive problem-solving. The framework involves:
1. Identifying core problems.
2. Generating ideas.
3. Prototyping solutions iteratively.

## Empirical Research

### Multiple case study

This chapter presents findings from three case studies—Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten (The Hague), Van Deysselbuurt (Amsterdam), and Van Meekeren (Rotterdam). It addresses how developers implement social ambitions and how social impact is achieved in collaboration with housing associations in urban redevelopment. The selected projects involve Dutch urban redevelopment initiatives focused on improving livability through physical and social interventions. They emphasize collaboration among developers, housing associations, and municipalities.

### Cross-case analysis

Creating safer and more inclusive neighborhoods requires a comprehensive approach integrating public and social investments, long-term developer commitments, and effective stakeholder collaboration. Investments in green spaces, infrastructure redesigns, and community facilities enhance livability while addressing climate resilience and social cohesion. However, developers often face challenges in committing to social investments due to difficulties in quantifying long-term benefits. Long-term developer engagement is vital for sustained social impact, supported by partnerships among municipalities, housing

associations, and social organizations to align resources and goals. Collaboration with community figures enhances trust and outcomes but is underutilized due to complexity. Relocation processes must be carefully managed to minimize disruptions to social structures. Phased rehousing within the neighborhood, combined with clear communication and resident participation, ensures smoother transitions and builds trust. Ultimately, fostering vibrant, resilient neighborhoods relies on integrating public and private efforts with national and social partnerships to secure both immediate and enduring community benefits.

## Synthesis

### Expert Panel

The expert panel evaluated the framework based on the perspectives of professionals from the built environment. Discussions centered around five statements regarding social impact strategies for developers, providing valuable insights for refining the framework.

### Expert Selection

Experts were selected to ensure a diverse and informed panel, including a constructing-developer, an investing-developer, an academic researcher, and a social mediator. All participants had expertise in "social impact" and "social impact strategies" but were not involved in earlier interviews to enhance objectivity.

### Key Findings from the Expert Panel

Developers must clearly articulate social ambitions supported by measurable KPIs to avoid superficiality and ensure their strategies address local neighborhood challenges like health and safety. Meaningful community engagement requires active efforts that go beyond formalities to address societal needs. Long-term developer involvement is essential for sustainable social impact. Early co-development with residents fosters trust and connection, while clear roles, strategic partnerships, and transparent communication prevent frustration and ensure realistic expectations. Social impact agreements, redefined as dynamic social impact goal agendas, should be adaptable and action-oriented, with early alignment of stakeholder goals and roles. Engaging communities and applying best practices ensure relevance and effectiveness. Investments in public spaces must address root causes of issues such as social isolation and inactivity, emphasizing place keeping preserving existing social infrastructure. Collaboration with stakeholders ensures spaces remain sustainable and responsive to community needs. Clear communication and meaningful resident participation build trust and ensure plans align with community needs. Transparent processes, equitable collaboration, and incorporating resident feedback create broadly supported and impactful redevelopment efforts.

### Synthesis

The expert panel refined the framework for social impact strategies. Under social ambitions, transparency, measurable KPIs, and a location-specific approach ensure tailored, accountable strategies. Public space investment focuses on physical improvements, while social infrastructure emphasizes preserving existing spaces (place keeping) and fostering behavioral change to address root social challenges.

For long-term commitment, housing funds and partnerships with organizations maintaining a neighborhood presence ensure sustained impact. Participation now prioritizes transparent communication, equitable dialogue, and integrating engagement into daily community life.
Lastly, social impact agreements are redefined as dynamic social impact goal agendas, emphasizing actionable goals, trust, clear roles, and stakeholder alignment for lasting success.

Developers must combine transparency, long-term commitment, strategic public investments, and genuine community engagement to create meaningful social impact. This refined framework ensures a holistic approach to fostering livable, inclusive, and socially cohesive neighborhoods.

## Conclusion and Recommendations
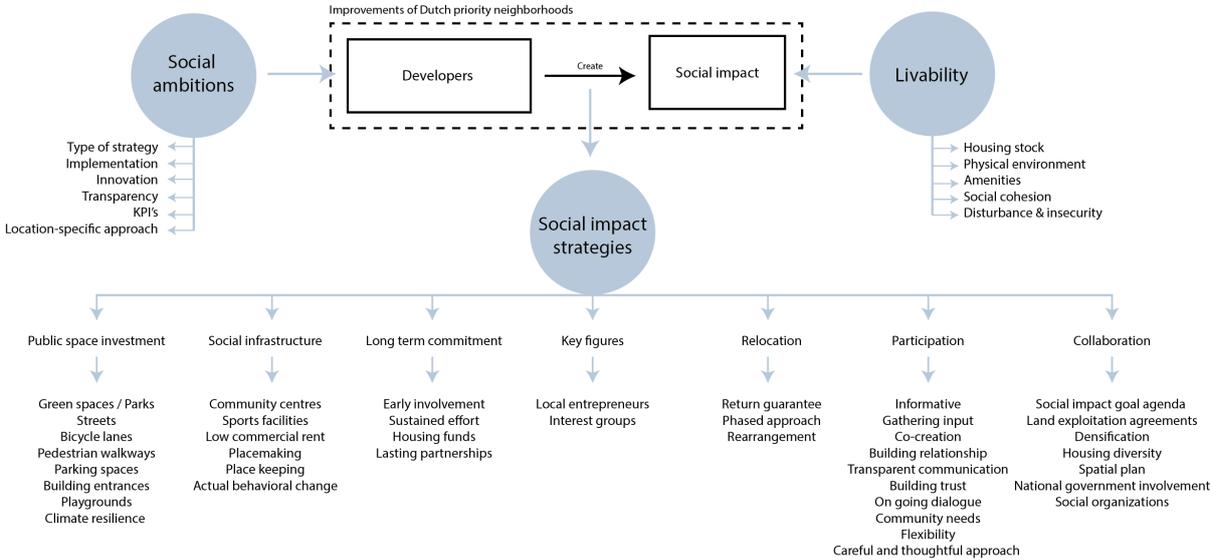


### Conclusion

This research explores how developers can create social impact in Dutch priority neighborhoods by aligning urban redevelopment projects with societal needs. Social impact involves addressing societal challenges to improve quality of life, equity, and sustainability. Developers can achieve this through collaboration, long-term commitment, and innovative strategies, prioritizing community needs over standardized approaches.

Developers implement social ambitions using frameworks like Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) criteria, and Shared Value Creation (SVC). These strategies align business goals with societal benefits. Examples from Heijmans, Rochdale, and VORM highlight diverse approaches to embedding social goals, from fostering community well-being to practical, cost-effective housing delivery.

Collaboration with housing associations enhances public and social investments, long-term commitments, and participation. Developers and associations create safer, more inclusive neighborhoods by improving public spaces, supporting social infrastructure, and managing resident relocation with care. Transparent communication and meaningful resident

engagement are critical for aligning redevelopment efforts with community needs and fostering trust.

Key lessons emphasize setting measurable KPIs, sustaining long-term involvement, fostering equitable participation, and tailoring strategies to local challenges. Public space investments and behavioral change initiatives must address root causes, ensuring physical and social improvements align with resident realities.

## Recommendations

Future research should expand the social impact framework to include more diverse case studies and international contexts, examining how global differences influence implementation. Developers should prioritize collaboration with municipalities and housing associations, adopt flexible social impact assessment tools like Social Return on Investment (SROI), and explore innovative financing models to balance profitability with community benefits. Long-term commitments and resident participation should remain central, ensuring projects evolve with changing societal needs while achieving meaningful, lasting social impact.

# Table of content

## List of figures

## List of tables

# PART 1 –

# Relevance

# Introduction

In the context of urban environments, the intersection of sustainability issues with everyday urban life has become increasingly apparent. Large cities are grappling with challenges such as neighborhood deterioration, escalating traffic, socioeconomic deprivation, and disparities in health and accessibility to healthcare. These issues have not only risen to the forefront of political debate in most EU member states but have also been recognized in strategic European and federal policy papers, as highlighted by Van Kamp et al. (2003). The acknowledgment of the critical role of local environmental quality in these discussions marks a significant shift towards addressing urban sustainability in a more integrated and holistic manner.

In certain districts of Dutch cities, the livability and safety of residents are increasingly at risk, leading to an accumulation of socio-economic and health-related issues. These areas are characterized by high rates of unemployment, poverty, educational disadvantages, and significant housing problems, contributing to an overall deterioration of living conditions. A considerable number of residents face a complex web of challenges, including reliance on social benefits, substantial debt burdens, overcrowded living situations, and a pressing need for care services, including youth care. This multifaceted crisis not only undermines the well-being and prospects of individuals and families living in these communities but also poses a broader societal challenge that necessitates comprehensive and targeted interventions (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, 2022).

Adding to these concerns, problems in many districts and neighborhoods are piling up, as stated by twelve directors of the "Nationaal Programma Leefbaarheid en Veiligheid" (NPLV). They argue that more investments are needed to provide a lasting perspective (Schaapman et al., 2024). This call for additional investments highlights the urgent need to address the escalating challenges within these neighborhoods, emphasizing the significance of not only identifying but also actively remedying the underlying factors contributing to their decline.

Numerous residential districts constructed in the post-World War II era within The Netherlands have been designated as 'priority neighborhoods'. These districts no longer provide an environment conducive to quality living, characterized by inadequate sustainability in housing and infrastructure. Furthermore, an additional challenge presents itself in the form of an escalating housing crisis, necessitating the incorporation of additional housing units within urban centers. Entities such as housing associations, municipal governments, and the national government are universally cognizant of the imperative to initiate decisive action. Nevertheless, the implementation of rapid measures encounters significant obstacles (Broesterhuizen et al., z.d.).

Moreover, the growing concerns over social segregation and stability in Europe have propelled the agenda of making cities more inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. This shift, noted by Janssen et al. (2023), reflects an evolving policy landscape that seeks to address the multifaceted nature of urban sustainability challenges, emphasizing the necessity of integrating social considerations into the broader sustainability discourse. This evolution in thinking and policymaking underlines the imperative of adopting comprehensive strategies that address the myriad dimensions of sustainability in an interconnected world.

Private entities are playing an increasingly important role in urban development (Heurkens, 2012; Andersson & Moroni, 2014). The development and sustainability of cities, areas, and real estate is a significant task that concerns private, public, and individual parties. There is an ongoing structural trend towards 'corporate sustainability' (Dyllick & Hockerts, 2002) and corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Tsutsui & Lim, 2015). On 5 January 2023, the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) took effect, enhancing requirements for companies to report social and environmental information (Corporate sustainability reporting, z.d.) Globally, market players are increasingly aligning their business philosophies with socially responsible and sustainable practices, with sustainability becoming an integral and intrinsic part of private business culture, personnel policies, business operations, and investment strategies (Senge et al., 2010). This often involves going 'beyond compliance,' surpassing what is legally required. This shift is frequently driven by societal pressure on companies to act more sustainably (Gunningham et al., 2018).

Shared Value Creation (SVC) is characterized as "a new way of doing business" (Porter & Kramer, 2011). Unlike traditional business models, SVC acknowledges that markets are defined not only by economic needs but also by societal needs. It also recognizes that social harm can lead to internal business costs, such as energy loss or material waste. This interdependence between business and community forms the foundation of the SVC concept. According to Porter and Kramer (2011), SVC is defined as "policies and operating practices that enhance the competitiveness of a company while simultaneously advancing the economic and social conditions in the communities in which it operates."

Real social enterprises differ from other types of businesses in that they assess their process and establish impact goals in addition to financial goals and progress (Maas & Grieco, 2017). Social enterprises are managing toward the societal objectives they have set for themselves by doing this. Impact thinking may assist companies and society in achieving sustainable development because it has the capacity to both validate and enhance the impact that is being created (Lall, 2017).

## 1.1    Problem statement

Despite the growing recognition of the importance of livability in the sustainability and quality of urban neighborhoods, there appears to be a notable disconnect between the priorities of housing associations and the broader goals of neighborhood improvement. According to Uyterlinde and van der Velden (2017), housing associations have predominantly concentrated on property management, with less emphasis placed on addressing livability concerns at the neighborhood level. This focus contrasts sharply with the needs of vulnerable neighborhoods, where improvements in livability could significantly enhance residents' quality of life. Moreover, while municipalities are actively seeking new partners to financially support or contribute to the urban reconstruction of these areas, market parties rarely demonstrate an interest in participating in such endeavors. This lack of engagement from potential contributors exacerbates the challenge of revitalizing at-risk neighborhoods.

Additionally, there is often a clear absence of consensus among stakeholders regarding the strategies for neighborhood rehabilitation, further complicating efforts to improve conditions. The cooperation between the various parties involved in these initiatives, government entities, housing associations, market parties, and community groups, is not always optimal, hindering

the effective implementation of necessary improvements. This situation underscores a critical need for enhanced collaboration and a unified approach to address the livability concerns in neighborhoods that are most in need of support and development (Uyterlinde & van der Velden, 2017).

**Research indicates that enhancing social impact is essential for improving the livability of Dutch priority neighborhoods. Moreover, it is crucial to foster improved collaboration among government entities, housing associations, and market parties. However, there is a knowledge gap about how developers can create this social impact.**

## 1.2    Societal relevance

The question of how developers can contribute to the social impact in the improvement of Dutch priority neighborhoods holds significant societal relevance. These neighborhoods often face socio-economic challenges such as unemployment, low educational levels, and poor housing. Developers bring crucial resources and expertise, which housing associations and the government are missing, that can help improve housing quality and affordability, stimulate local economies, and enhance community cohesion and diversity.

## 1.3    Scientific relevance

From a scientific perspective, this issue intersects with fields like urban planning, sociology, and economics, offering a rich area for research. Understanding the role of developers in sustainable urban redevelopment can help shape effective strategies and policies, enhancing community well-being and economic sustainability.

## 1.4    Research questions

The following research question has been developed:

**"How can developers create social impact in Dutch priority neighborhoods?"**

Improvements of Dutch priority neighborhoods

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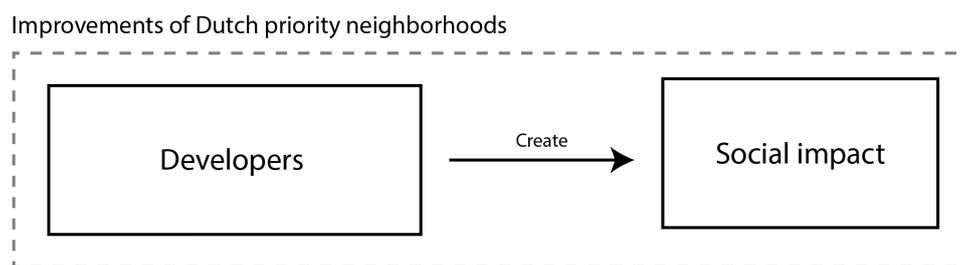
*Figure 1: Conceptual framework (Damen, 2025)*

To get a better understanding of the concepts and to support the main research question, the following sub-questions will be addressed:

**SQ1**: What is social impact in the built environment?

**SQ2**: How do developers implement social ambitions?

**SQ3**: How do developers create social impact in collaboration with housing associations in urban redevelopment projects?

**SQ4:** What do we learn from existing practices for the possible future of creating social impact in Dutch priority neighborhoods by developers?
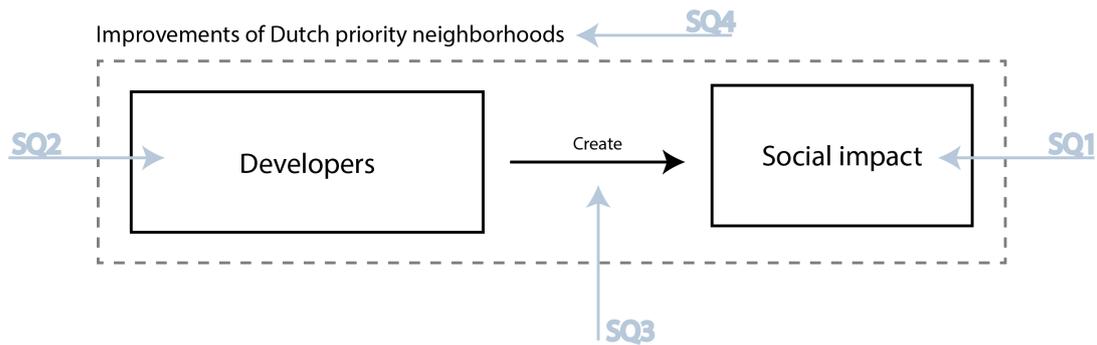
*Figure 2: Sub-questions relationship with conceptual framework (Damen, 2025)*

## 1.5    Definitions and terms

Developer

A developer is an individual, company, or organization responsible for transforming undeveloped land or revitalizing existing properties. Developers may be private entities, government bodies, nonprofit organizations, or other institutions involved in creating or renewing built environments.

Strategy

A strategy is a multifaceted concept that involves high-level planning and the deployment of resources to achieve specific goals under uncertain conditions. It is reflecting an integrated approach to achieving long-term objectives and competitive advantages (Barad, 2018).

Social impact

Social impact means any significant or positive changes that solve or at least address social injustice and challenges (Mitchell, 2021).

Priority neighborhood

A priority neighborhood is a disadvantaged neighborhood eligible for restructuring and therefore requires additional attention from the government (ANW, 2001).

Long-term commitment

A long-term commitment refers to the dedication to maintaining sustained efforts and building lasting partnerships over an extended period. It involves investments in long-term goals.

## 1.6    Research output

### 1.6.1   Goals and objectives

The principal aim of this research is to facilitate the formulation of an effective strategy by developers for creating social impact in designated Dutch neighborhoods of interest. It is imperative for these developers to balance profitability with the implementation of social impact strategies.

### 1.6.2   Personal study targets

The initial impulse for directing my research towards improving priority neighborhoods in the Netherlands stems from my childhood experiences growing up adjacent to one of the NPLV neighborhoods. This neighborhood, alongside the relatively affluent one where I was raised, shares a common shopping center. I have always found it intriguing that within this shopping

center, a confluence of people from diverse backgrounds, educational levels, incomes, and prospects occurs. Not only do adults intermingle here, but their children also interact, often enjoying a game of soccer on the designated playground.

Each time I returned home, I envisioned crossing the major road to the other side, experiencing a completely different situation. I am certain that those who live on the less affluent side often contemplate how their lives might differ if they could venture to the more prosperous side. I am committed to improving the lives and environments of these individuals so that they, too, feel their part of the city is significant. My goal is for them to feel content regardless of which side of the street they reside.

By conducting research on the potential influence of private entities within these disadvantaged neighborhoods, I hope to generate new insights that could significantly bolster the efforts to enhance these areas.

### 1.6.3   Dissemination and audiences

This study is primarily intended for developers, yet it also holds relevance for various other actors, including municipalities and housing associations. It aids real estate developers in achieving social impact within targeted Dutch neighborhoods, thereby enhancing livability. Additionally, municipalities could benefit from the suggested policy modifications, which further empower developers to contribute positively to these communities. Housing associations might also implement these strategies to facilitate social impact. Moreover, the academic community could utilize the insights and data provided in this research to advance the field of sustainable urban development.

# PART 2 – Methodology

# Research design

The research model is illustrated in Figure 3 below (Damen, 2025). This framework segments the research into three distinct phases, desk research, empirical research, and synthesis, providing a structured overview of how the main research question will be addressed.
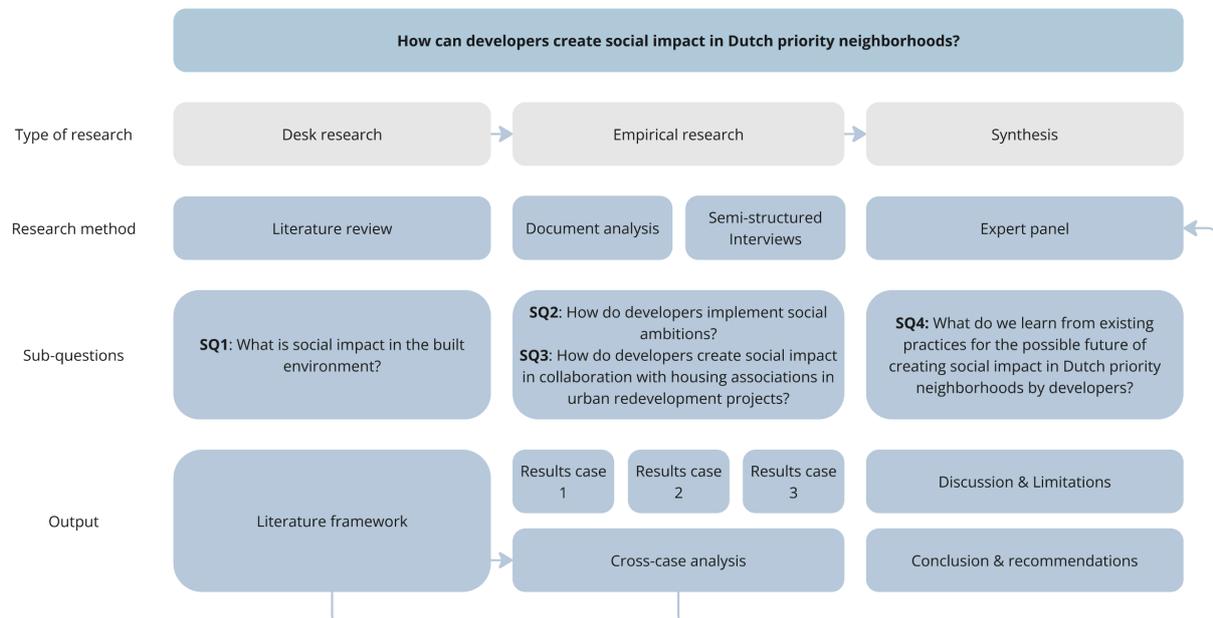


*Figure 3: Research model (Damen, 2025).*

## 2.1    Type of research

This research adopts a qualitative methodology to gain a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. Qualitative research is a type of research that aims to collect and analyze non-numerical (descriptive) data to gain insight into the reality of individuals or groups, including their attitudes, beliefs, and motivations. Qualitative research is often used to investigate complex phenomena, or to gain insight into people's experiences and perspectives on a specific theme. Qualitative research is especially suitable when researchers want to gain insight into the meaning that people attribute to their experiences or when researchers want to understand certain people's behavior.

## 2.2    Research methods

The study begins with an in-depth review of literature to construct a foundational understanding of social impact and social impact strategies. This literature review results in a literature framework that will be used as analytical framework and input for the empirical research. Hereby cases will be used to bridge theory with practice. Next to document analysis, interviews are conducted to pinpoint the role and influence of developers creating social impact trough their projects, collaborating with housing associations. As output of the empirical research a cross-case analysis is done. The results from the cross-case analysis are the starting point for the synthesis. Hereby an expert panel is conducted, which will evaluate and establish conclusions regarding the possibility of creating social impact by developers during the improvement of Dutch priority neighborhoods.

### 2.2.1 Desk research

#### Literature review

During the literature review, background material is collected to establish a robust foundation for the research and ensure the accurate application of definitions. This review not only lays the groundwork but also collects pertinent information for subsequent phases of the study. With a focus on capturing a wide array of relevant data, the literature review adopts a broad perspective, particularly emphasizing the concept of social impact and social strategies for developers. Phase 1 of the research delineates the overarching notion of social impact, elucidating the terms, identifying its key components, and compiling various existing studies.

**SQ1**: What is social impact in the built environment?

### 2.2.2 Empirical research

#### Multiple-case study

Phase 2 of the research consists of a multiple-case study with document analysis, semi-structured interviews, and a cross-case analysis. An advantage of a multiple-case study is the ability to evaluate data both inside and across cases. For the research three cases are studied. Cross-case analysis can be used to compare the examples to one another to detect similarities and differences, which improves the trustworthiness of the findings (Groat & Wang, 2013; Gustafsson, 2017).

#### Document analysis

Through document analysis various documents related to the selected cases extract meaningful information to understand the case. Various types of documents can be analyzed, like strategy documents, the business case of the project and presentation slides.

#### Semi structured interviews

Sub question 3 is done through semi structured interviews. This phase synthesizes the data and insights derived from the initial stage of literature review, focusing on identifying how developers implement social ambitions and how developers create social impact in their projects in collaboration with housing associations. The interviews must include a developer, a representative from the housing associations, a representative from the municipality and a social impact manager.

#### Cross-case analysis

In the cross-case analysis, the outcomes of the three case studies are juxtaposed to identify patterns and similarities among them. This will result in tables that give insights how developers create social impact in collaboration with housing associations. This table includes the topics that are discovered during the desk research phase and is related to the literature framework.

**SQ2**: How do developers implement social ambitions?
**SQ3**: How do developers create social impact in collaboration with housing associations in urban redevelopment projects?

### 2.2.3 Synthesis

Expert panel

This is phase 3 of the research. The findings from the cross-case analysis are used to connect the empirical research results to practice. The expert panel will discuss social impact strategies for developers to create social impact in Dutch priority neighborhoods. The panel comprises a constructing-developer, an investing-developer, an academic researcher on the topic of social impact, and a social mediator in the built environment, who contribute to testing and refining the framework for practical application in real-world scenarios. The data gathered will be synthesized to evaluate and establish conclusions regarding the creation of social impact by developers during the improvement of Dutch priority neighborhoods.

**SQ4:** What do we learn from existing practices for the possible future of creating social impact in Dutch priority neighborhoods by developers?

## 2.3 Case-, document-, interview-, and expert panel criteria

Case selection

The selection of cases will be guided by a set of criteria. It is imperative for the case selection process that the three chosen cases share a core subject yet exhibit slight variations among them. This approach will enable the identification of both differences and similarities during the cross-case analysis. The selection criteria for these cases are: The cases are situated within a Dutch context and involve projects where a developer is involved, in collaboration with a housing association. This is chosen because the role of developers is significant in contemporary urban developments, and housing associations are key partners in addressing social housing needs. The focus is on urban area redevelopment projects within existing urban structures, as these projects provide a rich context for understanding how to integrate new developments within the constraints and opportunities of established neighborhoods. The cases aim to create social impact, which is a core criterion, ensuring that the project goals align with broader societal needs, like the neighborhood's livability. Additionally, the projects selected vary in size but are all situated at a neighborhood scale, which allows for a more diverse set of insights on how redevelopment can occur at different scales while maintaining a local impact. Three cases were selected to achieve a balanced distribution between scope and depth. Including more cases could provide additional insights into potential strategies, but this would come at the expense of the depth with which each case could be analyzed.

*Table 1: Case -, interview-, and expert panel selection criteria (Damen, 2025)*

| Method | Amount | Selection criteria |
|---|---|---|
| Case studies | 3 | 1. In a Dutch context. <br> 2. Involves a developer. <br> 3. The project is in collaboration with a housing association. <br> 4. The project aims to create social impact. <br> 5. The project is an urban area redevelopment. <br> 6. Different sizes of the projects within a neighborhood scale. <br> 7. Within an existing urban structure <br> 8. Access to all crucial information. |

| Document analysis | Depends on | 1. Useful documents from the cases. |
|---|---|---|
| Semi-structured interviews | 4 each case | 1. Social impact manager.<br>2. Developer.<br>3. Representative of the municipality.<br>4. Representative of the housing associations. |
| Expert panel | 1 panel, 4 participants | 1. Professionals with backgrounds in social development and the built environment.<br>2. Participants must at least be familiar with the theme's "social impact" and "social impact strategies".<br>3. Not involved in the semi-structured interviews.<br>4. Differentiation in participants: Constructing-developer who wants to make social impact, Investing-developer who want to make social impact, Academic researcher on the topic of social impact, Social mediator in the built environment. |

## 2.4 Data plan and ethical considerations

The research data plan delineates the various types of data anticipated to emerge from the study and outlines the procedures for their processing and dissemination. The anticipated data types include:

- Documentation from the multi-case study and the subsequent cross-case analysis.
- Personal information of participants collected through semi-structured interviews and during sessions with the expert panel.
- Notes, recordings, and transcripts from the semi-structured interviews and the expert panel sessions.

Due to the involvement of human participants in the interviews and expert panel discussions, it is mandatory for all participants to provide informed consent prior to the collection of notes, recordings, and transcripts.

Ownership of all data, including notes, recordings, transcripts, and coding from the interviews and expert panel, resides with the researcher. The researcher bears complete responsibility for the processing, storage, and dissemination of data throughout and after the conclusion of the research. For the duration of the study, data will be securely stored on a drive provided by TU Delft. The final report will be made available on the publicly accessible TU Delft repository.

# PART 3 —
# Desk research

# Literature review

## 3.1 Impact thinking

Impact, as defined by Anheier & Leat (2006), Ebrahim & Rangan (2014), is generally defined as the "ultimate net value contributed to, or change made in, society on the economic, environmental, and social dimension, as a result of the actions". Specific definitions, however, differ. Consequence is therefore seen as the last link in a causal chain connecting corporate activities to their ultimate social consequence (Ebrahim & Rangan, 2014).

The "impact value chain," (Figure 4) another name for this causal chain, consists of the following five steps (Rosenzweig, 2004; Ebrahim & Rangan, 2014; Maas & Grieco, 2017; Maldonado & Corbey, 2016; Epstein & Yuthas, 2017):

- **Input** (The assets committed to the invention)
- **Activities** (How the company manufactures its goods)
- **Output** (What is produced)
- **Outcome** (The innovation's immediate consequences on the people it was designed to help)
- **Impact** (The significant or lasting changes in people's lives, directly attributable to the innovation) (Molecke & Pache, 2019)
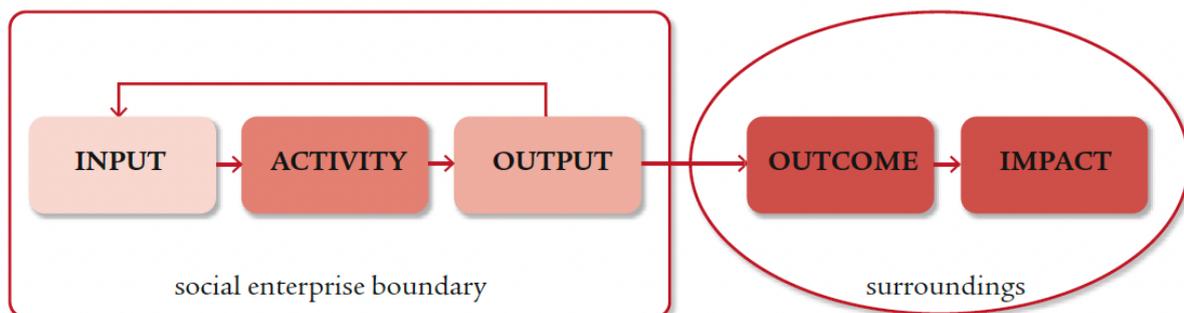


*Figure 4: Impact value chain (Maldonado & Corbey, 2016)*

### 3.1.1 Measuring impact

#### Impact measurement methods: social and environmental

Literature lists and describes a wide range of impact measuring methods, including social and environmental techniques. Given that it has received a lot more attention in the past than social impact measurement, environmental impact measurement appears to be more advanced than social impact measurement (van der Wal, 2020).

Simultaneously, although not being as advanced as environmental impact assessment, it's nonetheless simple to become disoriented by the variety of approaches available, as several social impact assessment techniques have been created to far. Consequently, several scholars have categorized the various social impact measuring techniques now in use (Maas & Liket, 2011; Molecke & Pache, 2019).

#### Impact Measurement & Management (IMM)

Although impact measurement has received most of the attention from academics, impact measurement and impact management are inextricably linked. Impact measurement and management, or IMM, is a combination that is discussed in the most current reports on impact

from practice from impact investors as well as social entrepreneurs (Daggers, 2019; Durand et al., 2019).

To better understand the distinction between the two: Impact management is the process of integrating the learned information (about the generated impact) into the way the company is managed. Impact measurement refers to the information systems used to make claims about the impact being made (Daggers, 2019).

The goal of impact management is to enable a firm to continually steer toward its purpose and vision by integrating impact thinking with it (Triodos Investment Management, 2019). The capacity to share information about your impacts and to learn from them over time are two essential components of impact management. These two facets are related to the impact measurement goals of improving and proving impacts produced.

### 3.1.2 Impact strategy

Strategy

To provide structure to the multitude of definitions, Mintzberg (1987) outlined the 5 P's for strategy. Each 'P' represents a distinct way in which the term strategy is conceptualized in various definitions.

**Strategy as a PLAN:** This is the most traditional approach to strategy formulation, which remains predominantly used today. Strategy is viewed as a detailed plan that guides the organization.

**Strategy as a PATTERN:** In this approach, strategy is identified retrospectively based on a pattern of past decisions. Mintzberg refers to this as 'emergent strategy.' This means that strategy is not a pre-conceived plan but evolves over time.

**Strategy as a PERSPECTIVE:** This approach centers on the core values of the organization. The values embedded in the organizational culture provide direction. These core values distinguish the organization from its competitors and are pivotal in setting strategic goals.

**Strategy as a POSITION:** This approach focuses on the market positioning of the organization. This interpretation of strategy emphasizes finding a 'strategic fit' between the organization's capabilities and the market. Achieving competitive advantage is central here. Concepts such as market analysis, organizational analysis, and SWOT analysis are fundamental to this approach.

**Strategy as a PLOY:** In this approach, the strategic process is viewed as a game among competitors. There is no fixed objective; the strategy is to outsmart the competition continually. For example, if a competitor is expected to develop a new product, one might form a strategic alliance with an organization that already has a similar product.

Impact strategy

In contemporary scientific discourse, there is a prevalent emphasis on measurement methods, often overshadowing the broader concept of impact thinking. Impact thinking encompasses more than just the measurement of impacts; it involves the development of a comprehensive impact strategy. This distinction is notably articulated in the seminal work "Measuring and Improving Social Impacts" by Epstein and Yuthas (2017), which remains a critical resource in understanding this paradigm. Drawing from the methodologies elucidated in this text, a streamlined model for crafting an impact strategy has been devised (Figure 6).

Figure 6 illustrates that formulating an impact strategy is inherently a cyclical process. The initial step involves (1) identifying and comprehending the (social) problem at hand. Following this foundational analysis, (2) the organization's mission and vision are (re)defined, which subsequently leads to (3) the establishment of specific impact goals through the application of a Theory of Change (Figure 5). This phase culminates in the selection of distinct impact metrics, ideally limited to ten, which are then (4) operationalized into an impact management and measurement system (IMM). At this juncture, the most appropriate impact measurement methods for the selected metrics are determined. Through the IMM system, (5) organizations can measure, monitor, communicate ('prove impacts'), and learn from ('improve impacts') their impacts, aligning with the objectives of impact measurement as outlined by Maas and Grieco (2017).
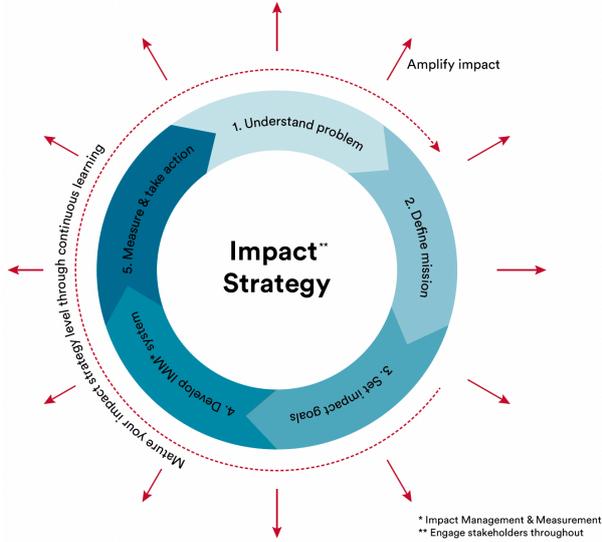


Figure 6: Impact Strategy (van der Wal, 2020) based on Epstein & Yuthas, 2017
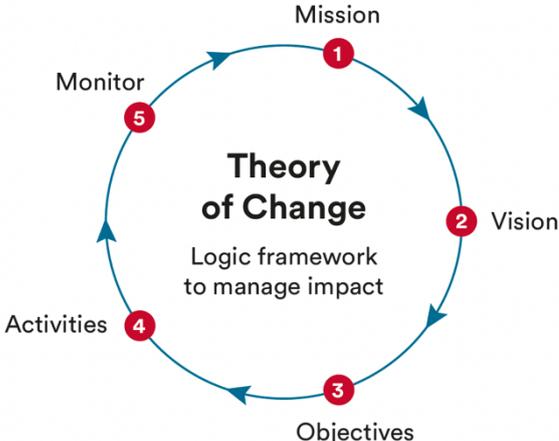


Figure 5: Theory of Change (van der Wal, 2020) based on Triodos Investment Management, 2019

Based on these insights, organizations may either adjust their activities or revisit all preceding steps in a recursive manner (Epstein & Yuthas, 2017). Over time, this iterative process enables social impact organizations to refine their impact thinking. Concurrently, organizations are encouraged to enhance their impacts by disseminating their insights across their industry, aiming to effect systemic change (Epstein & Yuthas, 2017). Throughout this process, maintaining engagement with all stakeholders impacted by the organization is crucial to ensure that actions lead to the intended impacts and fulfill the actual needs, adhering to the principle of 'additionality'.

## 3.2    Social impact

Like sustainable development, impact can be categorized into economic, environmental, and social dimensions (Maas & Grieco, 2017). Historically, business decisions have predominantly focused on economic impact, resulting in a more comprehensive understanding of this dimension (Durand, Rodgers, & Lee, 2019; Maas & Grieco, 2017). In recent years, however, there has been increasing emphasis on environmental impact through the advancement of ecological accounting, as well as the implementation of various sustainability standards and regulations. Nevertheless, social impact remains the least developed in both academic

research and practical application, primarily due to the inherent challenges associated with its measurement (van der Wal, 2020).

### 3.2.1 Social Impact measurement methods

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), by all United Nations Member States in 2015, comprise 17 goals (Figure 7) designed to be a "blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all" by 2030. These goals address global challenges including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace, and justice. The 17 SDGs can roughly be split out in social and environmental goals.

**Social SDGs:**
- No poverty
- Zero hunger
- Good health and well-being
- Quality of education
- Gender equality
- Clean water and sanitation
- Decent work and economic growth
- Reduced inequalities
- Sustainable cities and communities

- Peace justice and strong institutions

**Environmental SDGs:**
- Affordable and clean energy
- Industry, innovation, and infrastructure
- Responsible consumption and production
- Climate action
- Life below water
- Life on land
- Partnerships for the goals



*Figure 7: The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, n.d.)*

Appendix 2 provides an overview of all SDG's and its most important indicators. These indicators serve as metrics to track the progress and effectiveness of initiatives aimed at achieving the SDGs, enabling stakeholders to target interventions and allocate resources more effectively to address global challenges.

## Social Return on Investment (SROI)

The Social Return on Investment (SROI) framework has gained widespread adoption because it is project-oriented and allows organizations to demonstrate and enhance the social, environmental, and economic benefits they generate. Moreover, it aids in identifying both positive and negative externalities (Krlev et al., 2013). According to Nicholls, Lawlor, Neitzert, and Goodspeed (2012), SROI serves as a comprehensive framework that measures and accounts for a broader concept of value, aiming to address inequality and environmental degradation while enhancing well-being by including social, environmental, and economic costs and benefits.

SROI is a tool designed to help organizations assess the fundamental question, "How much value are we creating?" It is applicable to any organization striving to make a positive impact on people's lives (Nicholls et al., 2012). Rather than focusing solely on financial metrics, SROI emphasizes value creation. Lewis, J. & nef. (2008, p. 20) note, "The outcomes that are measured are the ones that get managed and valued. If outcomes for people and communities are not being measured, they are unlikely to be considered, and social organizations will continue to assume that their work is beneficial without truly understanding its effectiveness."

As a technique, SROI measures socio-economic and environmental impacts by integrating cost-benefit analysis, stakeholder engagement, financial proxies, and project improvement. This methodology can be applied to an entire organization, a specific project, or even a small activity across profit, non-profit, and governmental sectors. It can be approached from two perspectives (Maldonado & Corbey, 2016):

o *Evaluative or Retrospective Studies*: These analyze the actual outcomes (results and impact) of a project or activity that has already been completed.
o *Forecast or Prospective Studies*: These predict the potential social value that could be generated if activities achieve their intended outcomes. Such studies are particularly useful for planning, strategy development, and project selection to maximize impact.

The SROI method is structured into six distinct stages (Maldonado & Corbey, 2016):

1. **Establishing Scope and Identifying Stakeholders**: In this stage, the project's boundaries are defined, and the primary stakeholders are selected. Their involvement is crucial for the development of an impact map. The goal is to understand the project's reach and those directly or indirectly affected by its activities.

2. **Mapping Outcomes**: Stakeholders help create an impact map that links inputs (resources) to outputs (results) and outcomes (immediate effects) to longer-term impacts. This map provides a comprehensive understanding of the causal relationships between the resources used and the changes they bring about.

3. **Valuing Outcomes**: Here, financial proxies are used to assign monetary values to outcomes that may not have a direct market price. This step is crucial because it translates qualitative changes into quantifiable metrics.

4. **Establishing Impact**: This step considers additional factors affecting the results, such as deadweight (outcomes that would have occurred regardless of the project), displacement (negative impacts that occur elsewhere), attribution (how much change can be linked to external influences), and drop-off (how long the benefits last over time). These considerations help refine the valuation and avoid overestimating the project's impact.

5. **Calculating the SROI Ratio**: The total benefits are calculated by subtracting the negative scenarios from the sum of all benefits. These are then discounted to find their present value. The SROI ratio is determined by dividing the net present value of the benefits by the net present value of the investment.

$$\text{SROI} = \frac{\text{(Net Present Value of Impact)}}{\text{(Net Present Value of Investment)}}$$

6. **Reporting, Using, and Embedding**: Results are communicated to stakeholders transparently, allowing for informed decision-making and better project planning. Verification of results is recommended, although not mandatory. Sensitivity analysis may also be conducted to test the robustness of the SROI ratio.

However, the ratio by itself doesn't reveal the full social value. Qualitative and descriptive evidence should complement the numerical data. Figure 8 provides a visual representation of the ratio. It's not just about monetary worth; it also encompasses the broader social benefits to society.
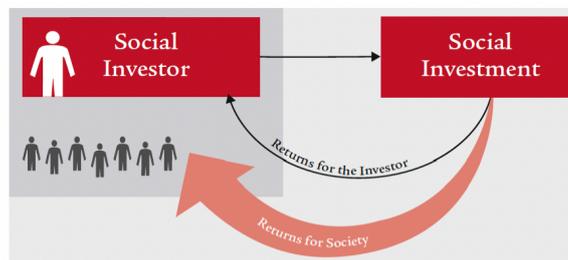


*Figure 8: Illustrative representation of the ratio (Krlev et al., 2013)*

## Quality of life and livability

Shafer, Lee, and Turner's 2000 study "A Tale of Three Greenway Trails: User Perceptions Related to Quality of Life" presents a conceptual model of factors influencing community quality of life from a human ecological perspective. The model focuses on urban greenway trails and their contributions to the overall quality of life in communities. Key components include:

**Community of People:** Emphasizing social networks and engagement, this element underscores the importance of social interaction, equitable access to resources, and recreational activities that foster cohesion and well-being.

**Physical Environment:** Highlighting the physical environment's role in quality of life, this component covers natural areas, public transportation, and sustainable land use. Greenway trails offer access to nature, promote physical activity, and provide alternatives to car travel, enhancing both mental and physical health.

**Economy:** While greenway trails influence economic growth less directly than social and environmental aspects, they can still boost the economy by raising property values, attracting tourism, and encouraging local businesses.



*Figure 9: Conceptual model of factors that contribute to community quality of life from a human ecological perspective (Shafer et al., 2000).*

The conceptual framework from RIVM (2003) for understanding the quality of life, includes the interplay of various environmental and personal factors. A breakdown of the components within this framework:

**Quality of Life**: This is the central concept influenced by other factors in the scheme. It is the overarching outcome of the interrelations among the local environment, health, and the physical and social environment.

**Local Environment**: Defined by its livability, this refers to the immediate, tangible surroundings in which people live. This aspect of the environment includes factors like the availability of green spaces, local amenities, and community services that contribute to the quality of life.

**Health**: Perceived Health is how individuals view their own health status, which can be subjective and influenced by personal feelings and experiences. The health aspect also includes objective measures.

**Physical Environment**:
o   *Housing*: The type, quality, and location of an individual's housing significantly affect their quality of life.
o   *Spatial Characteristics*: These might include the geographical layout, urban design, transportation networks, and accessibility of different locations.
o   *Environmental Quality*: This factor encompasses air and water quality, noise pollution, and the presence of green and public spaces.

**Social Environment**:
o   *Personal Characteristics*: Individual demographics like age, gender, education, and personal health is included here.
o   *Lifestyle*: This entails personal choices that affect health and well-being, such as diet, exercise, smoking, and drinking.
o   *Social Quality*: This includes the quality of social interactions, social support networks, and the broader societal context that individuals live within.

The bottom two boxes, "Quality of the local environment" and "Health status," suggest the outcomes or states that result from the interaction of the social environment with the other factors in the model.

**Other Factors Influencing Quality of Life**: These are depicted in the box to the right and include legal and social security, family relations, employment, activities, and consumption patterns.
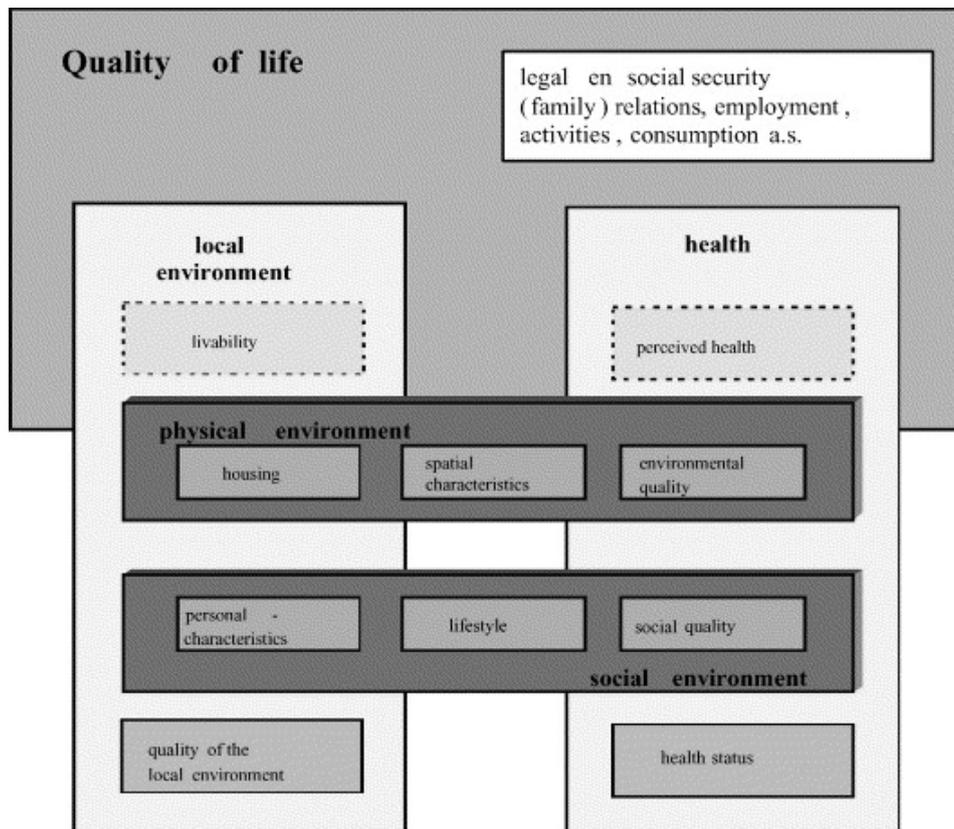


*Figure 10: Scheme of the basic elements of quality-of-life, health, and the daily living environment (RIVM, 2003)*

Overall, the framework suggests that quality of life is multi-dimensional, encompassing various aspects of the living environment and individual characteristics. Each element interconnects and contributes either directly or indirectly to an individual's quality of life. The RIVM's approach, based on this scheme, indicates that policies and interventions aimed at improving quality of life must consider this complex web of interactions.
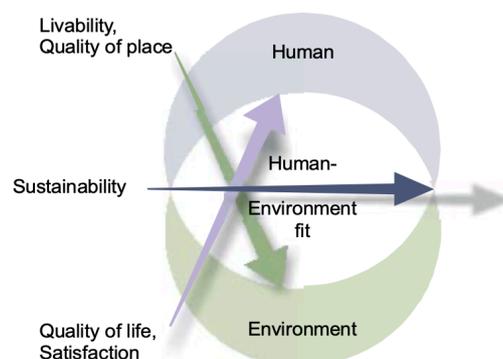


*Figure 11: Perspectives on human-environment fit (RIVM, 2003).*

The concepts livability and quality of life relate to two sides of the same coin: the fit between humans and their environment. While livability refers to the extent to which the environment aligns with people's desires and needs, environmental quality of life primarily concerns the effect of the environment on quality of life (RIVM, 2003).

*Table 2: Livability dimensions (Damen 2024, adopted from RIVM, 2003)*

| Livability dimensions |
| --- |
| Housing stock |
| Affordability |
| Environmental |
| Physical environment |
| Green space |
| Accessibility |
| Walkability |
| Outdoor facilities |
| Amenities |
| Education |
| Groceries |
| Health care |
| Sport facilities |
| Social cohesion |
| Community engagement |
| Inclusivity and equality |
| Disturbance & insecurity |
| Safety |
| Crime rate |
| Pollution |
| Noise |

### 3.2.2   Social Impact assessment

Social Impact Assessment (SIA) is defined as the systematic process of understanding, analyzing, and managing the social consequences of planned developments. Esteves et al. (2012) describe it as a comprehensive framework designed to optimize positive benefits while mitigating negative impacts throughout a project's lifecycle. This is achieved through stakeholder participation, emphasizing improved social outcomes while addressing community resilience, social justice, and sustainable livelihoods (Vanclay, 2003). Effective SIA requires a deep understanding of societal contexts, governance structures, and potential power dynamics that might influence outcomes. Becker (1997) and Vanclay (2003) emphasize that SIA not only involves predictive analysis but also employs management strategies that align development projects with broader societal goals.

The International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) provides global principles and guidelines that have shaped SIA practices. Contemporary frameworks emphasize trends like Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), human rights assessments, and community benefit agreements (Esteves and Vanclay, 2011; Franks, 2011). These trends highlight a growing

emphasis on aligning project planning with international standards to address the complex social dimensions involved (Esteves et al., 2012).

SIA seeks to ensure that any planned intervention, including policies, programs, plans, or projects, addresses intended and unintended social outcomes. Vanclay (2003) highlights SIA's emphasis on fostering a "more sustainable and equitable biophysical and human environment," underscoring its commitment to sustainability and social justice. The process involves analyzing both positive and negative social impacts, drawing on stakeholder knowledge to develop management strategies that maximize benefits while minimizing harm.

SIA is deeply rooted in core values prioritizing human rights, equity, and environmental sustainability. These guide its practice, ensuring not only an assessment of potential negative outcomes but also a proactive approach to promoting positive social change. Principles derived from these values emphasize comprehensive consideration of all social aspects, with active engagement from all affected stakeholders.

The methodology requires understanding and managing impact pathways across interconnected social, economic, and biophysical domains. Vanclay (2003) stressed that SIA seeks outcomes such as community development, empowerment, capacity building, and enhancing social capital while safeguarding human rights. Practitioners engage in participatory processes with stakeholders to assess impacts like demographic shifts, economic outcomes, community stability, cultural heritage, political involvement, and health. Vanclay (2003) and Esteves et al. (2012) highlighted that SIA's scope also includes assessing indirect and cumulative impacts beyond immediate project outcomes, addressing secondary and higher-order impacts.

SIA functions as a distinct discipline with specific methodologies and a professional community of practice. In practice, it follows international principles endorsed by the IAIA, advocating for transparency, accountability, fairness, and equity. It is not simply predictive but a holistic process supporting decision-making that maximizes social benefits while minimizing adverse effects. This flexible framework allows SIA to integrate into diverse project structures, ensuring development projects contribute positively to the social fabric and ecological system.

## 3.3 Social strategies

### 3.3.1 Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a multifaceted and evolving concept, crucial for companies that strive to integrate social, ethical, and environmental concerns into their operational and strategic frameworks. As discussed in the literature by Lindgreen and Swaen (2010), CSR encompasses an organization's ongoing commitment to ethical behavior, social equity, and environmental sustainability, ensuring the company operates responsibly while addressing the expectations and needs of stakeholders.

**Expanded dimensions of CSR:**
o *Ethical Operations*: Companies are expected to go beyond mere legal compliance, embracing ethical standards that respect human rights and ensure fair labor practices. Ethical operations foster trust and loyalty among consumers and employees, which are critical for long-term success (Carroll, 1999).

- *Social Equity*: Organizations should promote social equity by providing fair wages, supporting diversity, and contributing to community development efforts to improve living conditions and access to opportunities (Porter & Kramer, 2006).
- *Environmental Sustainability:* This involves reducing the environmental impact through sustainable practices like using renewable resources, minimizing waste, and implementing sustainable supply chain operations (Hart & Milstein, 1999).

**Implementation Challenges:**
- *Aligning CSR with Business Strategy:* Integrating CSR seamlessly with core business strategy is challenging but essential for driving long-term value. This requires a commitment from top management and clear communication of CSR objectives throughout the organization (Porter & Kramer, 2006).
- *Stakeholder Skepticism:* Companies often face skepticism regarding their CSR motives, especially if efforts are perceived as insincere marketing tactics. Overcoming this requires transparency and consistent actions aligned with stated CSR goals (Mohr, Webb, & Harris, 2001).
- *Measuring Impact:* Defining appropriate metrics to gauge the effectiveness of CSR activities is complex. Effective measurement is necessary to ensure that CSR efforts make a meaningful difference and support continuous improvement (Wood, 2010).
- *Long-Term Commitment:* CSR demands a long-term commitment to making a positive impact, which can conflict with the business environment's focus on short-term gains. Building a culture that supports sustained CSR efforts involves shifting corporate values and redefining success metrics (Doppelt, 2003).

CSR is not merely a charitable endeavor but a comprehensive approach to responsible business conduct that aligns company operations with societal expectations, aiming for sustainable success and societal well-being. Embracing CSR can lead to improved reputation, operational efficiencies, and ultimately, competitive advantage.

### 3.3.2   Environmental, Social & Governance

Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) criteria are a set of standards for a company's operations that socially conscious investors use to screen potential investments. These criteria help to evaluate how a company performs as a steward of nature (environmental), how it manages relationships with employees, suppliers, customers, and the communities where it operates (social), and how it deals with its leadership, executive pay, audits, internal controls, and shareholder rights (governance) (Zaccack, 2020). *"ESG is the ability of maximising long term financial performance while contributing to environmental and social development through good governance."* (van der Griendt, 2022). Figure 12 shows how ESG adds another dimension to the 3P's.



*Figure 12: The ESG tetrahedron (van der Griendt, 2022)*

## Environmental

Environmental criteria consider how a company performs as a steward of the natural environment. This can include a company's energy use, waste, pollution, natural resource conservation, and treatment of animals. The criteria can also be used in evaluating any environmental risks a company might face and how the company is managing those risks. For example, there might be issues related to its ownership of contaminated land, its disposal of hazardous waste, its management of toxic emissions, or its compliance with government environmental regulations.

## Social

Social criteria examine how it manages relationships with employees, suppliers, customers, and the communities where it operates. The social aspect of ESG involves topics such as company policies on workplace health and safety, labor standards, diversity, employee relations, and human rights. It also considers the company's stance on social justice issues, its involvement in the local community, and its customer satisfaction levels.

## Governance

Governance criteria look at a company's leadership, executive pay, audits, internal controls, and shareholder rights. Investors want to know that a company uses accurate and transparent accounting methods and that stockholders can vote on important issues. They also want assurances that companies avoid conflicts of interest in their choice of board members, don't use political contributions to obtain favorable treatment, and, of course, don't engage in illegal practices.
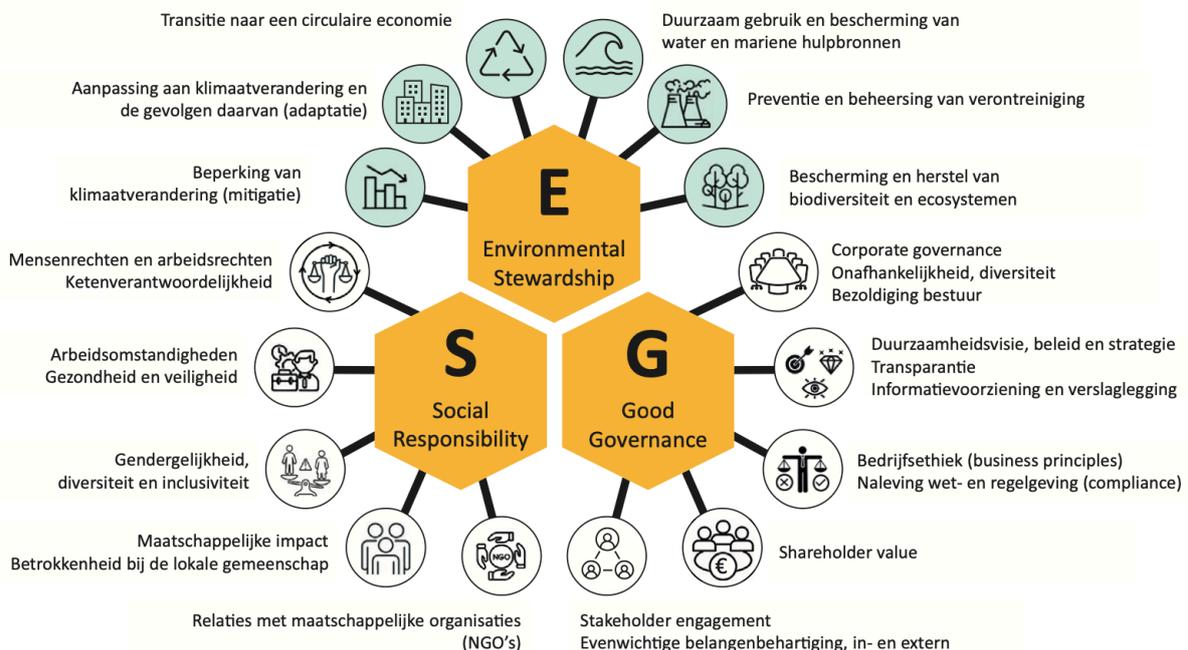


*Figure 13: The scope of ESG (van de Griendt, 2022)*

## 3.4    Shared value creation

Porter & Kramer (2011) offered a fresh strategic viewpoint on the function of companies in society. They were unable to ascertain the meaning, jargon, and effects, though. This makes it more difficult for companies to develop business strategy (Moon & Parc, 2019). The study by Moon & Parc (2019), in which the authors attempt to differentiate the notions of CSR and SVC

based on several characteristics, provides the best explanation of the idea. In addition, they add a third idea to the mix. CSO (Corporate Social Opportunities) was introduced in addition to SVC and CSR. A notion that is best explained by social business practices.

The foundation of corporate social responsibility (CSR) is the belief that businesses should be held accountable for their effects on society by implementing social business strategies in addition to traditional business methods. These are often just for the benefit of society and come at a cost to the organization carrying them out. In contrast to CSR, CSO is viewed as a value-adding endeavor that aims to generate corporate benefit via engaging in these social initiatives. Improving the value of company and society in a similar way. Establishing business opportunity for these kinds of social engagements. Thus, the main distinction between the two ideas is how corporate strategy view these social actions.

To position SVC in relation to these two ideas. One way to change CSR efforts into CSO activities is through SVC. SVC seeks to establish connections between business and social advantages. Changing how companies are generally seen in relation to CSR initiatives. Seeing them not as a burden but as possibilities (Moon & Parc, 2019; Porter & Kramer, 2011). An overview of the schematization of the differences between these three notions may be seen in Figure 14.
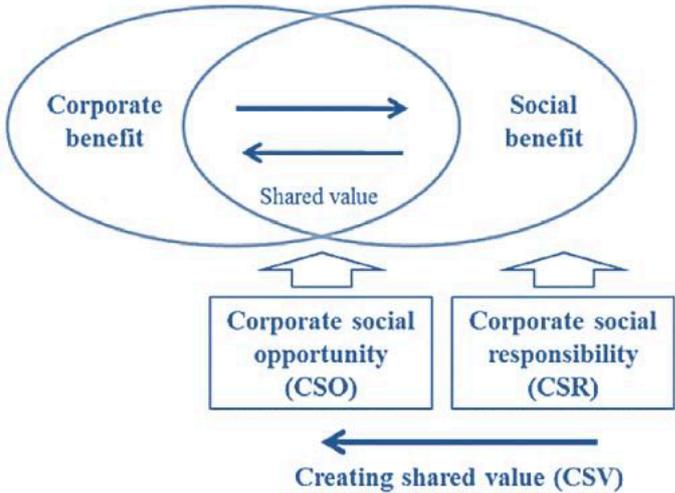


*Figure 14: CSR, SVC (CSV in the figure) & CSO (Moon & Parc, 2019)*

To go into further detail about the SVC research idea and the CSR concept. Porter & Kramer (2011) identify three operational differences between SVC and CSR. First, whereas SVC concentrates on strengthening core competitiveness while improving social and economic conditions, CSR activities are concentrated on increasing reputation and providing a positive response to outside pressure. Second, by rethinking the relationship overlap between society and company success, SVC is more tied to the core business than CSR. Third, SVC focuses on the value a firm may provide for society and what society can do to improve corporate value, whereas CSR operations distribute earnings to acquire social value.

The difficulty in quantifying shared value results and the lack of a solution provided by present efforts are the main criticisms leveled at shared value measurement (Dembek, et al., 2015). Even though Porter attempted to tackle this problem in his follow-up study on shared value assessment. Porter, et al. (2011) describe how a four-step iterative method is used to measure shared value in this study.

Step 1 – Identify the social issues to target: the approach starts with determining whether social challenges provide commercial potential. This entails examining the relationships between corporate and societal ideals. Examining the ways in which these values are reflected in the three SVC pillars (partnership, products, and processes).

Step 2 - Make the business case: after the identification of possible SVC connections. The following stage involves selecting and filtering specific relationships to develop a business plan. examining how a certain approach will enhance the operation of the company. This entails figuring out goals, tasks, expenses, and income in relation to these expenses.

Step 3 - Track progress: using the business case as a foundation, the goals-based progress is monitored. Measuring the actions, results, and performance in relation to the goals is one of these processes.

Step 4 – Measure results and use insights to unlock new value. The procedure concludes with validation of the established relationship, which ascertains if a certain technique is effective based on preliminary attempts. There are lessons to be learned from these observations.
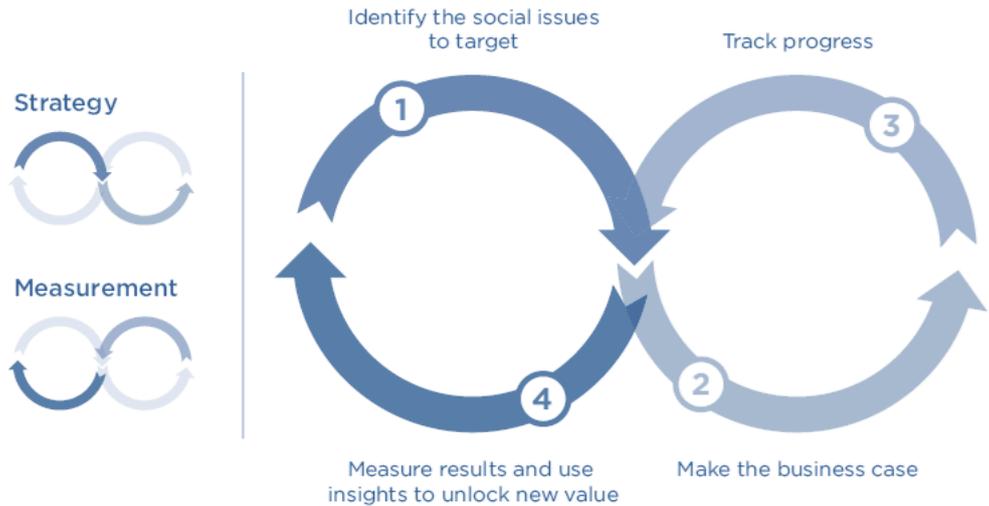


Figure 15: Measuring Sharded Value (Porter, et al., 2011)

### 3.4.1  Social innovation framework

The social innovation framework involves three main steps (Figure 16). First, you identify and articulate the core problem by understanding its root cause. This problem statement should be specific yet broad enough to allow for creativity and is refined iteratively using techniques like the 5 Why's and smart questioning. Second, you generate ideas by reframing the problem statement to trigger new perspectives, distinguishing between findings (facts) and insights (deeper understanding) to inform your ideas. Lastly, you prototype by quickly and frugally creating prototypes, gathering feedback, and adapting your ideas, repeating this process to continually refine and improve the solution (Marinello, 2021).

**SOCIAL INNOVATION FRAMEWORK**

| | SENSING | IDEA GENERATION | PROTOTYPING |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mission | Find the root cause! | Play with the insights! | Solve the problem! |
| Mindset | *EMPATHIC* | *OPEN-MINDED* | *RAPID* |
| Process | *What/who do you really care about?* → Problem Statement — Insights — Mental Models — Field Research | Mixed Group | Solution-Idea — Adapt — Test — Measure |
| Skill | Listening & Observing | Creativity | Discipline |
| Methods | Literature review, Stakeholder map, Shadowing, Smart questions / 5-Why's | Brainstorming, Associating, Reframing, Idea Sharing | Minimum Viable Product, Feedback Form / Observation, Business Model Canvas, Logic Model |

*Figure 16: Social innovation framework (Marinello, 2021)*

Figure 17 illustrates the process of social innovation that transcends public, private, non-profit, and informal sectors, incorporating social actors who collaborate and co-create across these multiple sectors. This depiction emphasizes the interconnectedness and collaborative efforts necessary for social innovation.
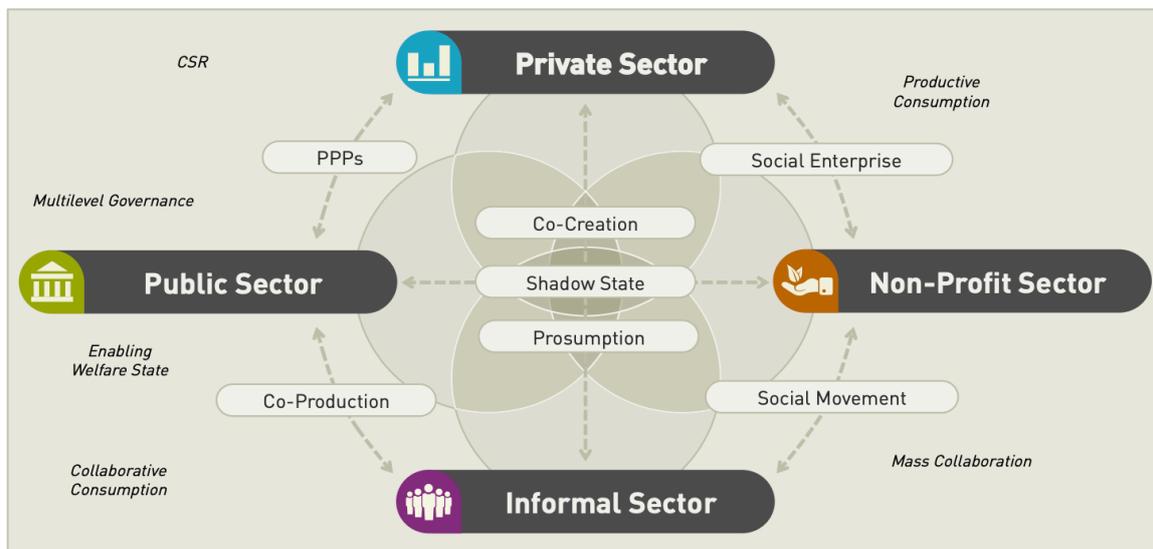


*Figure 17: Social innovation actors (Rehfeld et al., 2015)*

Various forms of cooperation and models of partnerships emerge within different social, economic, political, cultural, technological, and environmental contexts. Despite these contextual differences, most social models are characterized by open, embedded, or cyclic dimensions of social innovation. These dimensions underscore the significance of networks in initiating and sustaining institutional change (Berkhout et al., 2004; Chesbrough, 2003; Hafkesbrink & Schroll, 2011; van de Vrande et al., 2010). For organizations to survive, they must forge close relationships with stakeholders both within and beyond their own boundaries. Powell and Grodal (2006) highlight that no single firm possesses all the necessary

skills to lead in all areas of progress and bring significant innovations to market, illustrating the critical nature of cross-sector collaboration despite the managerial challenges it presents.

Business partners must work together, overcoming differences in organizational structures, objectives, value propositions, business models, and philosophies. Enhanced interactivity results in novel forms of collaboration that facilitate the access, exploration, exploitation, sharing, and diffusion of knowledge (Piller & Reichwald, 2009). This process fosters cross-organizational learning, collaboration, and value co-creation. Social innovation, therefore, represents a form of collective learning that enables the formation of local institutions aimed at meeting societal needs through the support of social, environmental, and institutional capital.

## 3.5    Research framework

Figure 18 shows the study's research framework, with the aspects from the literature being operationalized. The empirical part of the study will examine the social ambitions developers have and how they employ these ambitions, which livability results they want to achieve, and how they approach the creation of this social impact. The social ambition and livability aspects are predefined, whereas the social impact strategies aspects are formed during the empirical part of this research.
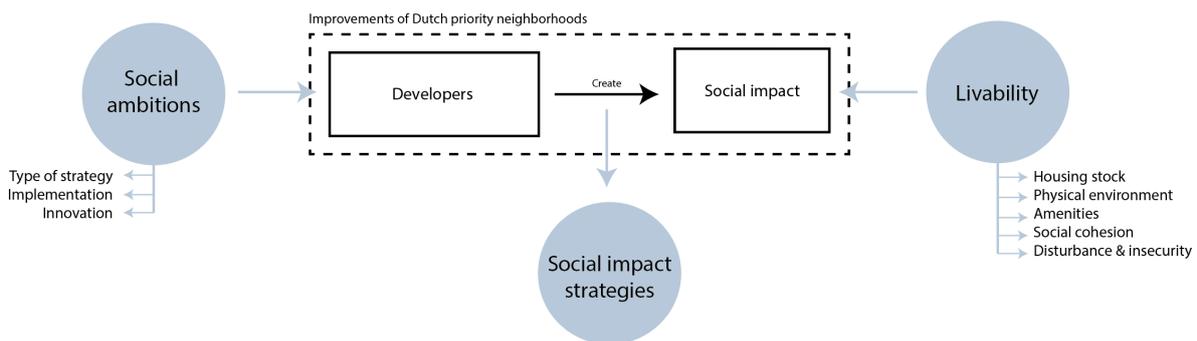


*Figure 18: Research framework (Damen, 2025)*

The framework is composed of various aspects, which can be connected to insights from the literature. For instance, social strategies such as CSR and ESG are linked to the social ambitions of developers. Similarly, Mintzberg's 5 P's can be related to these ambitions, as they offer insights into how social ambitions are translated into social strategies, if present. Innovative collaborations play a significant role in socio-social developments, as reflected in the social innovation framework, which clarifies the different forms of collaboration between private, public, non-profit, and informal sectors.

When examining the livability of neighborhoods, the framework incorporates the livability aspects established by the RIVM, simplified into five main pillars. Each of these pillars will guide the empirical part of the research, analyzing the different cases to identify existing challenges and their solutions. The methods of addressing these challenges will lead to the identification of social impact strategies.

At the end of the cross-case analysis of this research, the social impact strategies aspect will be further elaborated. After the expert panel, a synthesis of the framework follows, with adjustments being made where necessary.

# PART 4 –

# Empirical research

## Multi case study

The findings from three case studies: Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten, de van Deysselbuurt, and Van Meekeren are presented in this chapter, addressing sub-question 2 "How do developers implement social ambitions?" and sub-question 3 "How do developers create social impact in collaboration with housing associations in urban redevelopment projects?". The studies will examine the social ambitions developers have and how they employ these ambitions, which livability results they want to achieve, and how they create this social impact.

The selection criteria for these cases are: The cases are situated within a Dutch context and involve projects where a developer is involved, in collaboration with a housing association. This is chosen because the role of developers is significant in contemporary urban developments, and housing associations are key partners in addressing social housing needs. The focus is on urban area redevelopment projects within existing urban structures, as these projects provide a rich context for understanding how to integrate new developments within the constraints and opportunities of established neighborhoods. The cases aim to create social impact, which is a core criterion, ensuring that the project goals align with broader societal needs, like the neighborhood's livability. Additionally, the projects selected vary in size but are all situated at a neighborhood scale, which allows for a more diverse set of insights on how redevelopment can occur at different scales while maintaining a local impact.



*Figure 19: Location of the cases used (Damen, 2025)*

## 4.1 Case 1 – Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten

### 4.1.1 Description

The Hague Southwest is a district characterized by significant socio-economic challenges, including poverty, unemployment, educational disadvantages, debt, radicalization, polarization, and a growing sense of insecurity. The neighborhoods of Dreven, Gaarden, and Zichten, constructed after World War II, lie at the heart of this area and are grappling with deteriorating housing, vacant facilities, a lack of diversity in the housing market, and declining support for the local economy and services. The ambitious restructuring project for these three neighborhoods aims to improve livability through an integrated approach. This strategy addresses not only the physical environment but also social and economic enhancement, intertwining urban redevelopment with measures in employment, safety, and public health.
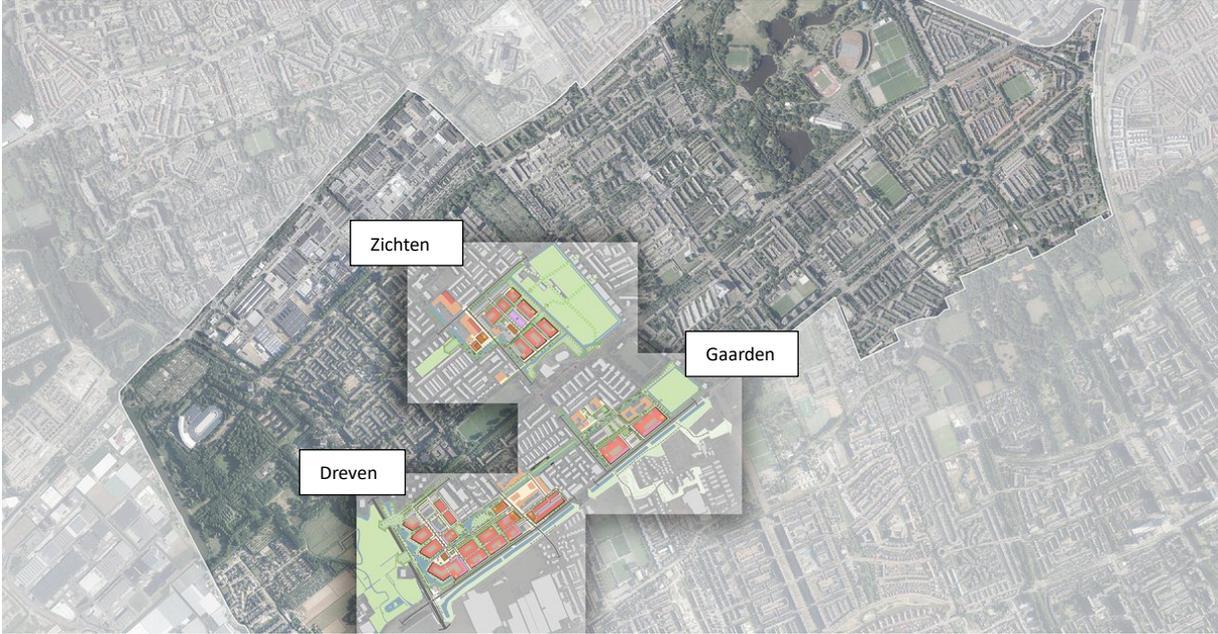


*Figure 20: Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten (Municipality of The Hague)*

The project encompasses the demolition of outdated social housing, the construction of new sustainable homes, and the development of new facilities and public spaces. Collaboration between the municipality, housing corporation Staedion, development partner Heijmans, and residents is central to this initiative. The goal is to create a new, healthy living environment over the next 15 to 20 years that meets both current and future residents' needs. Heijmans will develop the residential units intended for Staedion's portfolio (3000 to 3500 units) and will independently develop and realize the market-rate housing at its own expense and risk (1500 to 2000 units). This process includes the temporary relocation of residents during construction and renovation activities, with the guarantee that they can return to their newly improved neighborhood upon completion.

*Table 3: General information Case Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten*

| Specification | Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten |
|---|---|
| Location | The Hague, The Netherlands |
| Size | 5000 units |
| Type of project | Renovation, demolition, new construction |
| Developer | Heijmans Vastgoed |
| Housing association | Staedion |
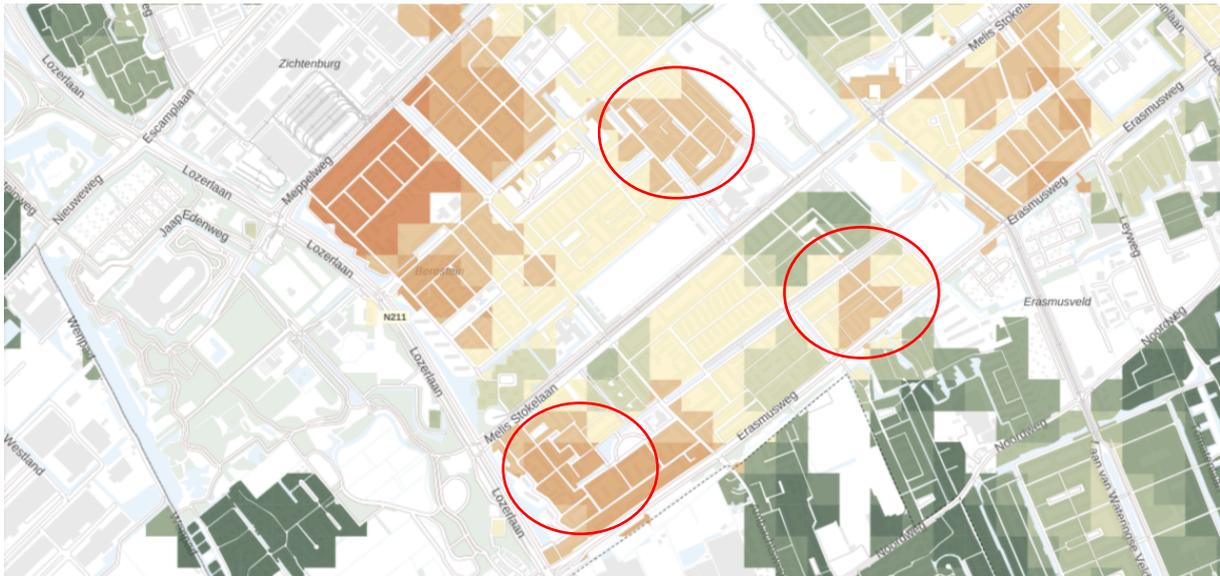
*Figure 21: Livability Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten (Leefbaarometer, 2022)*

<u>Dreven</u>

Housing and Facilities

In Dreven, a significant portion of the existing social housing will be demolished and replaced by approximately 2600 newly constructed homes. These new homes will be developed across different categories, ranging from social housing to mid-range rental and owner-occupied homes. This mix is essential to promote a diverse population, ensuring that, alongside low-income residents, there is also space for middle-income groups. This should lead to a strengthening of the socio-economic base within the neighborhood.

In addition to housing, around 10.000 square meters of facilities will be added, including community services, business spaces, and commercial activities. These are necessary to create a vibrant, lively neighborhood where residents have access to essential amenities such as shops, healthcare, and educational institutions.

Public Spaces and Green Structures

A key feature of Dreven is its existing green structure, particularly the singels (waterways) along Lozerlaan. Preserving and enhancing these are central objectives of the project. The new development will be carefully integrated with the existing greenery, with particular emphasis on increasing the usability of public spaces. Existing "viewing greens" will be transformed into functional green spaces, featuring walking, and cycling paths as well as meeting places for residents. This will contribute to the neighborhood's climate adaptability and sustainability.

Sustainability and Mobility

A crucial aspect of the redevelopment is the transition towards sustainable mobility. To future-proof Dreven, there will be a shift from car dependency to greater reliance on cycling, walking, and public transport. Smart solutions, such as underground parking garages and cycling and pedestrian routes throughout the neighborhood, will ensure that the area remains both accessible and sustainable.

*Figure 22: Dreven spatial vision (Municipality of The Hague)*

### Gaarden

### Housing and Restructuring

The Gaarden project focuses on the complete replacement of the current social housing, with approximately 900 new homes set to be constructed. The old housing, which no longer meets modern standards, faces issues such as poor insulation, moisture problems, and outdated layouts. The new construction aims to achieve a significant quality improvement, with energy-efficient, future-proof homes.

One of the primary goals is to create a mixed neighborhood with a diverse housing supply, allowing not only low-income residents but also middle-income groups to remain in the area. The addition of mid-range rental and owner-occupied housing is expected to make Gaarden more attractive to a broader demographic, thereby enhancing the social and economic vitality of the neighborhood.

### Facilities and Public Space

Alongside new housing, approximately 1600 square meters of facilities will be introduced, including both community and commercial real estate. This is crucial for stimulating the local economy and ensuring that residents have access to essential services. The redesign of public spaces plays an important role in fostering social cohesion. The new layout of the neighborhood will be focused on promoting interaction and social control, with collective courtyards serving as meeting spaces for residents.

### Sustainability and Climate Adaptation

Sustainability is also a key priority in Gaarden. The new homes will be energy-efficient and gas-free, connected to a sustainable energy system. The design of the public space will be climate-adaptive, with a focus on greenery, water storage, and biodiversity. For instance, collective gardens and play areas will be established, contributing to a healthy living environment.

*Figure 23: Gaarden spatial vision (Municipality of The Hague)*

## Zichten

### Housing and Renovation

The Zichten project involves the demolition of 85% of the current housing stock, followed by the construction of approximately 1750 new homes. Like Dreven and Gaarden, the focus is on providing a diverse range of housing, where social housing is combined with mid-range rental and owner-occupied units. This strategy aims to create a more varied living environment, attracting both lower and middle-income groups.

Unlike the other two projects, some existing flats in Zichten will be preserved and renovated. This is important for maintaining the historical value and diversity of the housing stock. Additionally, the renovation of commercial and business premises in the area is incorporated to strengthen the local economy and reduce vacancy.

### Green Spaces and Facilities

Public space in Zichten will be redesigned with particular attention to the green structures and connections to surrounding neighborhoods. The project emphasizes the creation of high-quality green spaces that not only serve aesthetic purposes but are also functional for residents. This means creating areas for informal sports and recreation, as well as collective gardens and parks where residents can meet.

### Mobility and Sustainability

Zichten will also implement the mobility transition, focusing on reducing car use and encouraging cycling and walking. As in the other areas, the project aims to make both the housing and public spaces more sustainable, with energy-efficient solutions and a climate-resilient design.

*Figure 24: Zichten spatial vision (Municipality of The Hague)*

### 4.1.2  Stakeholders

Heijmans vastgoed

Heijmans Vastgoed, the real estate arm of Heijmans N.V., focuses on residential, commercial, and mixed-use developments in the Netherlands. Known for managing projects from concept to delivery, it emphasizes sustainability, innovation, and eco-friendly design. Their projects prioritize energy efficiency and smart technologies, while fostering community livability and social impact. Working closely with local governments and planners, Heijmans Vastgoed creates vibrant, sustainable neighborhoods and urban spaces. Their portfolio includes energy-neutral housing and urban regeneration projects, positioning them as a forward-thinking leader in Dutch real estate development.

Staedion

Staedion is one of the largest social housing corporations in the Netherlands, based in The Hague. With a mission to provide affordable, sustainable, and quality housing, Staedion plays a crucial role in addressing the growing demand for social housing, especially in urban areas. The organization manages over 36.000 homes, offering a range of housing solutions that cater to low and middle-income families, seniors, and individuals with special needs. Staedion focuses on more than just housing; it aims to create vibrant, inclusive, and livable communities by collaborating with local governments and other stakeholders. Sustainability, social responsibility, and long-term community development are central to Staedion's vision for the future.

Municipality of The Hague

The Hague is actively managing real estate development to meet rising housing demands and promote sustainability. The municipality emphasizes high-density, mixed-use projects, especially in central areas and near transit hubs, to optimize land use and reduce sprawl. Sustainable practices are central, with a focus on energy-efficient buildings and green spaces.

The city is also working to diversify housing options, including affordable units, through public-private partnerships. Key initiatives involve redeveloping former industrial areas and revitalizing waterfronts to create vibrant, resilient neighborhoods.

### 4.1.3  Social ambition

Table 4 shows the social ambitions of Heijmans, Staedion and the municipality of The Hague.

*Table 4: Social ambitions - Heijmans, Staedion and the municipality of The Hague (interviews)*

| Social ambition |
| --- |
| **Heijmans** |
| <ul><li>Heijmans places a strategic focus on well-being, integrating it as one of its five strategic pillars and defining it as "a prolonged state of satisfaction." This approach aims to enhance happiness and address social challenges through targeted projects.</li><li>Well-being serves as the foundation for Heijmans' social ambition, operationalized through specific initiatives, innovative collaboration models, and organizational adjustments.</li><li>Sustainability, another strategic pillar, often overlaps with well-being to further Heijmans' broader societal mission.</li><li>The company maintains strong partnerships with housing corporations and employs socially committed individuals who prioritize the living environment, health, and overall well-being.</li><li>Heijmans' social ambition emphasizes fostering resident resilience and independence, ensuring long-term improvements in living conditions and neighborhood stability.</li><li>As a constructing-developer, Heijmans leverages its ability to accept lower margins on development projects due to ongoing construction revenues. This flexibility allows them to incorporate meaningful social impact into their business model while maintaining financial viability.</li></ul> |
| **Staedion** |
| <ul><li>Founded to provide affordable housing for those unable to secure it themselves, with a strong social mission embedded throughout the organization.</li><li>Focus on measurable objectives like housing availability and livability, using SMART criteria for monitoring and reporting.</li><li>As part of their legal duties, Staedion fosters pleasant living environments and addresses disturbances caused by tenants with complex needs.</li><li>Providing housing for individuals with challenges, including former inmates and those with mental health issues, requiring tailored support and interventions.</li><li>"Maximizing social performance" guides Staedion's efforts across all areas and levels of operation.</li></ul> |
| **Municipality of The Hague** |
| <ul><li>Housing, living environment, health, and education form the foundation of the program's initiatives.</li><li>Social sector partners, such as educational institutions, actively shape the initiatives.</li><li>Includes a structural vision/master plan for the area's physical development.</li><li>The social and physical aspects are designed to complement and reinforce each other continuously.</li></ul> |

Table 5 shows how Heijmans, Staedion and the municipality of The Hague implement their social ambitions.

*Table 5: Implementation of social ambitions – Heijmans, Staedion and the municipality of The Hague (interviews)*

| Implementation |
|---|
| **Heijmans** |
| • Heijmans integrates its responsibility for "hardware" (design and construction) with an understanding of "software" (how spaces are used and organized) to achieve meaningful social impact. |
| • By conducting detailed neighborhood analyses, Heijmans tailors its approach to address unique challenges, such as adaptable housing needs, physical inactivity, or social vulnerability, ensuring solutions are aligned with local dynamics. |
| • Heijmans prioritizes creating mixed-income neighborhoods to avoid monocultures, enhancing resilience, vibrancy, and support for local residents and businesses. Through the "Asset-Based Community Development" (ABCD) method, the company focuses on strengthening communities, fostering self-sufficiency, and instilling pride among residents. |
| • To ensure accountability, Heijmans collaborates with Utrecht University to measure social impact using indicators like education rates, crime statistics, and community resilience. |
| **Staedion** |
| • Provides DAEB (social housing) and non-DAEB (commercial spaces) services, with renewed focus on non-DAEB initiatives in vulnerable neighborhoods. |
| • Addresses the needs of residents who don't qualify for social housing, especially in areas like The Hague Southwest. |
| • Focuses on diverse housing options to enable residents to progress within the same neighborhood, fostering sustainability and social resilience. |
| • Initial decrease in housing due to demolition, followed by gradual growth and development of amenities. |
| • Starts with limited commercial spaces, expanding as the neighborhood evolves to support vibrant, sustainable communities. |
| • Substantial investments are made to reintroduce amenities, supporting long-term neighborhood revitalization despite low purchasing power. |
| **Municipality of The Hague** |
| • Oversees physical projects like real estate and infrastructure, with an emphasis on integration across political and social challenges. |
| • Social Affairs and Welfare manage the social domain, while Education, Culture, and Welfare handle health, requiring significant organizational effort for effective involvement in physical projects. |
| • The area faces both social and physical challenges, with many post-war buildings at the end of their lifespan. |
| • In Southwest, the Municipality addresses housing, socio-economic issues, energy and mobility transitions, and sustainability simultaneously in one location. |

Table 6 shows how Heijmans is using innovation in their social ambition.

*Table 6: Innovation in social ambition - Heijmans (interviews)*

| Innovation |
|---|
| **Heijmans** |
| • Heijmans ensures sustained engagement in its projects through data-driven monitoring conducted by its smart-city team, evaluating impacts on biodiversity, social cohesion, and other critical areas. |
| • To amplify meaningful outcomes, the company has launched Studio LAB, a dedicated team focused on advancing social impact and achieving strategic goals. Operating nationally and supporting regional initiatives, Studio LAB emphasizes integral vision development across diverse projects. The Studio LAB team comprises seven experts specializing in fields like architecture, senior housing, and governance strategies. It fosters collaboration and knowledge-sharing within Heijmans, ensuring innovative practices are applied across various project types. |
| • Heijmans is committed to developing a livability measurement tool on par with its sustainability metrics. By exploring partnerships and methodologies, the company aims to establish a robust system to quantify and enhance livability in the communities it develops. |

### 4.1.4 Livability impact

Table 7 shows the livability impact elements of Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten.

*Table 7: Livability impact elements Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten (interviews)*

| **Livability impact** |
|---|
| **Housing stock** |
| • Many residents face significant concerns, including mold, poor housing conditions, and limited accessibility due to the absence of elevators, which particularly affects those with mobility challenges. <br> • Residents living in single-family homes with gardens and sheds express hesitancy about relocating to smaller apartments as part of redevelopment plans. <br> • Some privately owned flats within homeowner associations (VvE) are in equally poor condition. Many individual owners lack the financial means for essential repairs, resulting in inadequate property stewardship and, in some cases, calls for municipal intervention. <br> • The municipality aims to address these issues by diversifying housing types and tackling the housing shortage. Currently, the neighborhood is dominated by social housing and low-rise buildings without elevators, limiting both livability and accessibility. The goal is to create a more balanced and functional housing stock while improving the overall quality of life for residents. |
| **Physical environment** |
| • The deteriorating state of the neighborhood has led parents to feel uneasy about letting their children play outside. <br> • Heijmans is responsible for creating a pleasant living environment with sufficient greenery, shaded areas, walking and cycling routes, and nearby amenities. |
| **Amenities** |
| • Redevelopment projects in South West often lead to an initial decline in livability, as residents relocate and community amenities temporarily diminish. While adding new facilities early in the process would help maintain vibrancy, it is challenging due to the reduced number of initial residents. <br> • Heijmans conducted a needs assessment to identify essential facilities, such as schools and healthcare services, ensuring their reinstatement post-redevelopment. <br> • The neighborhood's population decline—from 100,000 to 70,000 due to smaller household sizes—has weakened demand for local amenities. <br> • Economic challenges, reflected in high vacancy rates and closures like the Leyweg cinema, highlight the importance of attracting higher-income residents to strengthen the neighborhood's economic base and sustain its facilities. |
| **Social cohesion** |
| • The "I Want My Neighbor Back" campaign highlights residents' strong desire to return after renovations and maintain their social connections. <br> • Urban renewal efforts have shifted to prioritize enhancing neighborhoods without displacing residents, emphasizing the preservation of established social networks. <br> • The Municipality of The Hague prioritizes preserving social structures during redevelopment, supported by return guarantees that encourage residents with strong ties to stay. This commitment to retaining invested residents strengthens the neighborhood's social fabric and promotes overall well-being, ensuring a lasting positive social impact. <br> • Staedion promotes community-driven initiatives such as gardens and neighborhood events, stepping back as residents take ownership. <br> • Heijmans focuses on designing spaces that foster connection and strengthen community dynamics, reducing reliance on external resources like healthcare. |
| **Disturbance & insecurity** |
| • Architectural design often overlooks practical considerations such as safety, opportunities for social interaction, and clear sightlines in residential spaces. Engaging directly with residents during the design process helps clarify these real-life needs, ensuring the design aligns with the community's requirements. <br> • Heijmans incorporates flexibility into its projects by designing optional communal spaces that can be converted into additional housing if necessary. This approach reflects a practical evaluation of communal areas, questioning whether they are consistently used or if they remain underutilized despite their potential to enhance the atmosphere. This adaptability ensures that the design serves both the residents' needs and the project's overall effectiveness. |

## 4.1.5 Social impact strategies

Table 8 shows the social impact strategies used in Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten.

*Table 8: Social impact strategies - Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten (interviews)*

| Public space investment |
| --- |
| • Heijmans employs a "Now and Later" strategy, making early investments such as park creation to enhance long-term area quality and build community support. |
| • Through transparent evaluations, Heijmans aligns its plans with municipal priorities, fostering trust with local governments. |
| • Acknowledging residents' desire for stronger connections, Heijmans designs shared spaces and pathways that encourage casual interactions and strengthen community bonds. |

| Social investment |
| --- |
| • Heijmans faces financial challenges in making upfront investments for long-term social benefits, such as reducing loneliness and promoting physical activity investments like jogging paths, walking trails, and welcoming public spaces, require significant initial costs but yield delayed benefits. |
| • While discussions with insurers suggest potential partnerships, regulatory constraints limit long-term funding options. |
| • Both Heijmans and municipalities grapple with justifying social expenditures, as the long-term returns on well-being initiatives are difficult to quantify, creating tension between short-term costs and long-term impact. |

| Long term commitment |
| --- |
| • Urban development is an ongoing process, and Heijmans recognizes that cities and livability are never "finished," requiring continuous attention to prevent challenges like rising crime when focus diminishes. |
| • Committing to long-term neighborhood engagement for 10–20 years, Heijmans works alongside residents through various development phases, deploying community managers and leveraging existing community strengths and key figures for placemaking. |
| • To ensure sustainable impact, Heijmans explores transferring ownership of commercial spaces to Staedion or the municipality, enabling better control over future use. |
| • Heijmans' strategic aim to "leave everything better," showcasing its redevelopment expertise and focus on lasting improvements. |
| • In partnership with the National Program and housing corporations like Staedion, Heijmans strives for sustainable outcomes. |
| • The Municipality of The Hague values the extended collaboration, particularly Heijmans' role in health initiatives and its dedication to long-term community development. |

| Key figures |
| --- |
| • Heijmans emphasizes community engagement by identifying local opportunities, strengths, and key figures within neighborhoods and collaborating closely with them. In The Hague's Southwest district, partnerships include a bike repair shop owner promoting cycling and a resident managing a community kitchen and fitness classes. |
| • To maintain a strong local presence, Heijmans operates an open-door project office and deploys team members to engage regularly with residents. |
| • Heijmans focuses on strengthening residents' existing connections and leveraging their experiential knowledge. |
| • Unemployed residents becoming energy coaches, contribute to sustainability efforts like solar panel installations and energy education. |
| • Business owners are supported during construction, with efforts to address their relocation needs while keeping them engaged in the process. |
| • Staedion has a commercial strategy that prioritizes tenants based on their community impact. Through the "making" theme, Staedion promotes hands-on, socially engaging activities tied to health and well-being, coordinated by their commercial department. |
| • Tenants are offered minimal rent in exchange for contributing to community life through organized activities and engagement. Staedion monitors these contributions by evaluating foot traffic, activities, and interactions to ensure they foster a vibrant and dynamic neighborhood. |

| Relocation |
| --- |
| • Rehousing is a central concern for residents, as reflected in the high interest in rehousing panels at community events. |
| • A return guarantee ensures that residents are asked at multiple stages whether they wish to return to the redeveloped neighborhood, with their intentions documented and respected. Residents are offered three housing options that meet specific criteria, with an appeals process available if none are suitable. |
| • Staedion begins informal discussions with residents two years before construction completion, issuing urgency certificates a year later to formalize the relocation process and provide stability. Special attention is given to individuals facing health or family-related challenges, acknowledging relocation as a significant life event. |
| • The "bathtub effect" describes how housing availability initially decreases during redevelopment but gradually increases as new units are completed. |

- Residents receive a relocation allowance of €7,500 (subject to change) and priority access to housing options, including social, middle-market, or private rentals and purchase opportunities.
- Housing assignments are determined by income, household composition, and preferences, ensuring that options align with residents' needs. The return guarantee particularly supports "over-housed" residents slightly above the social housing threshold, maintaining a stable and engaged community. This initiative, led by Staedion and Heijmans with support from the municipality, emphasizes long-term community benefits and fosters collaborative efforts to support residents through the transition.

## Participation

- Heijmans distinguishes three levels of resident participation: communication (informing), limited participation (gathering input), and full participation (co-creation or decision-making). In vulnerable neighborhoods, engagement often focuses on communication or limited participation.
- To ensure clarity and consistency, Heijmans, Staedion, and the Municipality of The Hague coordinate efforts under the "First a Better Neighborhood" platform, supported by a neutral point of contact.
- Heijmans engages residents by presenting plans, collecting feedback, and incorporating collective concerns into projects. Initially, discussions center on relocation, with broader participation growing as residents settle. To foster collective responsibility, Heijmans encourages residents to prioritize community needs over individual concerns.
- Specialist teams from all three stakeholders collaborate, maintaining a unified message during fixed neighborhood visits. Rehousing representatives attend all meetings to address relocation concerns.
- Staedion emphasizes clear and ongoing communication, regularly updating residents even during delays.
- As construction progresses, residents' interests have shifted from immediate relocation concerns to long-term plans, including housing types, public spaces, and amenities.
- Through multiple design-phase meetings and collaboration with key community figures, Heijmans and its partners work to integrate residents' insights into the redevelopment process, fostering trust and meaningful involvement.

## Collaboration

- The Municipality of The Hague is adding a significant number of open-market homes and requires a market partner to manage this development.
- Staedion recognizes the neighborhood's poor housing conditions, social issues, and crime, emphasizing the need for renewal alongside strategic partners.
- Heijmans brings an integrated approach to area development, addressing housing, mobility, sustainability, and community needs, complementing the efforts of municipalities and housing corporations.
- The municipality's responsibilities include setting frameworks, facilitating public space development, and ensuring the public interest is maintained. However, coordination between social services and urban development is limited, indicating room for improved integration to achieve greater impact. Heijmans contributes by organizing public space projects and enhancing the impact of housing corporations with their expertise.
- A public-private partnership among Heijmans, Staedion, and the municipality coordinates property, zoning, and construction efforts, creating a solid collaboration framework.
- Heijmans' role as a long-term partner ensures sustainable and profitable development, avoiding fragmented approaches. Their profit-driven motivation aligns with the municipality's interest in fostering positive neighborhood growth.
- Despite some partnerships with health organizations, insurers show limited engagement in preventive projects, highlighting an area for potential improvement.
- Staedion has partnered with a museum to create a neighborhood satellite for educational projects, funded by a socially-focused bank, demonstrating innovative collaboration.
- Staedion and Heijmans align schedules for rehousing residents and relocating entrepreneurs, coordinating with the municipality to manage city-wide displacement effectively.

## 4.2  Case 2 – Van Deysselbuurt

### 4.2.1  Description

The Van Deysselbuurt is a large-scale redevelopment and renovation initiative in the neighborhood near the central area of Slotermeer. This project encompasses various aspects, including urban renewal, infrastructure improvement, social amenities, and the enhancement of green spaces. The redevelopment of the Van Deysselbuurt aims to strengthen the neighborhood as a clearly defined residential area with improved infrastructure.



*Figure 25: Van Deysselbuurt impression (Rochdale)*

The neighborhood is structured around four primary traffic routes: Burgemeester Röellstraat, Lodewijk van Deysselstraat, Van Moerkerkenstraat, and Burgemeester van Leeuwenlaan. These streets are being redesigned to enhance spatial quality, with a reduced emphasis on car traffic and an increased focus on greenery. The project emphasizes improving traffic safety, with specific attention to cyclists and pedestrians. Burgemeester van Leeuwenlaan will be redesigned as a lush, tree-lined avenue, while Van Deysselstraat and Van Moerkerkenstraat will remain crucial routes for slow traffic.

*Table 9: General information Case van Deysselbuurt*

| Specification | Van Deysselbuurt |
|---|---|
| Location | Amsterdam, The Netherlands |
| Size | 1756 units |
| Type of project | Renovation, demolition, new construction |
| Developer | Rochdale |
| Housing association | Rochdale |

The project involves a mix of demolition, new construction, and renovation to enhance the quality and diversity of housing. The development includes a mix of social housing, mid-range rental units, and owner-occupied homes. This ranges from single-person apartments to homes for large families. The distribution is 1078 social housing (61%), 438 mid-range rental (25%), and 240 private sector (14%). Housing blocks are being adapted to create better connections with public spaces. For instance, the homes in the central zone are being transformed from strip construction to open blocks, contributing to greater social safety and a wider variety in the use of outdoor spaces.

Green spaces play a central role in the neighborhood's new design. The plan preserves and enhances the existing green borders on the west and north sides of the neighborhood. New trees are being planted, and the accessibility of green spaces is being improved, with a focus on making these areas more accessible and inviting for residents. The neighborhood will feature new sports and play areas that are better integrated into the existing green structure. Play areas for young children will be located close to residential buildings, while those for older children and teenagers will be situated at the neighborhood's edges.

The project also involves the development of social and educational facilities. A new all-in-one school is being constructed on the west side of the neighborhood. This school will replace the current, more isolated location and will include space for childcare and a gymnasium. A new youth center is being developed in the neighborhood, offering various activities related to sports, art, and culture. This center aims to support and connect the local youth.
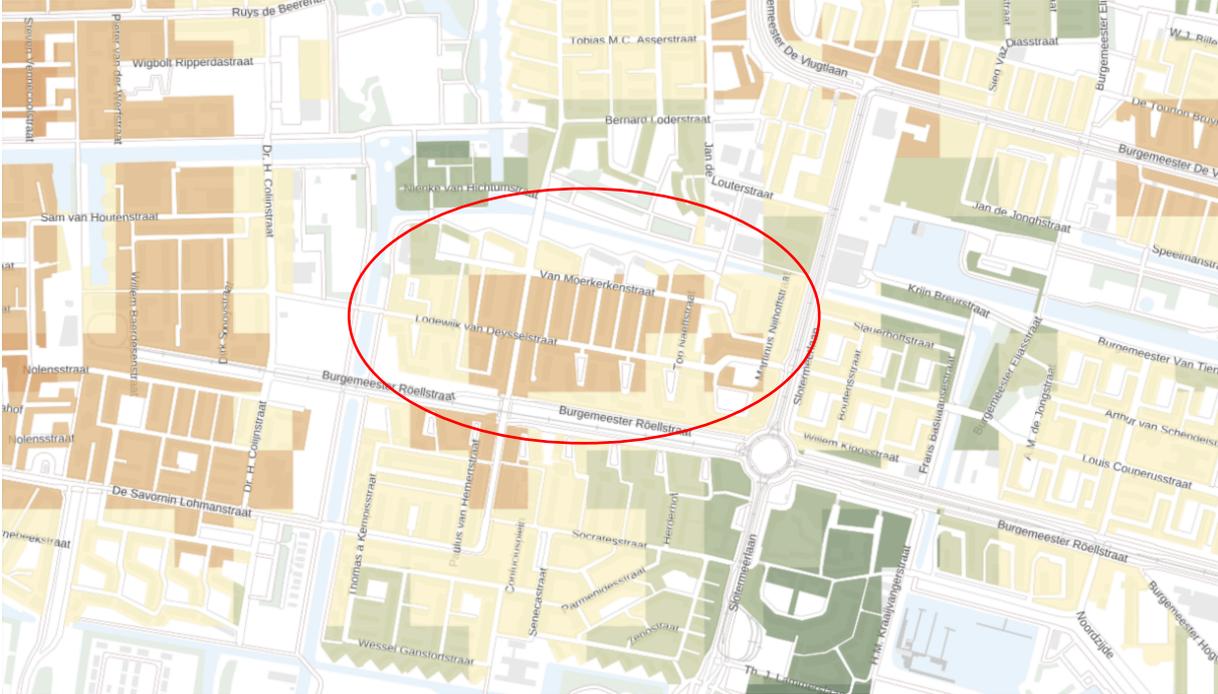


*Figure 26: Livability van Deysselbuurt (Leefbaarometer, 2022)*

The project is being executed in phases, with the first housing units expected to be completed in 2027. Renovations and new constructions are being carefully planned to minimize the impact on current residents. Efforts are being made to maintain social cohesion and improve the neighborhood's overall livability.

### 4.2.2 Stakeholders

<u>Rochdale</u>

Rochdale is a prominent housing association in the Netherlands, known for its commitment to providing affordable and high-quality housing options. Established with a mission to serve the community, Rochdale plays a vital role in addressing the housing needs of a diverse population, including low- and middle-income households. The association manages a substantial portfolio of rental properties, ranging from social housing to more market-oriented options, primarily in the Amsterdam metropolitan area and its surroundings.

Rochdale focuses on creating sustainable and inclusive neighborhoods, ensuring that residents have access to essential amenities and a high quality of life. In addition to maintaining and developing housing stock, the association actively engages in community development projects, supporting initiatives that foster social cohesion and enhance the living environment.

<u>Municipality of Amsterdam</u>

The municipality of Amsterdam is actively addressing its real estate challenges by focusing on sustainable growth, affordability, and urban density. As the capital and largest city of the Netherlands, Amsterdam faces significant demand for housing and commercial space due to its population growth and thriving economy. To manage this, the city has implemented strategic policies to increase the supply of affordable housing, while maintaining the city's historic charm and livability.

Amsterdam's real estate development strategy centers around densifying urban areas, particularly near transit hubs, to reduce pressure on surrounding green spaces. The municipality prioritizes the construction of energy-efficient buildings and sustainable infrastructure, aligning with its broader goals of reducing carbon emissions and promoting eco-friendly urban living.

To tackle the housing crisis, Amsterdam is working to provide more affordable and social housing units, often through public-private partnerships. Key projects include the redevelopment of former industrial zones, the transformation of waterfront areas, and the revitalization of existing neighborhoods to accommodate more residents while preserving the city's unique character. These efforts reflect Amsterdam's commitment to creating a balanced and inclusive urban environment that meets the needs of its growing population.

### 4.2.3 Social ambition

Table 10 shows the social ambitions of Rochdale and the municipality of Amsterdam.

*Table 10: Social ambitions - Rochdale and the municipality of Amsterdam (interviews)*

| Social ambition |
|---|
| **Rochdale** |
| • Rochdale is committed to long-term community engagement, retaining developed properties in its portfolio to ensure a lasting presence and influence. |
| • Guided by a strong social mission, the organization prioritizes affordability and the creation of "strong neighborhoods" that embrace diversity and foster social connections. |
| • Unlike commercial developers who focus primarily on profit, Rochdale distinguishes itself by investing in projects that deliver lasting social impact and community development. |
| • With a flexible approach to projects, Rochdale often undertakes initiatives that may not generate financial returns, placing community benefits above profitability. |

| Municipality of Amsterdam |
|---|
| • Their mission goes beyond merely constructing housing; it is about providing robust housing solutions for diverse groups while building vibrant, thriving neighborhoods that support residents' well-being and long-term success. |

| Municipality of Amsterdam |
|---|
| • Amsterdam's civil servants uphold the core values of equal rights, freedom, and well-being for all, as outlined in their official oath. |
| • The city council decided in 2021 to pursue a comprehensive neighborhood renewal approach, not just focused on increasing housing units. |
| • The ambition includes allocating space for social and community facilities, acknowledging the additional costs but committing to this as part of the city's broader investment plan. |

Table 11 shows the implementation of the social ambitions of Rochdale and the municipality of Amsterdam.

*Table 11: Implementation of social ambitions – Rochdale and the municipality of Amsterdam (interviews)*

| Implementation |
|---|
| **Rochdale** |
| • Rochdale is dedicated to delivering high-quality homes, ensuring that social rental housing meets the same standards as owner-occupied properties, making them indistinguishable from one another. |
| • To address the needs of residents who fall between income thresholds for social housing and homeownership, Rochdale holds middle-income rental housing within its portfolio to ensure long-term accessibility. |
| • In the Van Deyssel neighborhood, Rochdale's ownership of 90% of properties provides a unique opportunity to drive significant social impact and execute streamlined improvements. However, while concentrated ownership allows for decisive action during prosperous times, it can also pose challenges during economic downturns. This was evident during a decade-long period of stagnation in Van Deyssel, highlighting the dual-edged nature of such concentrated investments. |
| **Municipality of Amsterdam** |
| • The Municipality of Amsterdam's project team includes engineers, public space designers, urban planners, legal experts, and financial specialists. |
| • Ensures the project stays within budget, on schedule, and that team members fulfill their responsibilities. |
| • The Land and Development Department hires the Project Management Bureau, which assigns a project manager to oversee the project. |

Table 12 show how Rochdale is using innovation in their social ambition.

*Table 12: Innovation in social ambition - Rochdale (interviews)*

| Innovation |
|---|
| **Rochdale** |
| • Rochdale is committed to setting measurable objectives to evaluate improvements in neighborhood quality, housing standards, resident satisfaction, and overall livability over time. By establishing an early baseline, the organization can effectively track progress and compare end results to initial conditions, ensuring transparency and accountability in its initiatives. |
| • To identify neighborhoods requiring additional attention, Rochdale leverages detailed municipal studies on demographics and social characteristics, including education levels, literacy, health status, and personal challenges faced by residents. While objectives often center on tangible metrics like the number of new housing units or physical upgrades, Rochdale also aims to assess the long-term social impacts of its efforts, emphasizing the broader well-being of communities. |

### 4.2.4 Livability impact

Table 13 shows the livability impact elements of the Van Deysselbuurt.

*Table 13: Livability impact elements Van Deysselbuurt (interviews)*

| Livability impact |
|---|
| • Rochdale prioritizes safety, accessibility, and youth facilities to improve livability and create a pleasant environment for all. |
| • Rochdale's approach includes providing quality housing with adequate space to support residents' socio-economic progress. |
| • The Municipality of Amsterdam emphasizes improving neighborhoods by enabling personal development, income stability, child safety, and support systems. |
| • Both Rochdale and the municipality aim to combine physical and social improvements to foster thriving communities. |
| **Housing stock** |
| • Maintenance neglect in the area has resulted in persistent issues like mold, prompting the municipality to urge housing corporations to address these problems. |
| • Rochdale is focused on providing quality housing for families with limited budgets, tackling overcrowding, and ensuring children have private spaces for study and play. |
| • Rochdale is addressing the shortage of accessible housing by building nine wheelchair-accessible homes, each 100 square meters. These efforts aim to expand housing options and facilities, contributing meaningfully to the social well-being of the community. |
| • To support housing progression, Rochdale is introducing mid-range rental units for residents who no longer qualify for social housing. The neighborhood's housing mix is being restructured, reducing social rental housing from 90% to 60% while maintaining the absolute number of social units. Additionally, 20–30% mid-range rentals and 10% owner-occupied homes will be added, increasing the total housing units to 1,100–1,200 while replacing 512 outdated units. |
| **Physical environment** |
| • Rochdale is focused on transforming the central street into the backbone of the neighborhood, creating a vibrant and welcoming meeting place for residents. |
| • At the heart of this vision is the community center, strategically located on the street and thoughtfully programmed with neighborhood-focused businesses and social functions. |
| • The diverse and intentional use of ground-floor commercial spaces plays a crucial role in enhancing the street's appeal and improving the overall livability of the neighborhood. |
| **Amenities** |
| • Rochdale takes a holistic approach to neighborhood support, prioritizing facilities that extend beyond housing to foster social functions and provide spaces for learning and studying. |
| • Regular, data-driven assessments track neighborhood development, identifying evolving needs such as creating spaces where middle-income residents can work and socialize. |
| • The community center will play a pivotal role in offering accessible social services to enhance community well-being. |
| • Rochdale is developing an inclusive youth center designed for sports, arts, and talent showcasing, with programming tailored to the needs of the community. |
| **Social cohesion** |
| • Creating a safe and pleasant environment is essential for fostering strong social connections among neighbors. |
| • Emphasizing the social aspects of neighborhood life, spaces are designed to encourage community interaction, providing opportunities for residents to meet, support each other, and build relationships. |
| • Cooking is highlighted as a unifying activity within the community, often taking place in the community center. |
| **Disturbance & insecurity** |
| • Supporting young people is essential for fostering success and reducing disruptive behavior in the neighborhood. |
| • Developing targeted social programs and increasing resources for youth care and education, such as providing additional support for teachers, can significantly enhance safety and social cohesion. |
| • Addressing youth-related issues, such as vandalism, is critical for improving the neighborhood's reputation and creating a secure environment. |
| • Inclusive efforts that ensure opportunities for individuals at the lower end of the social spectrum contribute to the well-being of the entire community, promoting stability and shared growth. |

### 4.2.5 Social impact strategies

Table 14 shows the social impact strategies used in the Van Deysselbuurt.

*Table 14: Social impact strategies - Van Deysselbuurt (interviews)*

| **Public space investment** |
| --- |
| • Building entrances have been redesigned and reoriented to align with the new neighborhood layout, enhancing orientation and accessibility.<br>• Shared, walkable courtyards now replace previously separate areas, offering increased greenery to improve livability and foster social interaction.<br>• Marginal spaces near building facades are designated for private use, while play streets provide safe environments for children and encourage neighborly connections.<br>• Parking spaces are relocated to inner courtyards, combining greenery with functionality to create a natural and welcoming atmosphere. |
| **Social investment** |
| • Rochdale supports local entrepreneurs by offering affordable "makerspaces" and renting properties to community-oriented organizations at reduced rates.<br>• Rochdale invests in community well-being by funding and developing facilities such as community centers, youth centers, daycare centers, schools, and emergency housing for individuals in crisis.<br>• Prioritizing social objectives over profit, Rochdale ensures feasibility through housing densification.<br>• Collaborating with the municipality, it develops essential services, including a multifunctional community center for support organizations and community activities.<br>• Neighborhood initiatives, like involving children in beautifying redevelopment areas, foster engagement during transitions. While these social investments are vital, their value often goes unmeasured in financial reports, making their justification and recognition challenging. |
| **Long term commitment** |
| • Rochdale demonstrates a deep long-term commitment to neighborhood development by investing in the "softer side" of community growth and remaining actively engaged well beyond construction. It takes accountability for property management, maintenance, and cleanliness, ensuring consistent involvement with residents and addressing their needs.<br>• By retaining ownership of commercial spaces, Rochdale maintains control over business operations, adapting them to align with neighborhood priorities and quality standards.<br>• Collaboration with local partners is central to Rochdale's approach, sharing responsibility for the long-term well-being of the community. This enduring commitment contrasts with the more transient involvement of commercial developers, a distinction recognized and valued by the Municipality of Amsterdam as part of Rochdale's socially driven mission. |
| **Key figures** |
| - |
| **Relocation** |
| • Rochdale faces significant challenges in rehousing residents during redevelopment projects, primarily due to insufficient housing stock and the complexity of managing transitions. The shortage of large family homes in Amsterdam, especially in Nieuw-West, poses additional difficulties for Rochdale's many large households.<br>• While residents have the option to return after redevelopment, this is not guaranteed, and many choose to remain in their new homes after settling in.<br>• To minimize disruption, Rochdale prioritizes rehousing residents into permanent, new homes within the same area, preserving social connections and reducing the need for multiple moves.<br>• The densification ambition, which involves building more homes than are demolished, creates a housing buffer that facilitates smoother relocation and allows many residents to stay in their neighborhood.<br>• Through a "right-sizing" initiative, Rochdale works to better match housing to household needs, addressing mismatches where homes are too large or small.<br>• Framework agreements protect residents' rights to priority rehousing and potential return, though the process may involve several years and multiple moves. Return rates vary, with about 30-40% of residents returning after demolition and reconstruction projects compared to 70% for renovations.<br>• The Municipality of Amsterdam expects all residents to ultimately benefit from improved living conditions, whether through interim or permanent housing, ensuring long-term gains for the community. |
| **Participation** |
| • Rochdale actively addresses senior housing needs by building homes designed for independent living and engaging seniors in discussions about their future requirements, including support and adequate facilities.<br>• To foster community connections, Rochdale surveys residents about their interest in community spaces, exploring purposes such as social activities, consultations with social workers, or resident-led events. |

- Supporting young people is another priority, with Rochdale collaborating with youth organizations to integrate social needs into housing, ensuring additional support for those requiring it.
- For the redevelopment of the main street, Rochdale involves residents in shaping its future, balancing the needs of current residents with new arrivals. This approach emphasizes entrepreneurship, community engagement, and creating a vibrant, inclusive neighborhood.

## Collaboration

- Rochdale's land exploitation framework in Van Deysselbuurt prepares plots for development, allocating sites for social rental and owner-occupied housing. Proceeds from market-rate sales to Heijmans are reinvested into the project.
- Collaboration with the municipality ensures financial alignment through agreements on land price distribution and investment plans, supported by the municipality's equalization fund to offset costs for high-need areas.
- The project's densification ambition doubles the number of homes compared to those demolished, enabled by municipal agreements to increase housing density. Rochdale's designs are coordinated with municipal public space plans and parking analyses, ensuring balanced infrastructure. Narrowing streets improves accessibility, freeing space for construction while maintaining strong transport links.
- As a partner in renewal, the municipality plays a dual role, also enforcing compliance under the Housing Act, fostering a cooperative but occasionally challenging relationship. Rochdale successfully advocated for the inclusion of a school and daycare, addressing critical neighborhood needs.
- Social return initiatives, developed in partnership with local contractors and youth organizations, provide employment opportunities for local youth, supported by a project leader funded by the National Program. A collaborative network of regular meetings with social organizations and the municipality enriches the project with local insights, addressing management issues and fostering strong, integrated partnerships.

## 4.3 Case 3 – Van Meekeren

### 4.3.1 Description

The Van Meekeren area in Oud-Crooswijk, Rotterdam, is on the brink of a significant redevelopment. This project, in collaboration with housing corporation Havensteder, primary schools Pierre Bayle and Vier Leeuwen, and the local community, is part of an ambitious Master Plan. This plan, developed by the Municipality of Rotterdam, aims to enhance livability, housing supply, and public spaces, with the goal of creating a future-proof urban neighborhood.



*Figure 27: Render new construction Van Meekeren (Heren 5)*

The redevelopment of the Van Meekeren area focuses on four central pillars:

**Socio-economic improvement:** The neighborhood should become a place where residents have greater opportunities for social and economic development.

**Improved livability:** The redesign of public spaces and infrastructure improvements aim to create a cleaner, greener, and safer neighborhood.

**Diverse housing stock:** The project introduces a mix of social housing and mid-segment homes without reducing the number of social housing units. This fosters greater diversity in the neighborhood, providing space for both current and new residents.

**Active community:** A key goal is to encourage active participation from residents and entrepreneurs, so they feel a sense of ownership and contribute to the neighborhood's ongoing development.

| Specification | Van Meekeren |
|---|---|
| Location | Rotterdam, The Netherlands |
| Size | 150 units |
| Type of project | Renovation, new construction |
| Developer | VORM |
| Housing association | Havensteder |

*Table 15: General information Case Krachtig Crooswijk*

The project includes the construction of new housing, a primary school, and a redesign of public spaces. Modern and sustainable building techniques will be employed, while preserving historical features where possible.



*Figure 28: Masterplan Van Meekerengebied (Municipality of Rotterdam)*

A total of 140 to 160 new homes will be constructed. This includes the renewal of 79 social housing units by Havensteder, with a guarantee that current residents can return, and the addition of 60 to 80 mid-segment homes. Parking spaces for these new homes will be created on-site to reduce street traffic. The Pierre Bayle and Vier Leeuwen primary schools will merge into a new building that will not only provide space for education but also for community activities. The new school will have its own gymnasium and on-site parking. Additionally, the area surrounding the school will be largely car-free to ensure children's safety. Redesigning streets and squares are a major component of the project. Approximately 10% of street parking spaces will be reduced to make room for more green spaces and safer streets. Around 25 new trees will be planted to compensate for those removed, and 1,200 m² of pavement will be replaced with greenery. The project places a strong emphasis on climate adaptation, with provisions for water storage and biodiversity.

Sustainability is a central theme in the plans for the Van Meekeren area. In addition to greening streets and squares, green roofs and climate-resilient measures will be implemented to prepare the neighborhood for future challenges such as heat stress and heavy rainfall. A robust ecological structure will be established through the addition of tree rows and connections between green courtyards and public spaces. Moreover, the new buildings will be designed to be sustainable and energy efficient.

The Master Plan also includes space for local businesses and community facilities. Between 200 and 400 m² of commercial space will be created, depending on economic feasibility. This will provide opportunities for new services and enterprises that will further strengthen the neighborhood.

*Figure 29: Livability Crooswijk (Leefbaarometer, 2022)*

From the outset, the local community has been actively involved in the development of the plans. Through participation meetings and discussions, residents and stakeholders have been able to share their ideas and concerns. This input has been incorporated into the Master Plan and will continue to play an important role during the implementation phase of the project. A resident advisory group will also be established to contribute to the further elaboration of the plans.

The project will be carried out in several phases, with an expected completion by 2029. During this period, the Municipality of Rotterdam, Havensteder, and the school board will work closely together to achieve the goals of the Master Plan. The redesign of public spaces will largely be financed by a previously reserved budget of €3.5 million, allocated from the Oud-Crooswijk Action Plan 2017-2020. Havensteder will invest in the renewal of its housing blocks, while Stichting BOOR will oversee the construction of the new primary school. Additional funding sources will also be sought to fully realize the project.

The Master Plan 'Oud Crooswijk in the lift' serves as the foundation for the redevelopment of the Van Meekeren area. This plan guides the implementation of housing and public space developments, ensuring that the Van Meekeren area becomes a future-proof, livable, and sustainable neighborhood.

### 4.3.2   Stakeholders

#### VORM

VORM is a prominent Dutch construction and real estate development company. VORM has grown into one of the country's leading players in the construction sector. It specializes in a wide range of projects, including residential, commercial, and infrastructural developments, with a focus on sustainability, innovation, and quality.

65

With over a century of experience, VORM is known for its commitment to creating high-quality, energy-efficient homes and buildings that meet the evolving needs of modern society. The company embraces cutting-edge technologies, such as modular construction and smart building solutions, to enhance efficiency and reduce environmental impact. Furthermore, VORM places a strong emphasis on social responsibility and collaboration with local communities.

## Havensteder

Havensteder is a housing association based in the Netherlands, focused on providing affordable and sustainable housing solutions in the Rotterdam region. Established in 2011 from the merger of two housing corporations, Havensteder manages a large portfolio of rental properties, primarily catering to lower and middle-income residents. Its mission is to ensure that everyone, regardless of their financial situation, has access to safe, comfortable, and well-maintained homes.

Havensteder emphasizes social responsibility, working to improve the quality of life in local communities by investing in the upkeep of neighborhoods, enhancing sustainability, and promoting social cohesion. The association is also actively engaged in urban renewal projects, revitalizing older housing stock, and developing new, energy-efficient homes to meet the growing demands of a diverse and dynamic population.

By focusing on inclusivity and long-term sustainability, Havensteder plays a crucial role in addressing housing challenges in Rotterdam, contributing to the overall well-being of the city's residents, and fostering stronger, more connected communities.

## Municipality of Rotterdam

The municipality of Rotterdam is at the forefront of innovative real estate development, driven by its rapid growth and commitment to sustainability. As one of Europe's largest ports and an industrial hub, Rotterdam faces unique challenges and opportunities in shaping its urban landscape. The city's real estate strategy focuses on creating a resilient, inclusive, and future-proof environment while balancing economic expansion with social and environmental goals.

Rotterdam is prioritizing high-density, mixed-use developments, particularly in former industrial areas and along its waterfront, transforming them into vibrant urban districts. The municipality is also committed to increasing the supply of affordable housing, ensuring a balanced housing market for all income levels. Sustainability plays a central role, with emphasis on energy-efficient buildings, green infrastructure, and climate-adaptive designs to address rising sea levels and environmental concerns.

Public-private partnerships are key to Rotterdam's real estate projects, allowing for large-scale redevelopment while maintaining a focus on livability and accessibility. By integrating modern architecture with its post-war identity, Rotterdam is shaping itself into a dynamic city that embraces both its industrial roots and its future as a leading center for innovation and urban living.

### 4.3.3  Social ambition

Table 16 shows the social ambitions of VORM, Havensteder and the municipality of Rotterdam.

*Table 16: Social ambitions - VORM, Havensteder and the municipality of Rotterdam (interviews)*

| Social ambition |
| --- |
| **VORM** |
| • VORM emphasizes the importance of clearly defining what makes a project "social," distinguishing meaningful social contributions from standard developments. |
| **Havensteder** |
| • Corporations have moved away from neighborhood development to focus on renting homes due to legislative changes and the economic crisis but are now adopting broader neighborhood-level approaches. |
| • Corporations lack the manpower, expertise, and financial resources to manage comprehensive development alone and increasingly seek partnerships to strengthen their efforts. |
| • Focused on long-term housing quality and livability, Havensteder is setting clear objectives and strategies for sustainable neighborhood management. |
| • Havensteder is innovating its practices, defining goals, and forming necessary partnerships to implement transformative projects. |
| • As an observer and facilitator, Havensteder works with a broader social network to effectively address neighborhood issues. |
| **Municipality of Rotterdam** |
| • Rotterdam's environmental vision outlines a 20-30 year framework for urban development, focusing on housing, work, and mobility. |
| • Broad strategies are refined into detailed plans for specific zones, targeting housing goals and development strategies. |
| • The city engages with developers, investors, and other stakeholders via the "environment table" to ensure feasibility and alignment with goals. |
| • This platform unites key players like the municipality, housing corporations, and developers to discuss housing policies and advance projects. |
| • Detailed plans evolve into principles documents that include actionable steps, policy rules, and public participation before city council approval. |

Table 17 shows the implementation of the social ambitions of VORM and the municipality of Rotterdam.

*Table 17: Implementation of social ambitions – VORM and the municipality of Rotterdam (interviews)*

| Implementation |
| --- |
| **VORM** |
| • Collaborating with Havensteder, VORM plays a pivotal role by delivering high-quality, cost-effective housing that aligns with the broader neighborhood development goals, contributing to a more cohesive and sustainable community. |
| **Municipality of Rotterdam** |
| • The Municipality of Rotterdam integrates social impact goals early in planning, ensuring they guide later practical actions. |
| • The municipality targets Crooswijk for comprehensive support, addressing housing, energy needs, and more, as outlined in the "Goed in Crooswijk" plan. |
| • Scattered projects in Crooswijk are insufficient; a holistic, neighborhood-wide strategy is needed for meaningful social impact. |

Table 18 shows how VORM, Havensteder and the municipality of Rotterdam are using innovation in their social ambitions.

*Table 18: Innovation in social ambition - VORM, Havensteder and the municipality of Rotterdam (interviews)*

| Innovation |
| --- |
| **VORM** |
| • VORM brings valuable housing innovations and expertise to the Van Meekeren project, enhancing the quality and impact of redevelopment efforts. |
| **Havensteder** |
| • Havensteder partners with Ad Hoc for vacancy management and encourages temporary residents, like students, to contribute to the community. |
| • Vacant ground-floor spaces are converted into social initiatives like the "warm living room" and a production house for children, fostering community connection and engagement. |
| • Havensteder transforms temporary real estate into active community spaces, maintaining vibrancy and livability during redevelopment. |
| **Municipality of Rotterdam** |
| • The municipality's establishment of a neighborhood hub in Van Meekeren strengthens community engagement and support. |
| • The municipality uses tools like the Wijkkompas and livability monitor to track and achieve goals related to entrepreneurship, outdoor spaces, and safety. |
| • Progress in Van Meekeren will be closely monitored to ensure key objectives are met. |

### 4.3.4 Livability impact

Table 19 shows the livability elements of the Van Meekeren area.

*Table 19: Livability impact elements Van Meekeren (interviews)*

| Livability impact |
| --- |
| • Havensteder sees social impact on individual, complex, and neighborhood levels, with larger projects like Van Meekeren significantly affecting all three. |
| • Social impact involves providing residents with opportunities to enhance their well-being, such as connecting them to community networks to combat loneliness or improve their quality of life. |
| • Positive individual changes, like better well-being or meaningful engagement, collectively improve neighborhood livability. |
| • VORM emphasizes that neighborhoods are shaped by their people, businesses, and activities, not just their buildings. |
| • The Municipality of Rotterdam aims to improve residents' quality of life while attracting new residents to make Crooswijk a vibrant and desirable place to live. |
| **Housing stock** |
| • The redevelopment plan focuses on fostering housing diversity by creating a balanced mix of social, mid-range, and higher-end homes to encourage greater resident diversity. |
| • Increasing housing density is a key objective, with the addition of new homes aimed at creating a more vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. |
| • Havensteder's vision for the Meekeren area includes transforming it from its current homogeneity into a more dynamic and diverse community, promoting positive social and community impacts. |
| **Physical environment** |
| • The municipality oversees public spaces and city infrastructure, while housing corporations concentrate on property ownership. |
| • A beautiful building alone is not enough to foster a sense of community, highlighting the need for a more integrated and people-focused approach to development. |
| **Amenities** |
| • The Crooswijkseweg has been identified as a key focus area requiring enhanced local amenities to drive social impact. |
| • Residents place great value on having basic services within easy reach, particularly as many do not own cars, making proximity essential. |
| • Thoughtful programming of ground-floor spaces could significantly contribute to neighborhood development, with developers playing a crucial role in curating these areas. However, coordinating these efforts can be challenging, especially when multiple property owners are involved. |
| • Properly designed and programmed amenities and spaces are vital for fostering neighborhood growth and enhancing livability. |

### Social cohesion

- Ground-floor spaces in large buildings should be thoughtfully designed to foster community connections.
- Creating smaller interest groups or units within buildings can encourage closer relationships among residents, enhancing the sense of community.
- Adding mid-range rental homes provides young adults, who are employed but ineligible for social housing, with the opportunity to stay in their community. This approach supports family connections and strengthens neighborhood bonds.
- To maintain neighborhood networks, increasing the availability of senior housing and promoting housing mobility are essential. These measures ensure residents can find suitable homes within their community without needing to relocate far, preserving social ties and fostering continuity.

### Disturbance & insecurity

- Entrepreneurship plays a vital role in strengthening social networks and fostering community oversight, contributing to enhanced safety and engagement within the neighborhood.
- Havensteder ensures clear and open communication with residents during construction or vacancy periods, providing a dedicated contact point to address concerns and maintain trust.

## 4.3.5 Social impact strategies

Table 20 shows the social impact strategies used in the Van Meekeren area.

*Table 20: Social impact strategies - Van Meekeren (interviews)*

### Public space investment

- Crooswijk's extensive paving contributes to heat stress, highlighting the need for increased greenery to mitigate rising temperatures.
- Implementing effective water storage solutions is an integral part of the neighborhood's improvement strategy, addressing both environmental and livability concerns.

### Social investment

- VORM promotes the idea of neighborhood adoption by commercial parties to foster stronger collaboration and ensure long-term commitment among stakeholders. It advocates for surplus profits to be redirected toward benefiting the community, addressing financial imbalances.
- Beyond construction, VORM supports placemaking and community-building initiatives, such as educational programs, to create lasting social impact.
- Investments in creating a "healthy city" are emphasized, with health insurers contributing to local initiatives but needing more targeted efforts for greater impact.
- The Municipality of Rotterdam calls for socially mindful construction practices to minimize resident disruption, such as reducing noise and managing material storage.
- Developers are encouraged to integrate financial goals with socially focused approaches, ensuring sustainable neighborhood improvements.

### Long term commitment

- Developers often focus on short-term involvement, recouping investments quickly and leaving neighborhoods without sustained engagement. To foster long-term commitment, engaging investors to acquire commercial portions of projects could ensure ongoing support for neighborhood development.
- An alternative structure involving municipalities, housing corporations, and investor-developers could create a foundation for long-term success by aligning goals and resources.
- Developers must emphasize effective process management to achieve genuine social impact, moving beyond merely delivering the final result.
- Long-term partnerships, such as Social Impact Obligations, enable developers to invest in community-enhancing facilities like centers and gathering spaces, creating lasting benefits for neighborhoods and stakeholders alike.

### Key figures

- Entrepreneurship plays a vital role in fostering personal growth and advancement, providing individuals with opportunities to improve their lives and contribute meaningfully to their communities. Entrepreneurs also serve as inspiring role models, demonstrating what is possible and motivating others within the neighborhood to pursue their own ambitions.

### Relocation

- Residents involved in the redevelopment project are offered the option to relocate temporarily with the assurance that they can return, fostering a sense of support and preventing feelings of displacement.
- The municipality prioritizes managing this process with care to ensure residents see the project as beneficial to their well-being.

- Havensteder has made a unique commitment to allow residents to stay within the neighborhood if suitable housing is available.
- The return guarantee provides residents with peace of mind, even if not all choose to return. For some, the process becomes an opportunity to explore better housing options, such as single-family homes, outside the neighborhood, offering a pathway to improve their living situations while maintaining a focus on their needs and preferences.

## Participation

- Havensteder implemented a comprehensive participation strategy to ensure residents were fully engaged in the neighborhood renewal process. Community meetings were held to address concerns and inform residents about upcoming changes.
- Individual home visits further personalized the approach, building trust and gathering 80 unique resident stories to gain deeper insights into their needs.
- A feedback group actively collected resident input, ensuring their concerns and suggestions were incorporated into the plans.
- The multi-layered participation approach ranged from informing residents to consulting and collaborating with them on key elements such as the social plan and interim management strategy.
- To support community-driven ideas, Havensteder allocated an extra budget, fostering meaningful involvement and ensuring residents played an active role in shaping their neighborhood's future.

## Collaboration

- The Municipality of Rotterdam's environmental vision incorporates focus neighborhoods, addressing complex challenges through collaboration across various domains, including public spaces, safety, mobility, youth programs, and education. As part of this strategy, the "Goed in Crooswijk" framework, developed collaboratively, establishes agreements for social impact that are regularly monitored to ensure accountability and progress.
- Havensteder plays a central role in supporting homes and residents in Crooswijk, delegating execution responsibilities to partners like VORM while maintaining a strong commitment from all involved parties. This integrated collaboration between Havensteder and the municipality involves both physical and social initiatives, structured through established consultation channels and shared objectives.
- In Van Meekeren, joint "entrance hall" conversations have brought together Havensteder, the municipality, and police representatives to engage directly with residents. These comprehensive discussions have fostered ongoing collaboration and ensured that community concerns are addressed effectively.
- VORM has actively participated in the Van Meekeren area, contributing to housing plan presentations, workshops, and neighborhood engagement efforts. Additionally, Havensteder is working with contractors, including VORM, to develop a Social Impact Agreement. This agreement aims to implement initiatives with direct benefits for the neighborhood, exploring innovative ideas that go beyond traditional construction jobs. Together, these efforts exemplify a committed, collaborative approach to sustainable neighborhood development.

## 4.4    Cross-case analysis

This chapter provides a direct comparison of the results from three distinct case studies, analyzing the findings to uncover recurring patterns or notable differences.

### 4.4.1   General information

*Table 21: General information cross-case analysis (interviews + documents)*

|  | **Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten** | **Van Deysselbuurt** | **Van Meekeren** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Location** | The Hague | Amsterdam | Rotterdam |
| **Project size** | 5000 units | 1756 units | 150 units |
| **Developer** | Heijmans | Rochdale | VORM |
| **Type of developer** | Constructing developer | Housing association | Constructing developer |
| **Early involvement of the developer** | Yes | Yes | No |
| **Housing association** | Staedion | Rochdale | Havensteder |
| **Social housing** | 85% | 90% | 80% |
| **Type of project** | Renovation, demolition, new construction | Renovation, demolition, new construction | Renovation, demolition, new construction |
| **Addition** | Social, mid, high | Mid, high | Social, mid, high |
| **Contractor** | Heijmans | Dura Vermeer + Heijmans | VORM |

The projects Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten, Van Deysselbuurt, and the Van Meekeren area are all neighborhood-level area developments but differ in scale regarding the number of housing units. Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten encompasses three neighborhoods but is considered a single project. The Van Deysselbuurt stands out as nearly all properties in the area are owned by Rochdale. The Van Meekeren project is smaller in scope and focuses on targeted, localized interventions.

All three neighborhoods face socio-economic challenges and have a high percentage of social housing. The redevelopment strategies share a common approach centered on adding mid-range and market-rate housing to diversify the housing stock. However, their implementation differs: Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten and Van Meekeren involve a constructing-developer, whereas Van Deysselbuurt is primarily developed by Rochdale, a housing association.

In Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten, Heijmans serves as the developer. In Van Deysselbuurt Rochdale, as a housing association, takes on the role of the developer, In Van Meekeren, VORM acts as the developer under the commission of Havensteder.

### 4.4.2   Social ambition

#### Social ambition

Heijmans' social ambition is centered around the pillar of well-being, which has been integrated into the company's overall corporate strategy. However, this pillar was not created in isolation. Heijmans had already been actively engaged in creating social impact before conceptualizing the well-being pillar.

As a housing association, creating social impact is deeply embedded in Rochdale's organizational DNA. As a non-profit organization, its social approach is firmly ingrained in its culture.

VORM does not provide a clear definition of its social ambition. However, the interview strongly indicates that the company is actively engaged with the social aspects of development, viewing it as a distinct approach from standard development practices.

*Table 22: Social ambition, implementation, and innovation - Cross-case analysis (interviews)*

| Heijmans | Rochdale | VORM |
|---|---|---|
| **Strategic Focus on Well-Being**: Integrating well-being as one of its five strategic pillars, defining it as "a prolonged state of satisfaction" aimed at enhancing happiness and addressing social challenges through projects. | **Social Focus**: Driven by a strong social mission, Rochdale emphasizes affordability and building "strong neighborhoods" that foster diversity and social connections. | **Defining Social Impact**: VORM emphasizes the need to define what constitutes a "social" project, distinguishing it from standard developments. |
| **Social Impact Alignment**: Well-being serves as the foundation for Heijmans' social ambition, operationalized through specific projects, new collaboration models, and adjusted organizational practices. | **Long-term Commitment**: Rochdale remains engaged in the community, retaining developed properties in its portfolio and ensuring a lasting presence. | |
| **Sustainability and Societal Mission**: Prioritizing sustainability as a separate pillar, often overlapping with well-being, to advance their broader societal mission. | **Distinction from Developers**: Unlike commercial developers focused on profit, Rochdale invests in lasting social impact and community development. | |
| **Strong Corporate Relationships**: Maintaining strategic partnerships with housing corporations and employs socially committed individuals passionate about living environment, health, and well-being. | **Flexible Project Approach**: Rochdale undertakes projects that may not generate profit, prioritizing community benefits over financial returns. | |
| **Operational Focus**: Their social ambition includes fostering resident resilience and independence, ensuring long-term improvement in living conditions and neighborhood stability. | **Broader Responsibility**: Rochdale's mission extends beyond constructing housing, aiming to provide robust housing solutions for diverse groups and build thriving neighborhoods. | |
| **Constructing-developer Advantage**: As a constructing-developer, Heijmans can accept lower margins on development projects due to ongoing revenue from construction activities, allowing for greater flexibility in incorporating social impact into their business model. | | |

## Implementation

Heijmans, Rochdale, and VORM share a focus on social impact in neighborhood development but implement it differently. Heijmans combines construction expertise with community-focused strategies, such as mixed-income housing and the "Asset-Based Community Development" approach, and measures impact through data-driven partnerships. Rochdale emphasizes long-term ownership, ensuring high-quality social and middle-income rentals while leveraging concentrated property holdings for transformative neighborhood improvements, though this approach carries risks during economic downturns. VORM focuses on delivering cost-effective, high-quality housing, aligning with broader neighborhood goals through collaborations like those with Havensteder. All three prioritize community well-being, but Heijmans excels in innovation and measurable strategies, Rochdale in ownership and accessibility, and VORM in supporting these efforts through efficient construction.

| Heijmans | Rochdale | VORM |
|---|---|---|
| **Responsibility:** Focuses on "hardware" (design and construction) but recognizes the importance of "software" (how spaces are used and organized) for social impact.<br><br>**ABCD Method**: Uses the "Asset-Based Community Development" approach to strengthen communities and foster self-sufficiency and pride among residents. | **Commitment to Quality**: Rochdale builds high-quality homes, ensuring social rental housing is indistinguishable from owner-occupied homes. | **Collaboration**: VORM collaborates with housing associations to provide high-quality, cost-effective housing that aligns with neighborhood development goals. |
| **Knowledge Center Role:** Acts as more than a contractor by leveraging expertise in neighborhood livability and contributing to government and local initiatives. | **Van Deyssel Focus**: Rochdale owns 90% of properties in the Van Deyssel neighborhood, enabling significant social impact and streamlined improvements. | |
| **Integrated Development in The Hague Southwest:**<br>• Balances social and market-rate housing.<br>• Densification increases the number of social units while fostering income diversity.<br>• Supports residents' transitions to avoid displacement. | **Challenges of Concentration**: While concentrated ownership allows swift action in good times, it can pose risks during economic downturns, as seen during a decade-long stagnation in Van Deyssel. | |
| **Avoiding Monocultures:** Prioritizes mixed-income neighborhoods to enhance resilience and vibrancy, supporting residents and businesses. | **Middle-Income Rentals**: Adding middle-income rental housing helps bridge the gap for those who don't qualify for social housing but can't buy, with these properties retained in Rochdale's portfolio. | |
| **Dynamic Needs Assessment:** Conducts detailed neighborhood analyses to tailor social impact efforts, addressing unique challenges like adaptable housing, physical inactivity, or social vulnerability. | | |
| **Measuring**: Collaborating with Utrecht University to quantify and measure social impact using indicators like education rates, crime statistics, and community resilience. | | |
| **Long-term Vision**: Focused on creating livable, resilient, and diverse communities with measurable social and economic benefits. | | |

Innovation

Heijmans, Rochdale, and VORM each approach social innovation in distinctive ways, with some overlapping commitments to measurable impact and community improvement. Unlike Heijmans' systematic tools and Rochdale's data reliance, VORM's innovation is rooted in delivering practical housing solutions within collaborative frameworks. While all three emphasize measurable impact and community-focused innovation, Heijmans excels in systematic innovation, Rochdale in leveraging data for strategic improvements, and VORM in practical implementation within redevelopment projects.

| Heijmans | Rochdale | VORM |
|---|---|---|
| **Monitoring and Involvement**: Remaining engaged in projects through data-driven monitoring, using its smart-city team to evaluate effects on biodiversity, social cohesion, and other areas. | **Measurable Outcomes**: Rochdale emphasizes setting measurable objectives to assess improvements in neighborhood quality, housing standards, resident satisfaction, and livability over time. | **Construction**: VORM's application of its housing innovations and expertise is highly valuable for enhancing the project's quality. |
| **Studio LAB Initiative**: A new team designed to drive meaningful impact in projects, addressing social impact and strategic goals. Studio LAB operates nationally and supports regional projects, focusing on social impact and integral vision development. | **Baseline Comparisons**: Starting with an early baseline allows Rochdale to track progress and compare end results to initial conditions. | **BuurtBoost:** BuurtBoost is a community-driven initiative that empowers neighborhoods by supporting local projects, events, and activities. It brings residents together to create a positive impact, enhance connections, and improve the quality of life in their community. |
| **Team Composition and Collaboration**: Studio LAB includes seven members with expertise in areas like architecture, senior housing, and governance strategies. It emphasizes cross-pollination within Heijmans to share knowledge across project types. | **Municipal Data Utilization**: Rochdale uses detailed municipal studies on demographics and social characteristics to identify neighborhoods needing attention. | |
| **Innovative Projects**: Examples include the Van Gogh bike path with bioluminescent lighting, asphalt technologies reducing particulates, and collaborations promoting cycling and walking, such as in Westergouwe. | **Social and Physical Metrics**: Objectives often focus on tangible metrics like new housing units or upgrades, but Rochdale also aims to evaluate long-term social impacts. | |
| **Future Goals**: Heijmans aims to create a livability measurement tool comparable to its sustainability metrics, exploring partnerships and methodologies to establish this system. | | |

### 4.4.3   Livability impact

Housing stock

Balancing social housing, mid-range rentals, and private-sector housing is essential to creating a well-diversified resident mix within the neighborhood. Adding additional housing units is necessary to achieve this balance without reducing the number of social housing units. It is equally important that the buildings meet the diverse needs of residents, such as the inclusion of elevators. Moreover, the housing must be free from issues such as mold and tailored to accommodate various household compositions.

*Table 23: Housing stock - Cross-case analysis (interviews)*

| | Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten | Van Deysselbuurt | Van Meekeren |
|---|---|---|---|
| Resident concerns | Mold, limited accessibility | Mold, poor maintenance | |
| Housing diversity | Adding mid-range and private sector housing | Adding mid-range and private sector housing | Adding mid-range and private sector housing |
| Densification | + 1500 units | + 650 units | + 70 units |
| VvE challenges | Privately owned poor conditions | | |
| Tailored housing | Depending on family size | Depending on family size, Disabled housing | Depending on family size |

All three areas emphasize improving housing conditions and promoting inclusivity. Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten and Van Deysselbuurt tackle issues such as mold, poor maintenance, and accessibility challenges, with a focus on diversifying housing options and supporting families.

Similarly, Van Meekeren aims to create a balanced mix of social, mid-range, and higher-end housing to encourage resident diversity and community integration.

The approaches differ in execution. Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten targets structural improvements and functional housing diversity, while Van Deysselbuurt focuses on reducing overcrowding and adding wheelchair-accessible homes to meet community needs. Meanwhile, Van Meekeren plans to increase housing density and transform its homogenous layout into a dynamic and inclusive neighborhood with a broader social impact.

## Physical environment

It is crucial to adopt a broader perspective that extends beyond the focus on housing and buildings alone. To achieve social impact, it is essential to also consider outdoor spaces. Streets provide opportunities for social interactions and play areas for children. Well-designed outdoor spaces significantly enhance overall livability.

*Table 24: Physical environment - Cross-case analysis (interviews)*

|  | Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten | Van Deysselbuurt | Van Meekeren |
|---|---|---|---|
| Meeting places | Park, community center | Central street activation, community center | Community center, people focused |
| Pleasant living environment | Greenery, shaded areas, walking and cycling routes, playgrounds | Greenery, shaded areas | Playgrounds, collaborative approach |

All three prioritize creating spaces for social interaction and community engagement. Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten focuses on greenery and outdoor amenities to improve livability. Van Deysselbuurt transforms its central street into a vibrant hub with community spaces and commercial activities, while Van Meekeren emphasizes integrated, people-focused development to enhance public spaces.

Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten addresses safety concerns and deteriorating infrastructure with improved outdoor spaces. Van Deysselbuurt highlights strategic use of ground-floor spaces and a community center to anchor neighborhood life. In contrast, Van Meekeren focuses on collaboration between municipalities and housing corporations, stressing the need for holistic planning over isolated projects.

## Amenities

Amenities play a vital role in enhancing livability and fostering the economic growth of a neighborhood. Adding appropriate facilities that align with residents' needs, such as shops, healthcare services, schools, recreational areas, and community centers, contributes significantly to the improvement of the community.

*Table 25: Amenities - Cross-case analysis (interviews)*

|  | Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten | Van Deysselbuurt | Van Meekeren |
|---|---|---|---|
| Needs assessment | Education, healthcare, community center | Spaces for learning and studying, youth center | Local amenities |
| Demand | Early facility development | Evolving demand for middle-income facilities, sport facilities | Easy access to nearby basic services |
| Economic weakness | High vacancy rates and closures |  |  |
| Ground floor spaces |  | Diverse programming | Diverse programming |

All neighborhoods focus on improving livability and accessibility. Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten and Van Deysselbuurt emphasize needs assessments to plan facilities, while Van Meekeren focuses on proximity to essential services and curated commercial spaces. Programming spaces for social well-being is another common goal: Van Deysselbuurt develops youth centers, while Van Meekeren prioritizes ground-floor amenities.

Each area faces unique challenges. Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten struggles with temporary livability decline during relocations and slow early facility development. Van Deysselbuurt takes a holistic approach, incorporating learning spaces and a strong community center. Van Meekeren emphasizes coordinated development of ground-floor spaces despite ownership complexities.

## Social cohesion

Social cohesion is a crucial component of neighborhood livability. When residents know each other, they are more likely to offer assistance and look out for one another. Social cohesion can be fostered by organizing events and creating spaces where people can meet and interact. These spaces can be established in public areas or within buildings. Strong community bonds contribute to a safer neighborhood, and vice versa. The addition of middle-income rental housing enables residents to make housing careers while remaining in their neighborhood, strengthening their connection to the community rather than moving elsewhere. Similarly, incorporating senior housing supports the retention of older residents, further contributing to the neighborhood's stability and social fabric.

*Table 26: Social cohesion - Cross-case analysis (interviews)*

| | Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten | Van Deysselbuurt | Van Meekeren |
|---|---|---|---|
| Community | Retaining social ties | Focus on strong social connections among neighbors | Ground floor spaces to foster connections |
| Initiatives | Community gardens, events | Cooking activities, provide meeting spaces | |
| Social structures | Return guarantees | | Increasing senior housing and mid-range housing for young adults |

All three neighborhoods prioritize maintaining or strengthening social ties. Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten emphasizes retaining residents through campaigns like "I want my neighbor back" and prioritizes urban renewal without displacement. Similarly, Van Deysselbuurt fosters social interactions through community spaces and activities, such as cooking events. Van Meekeren also encourages connections through thoughtful ground-floor designs and targeted housing for young adults and seniors, supporting neighborhood stability.

The approaches differ in focus. Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten leans on initiatives by organizations like Heijmans to build community dynamics and ensure resident retention. Van Deysselbuurt focuses on creating a safe and pleasant environment with social hubs like community centers. Van Meekeren targets specific housing needs, such as mobility for seniors and rental options for young adults, to maintain long-term bonds within the community.

## Disturbance & insecurity

Youth issues and neighborhood safety are closely interconnected. In areas with significant youth-related challenges, neighborhood safety often declines. This is due to behaviors such as

loitering, setting off fireworks, and harassing others. To enhance safety, it is logical to focus on addressing youth-related issues. Entrepreneurs can serve as role models, creating a social network that inspires young people by presenting goals they aspire to achieve. Additionally, establishing community centers provides a space for youth to gather, reducing the likelihood of them meeting on the streets.

"Eyes on the street" are crucial for fostering a sense of safety. Incorporating vibrant functions into the ground floors of buildings can contribute to this goal. However, it is essential to ensure that these spaces remain lively in the evenings, as inactivity can have the opposite effect. Vacant spaces are particularly detrimental to perceptions of safety. Therefore, the use of temporary functions in underutilized spaces is critical to maintaining vibrancy and enhancing the overall sense of security in the neighborhood.

Table 27: Disturbance & insecurity - Cross-case analysis (interviews)

|  | Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten | Van Deysselbuurt | Van Meekeren |
|---|---|---|---|
| Resident engagement | Design process | Addressing disruptive behavior | Activate entrepreneurial social network, clear communication |
| Communal spaces | Function flexibility against vacancy |  |  |
| Youth support |  | Social programs |  |
| Inclusivity |  | Ensuring opportunities for lower social class |  |

Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten emphasizes resident engagement during the design process to align projects with practical needs. Similarly, Van Deysselbuurt invests in youth care and social programs to foster safety and cohesion, while Van Meekeren strengthens social networks through entrepreneurship and open communication to enhance neighborhood engagement.

The specific approaches vary. Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten questions the value of communal spaces, opting for flexible designs that balance atmosphere with practical use. Van Deysselbuurt focuses on addressing youth-related issues like vandalism and promoting inclusivity through social programs. In contrast, Van Meekeren leverages entrepreneurship and clear communication during redevelopment to ensure safety and resident satisfaction.

### 4.4.4   Social impact strategies

<u>Public space investment</u>

Investing in public spaces contributes to creating safer neighborhoods. Public investments can include the redesign of infrastructure such as street profiles, bicycle paths, pedestrian walkways, parks, playgrounds, green spaces, and parking areas. Strategically positioning building entrances can further facilitate accessible opportunities for social interaction. Additionally, incorporating green spaces is beneficial for addressing the challenges of climate change and enhancing the overall resilience of the environment.

Table 28: Public space investment - Cross-case analysis (interviews)

|  | Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten | Van Deysselbuurt | Van Meekeren |
|---|---|---|---|
| Early investment | Park realization |  |  |
| Community ties | Building trust, shared spaces | Green walkable courtyards, promoting social interaction |  |
| Redesign | Streets, pathways, bicycle lanes | Building entrances, private green areas, play streets | Heat stress reduction, water storage |

All neighborhoods emphasize creating green and shared spaces to improve quality of life and encourage community interaction. Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten strengthens community ties through shared pathways and early investments in parks, while Van Deysselbuurt transforms courtyards into walkable green areas for social engagement. Similarly, Van Meekeren prioritizes increased greenery and water management to address environmental concerns like heat stress.

Each neighborhood has distinct priorities. Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten focuses on building trust with local governments and aligning redevelopment with municipal goals. Van Deysselbuurt redesigns entrances and relocates parking to blend functionality with natural spaces. In contrast, Van Meekeren tackles urban heat stress and integrates water storage solutions to enhance climate resilience.

## Social investment

Social investments can include physical interventions, such as adding community centers and sports facilities, as well as softer measures like promoting entrepreneurship by keeping commercial rental prices low and implementing placemaking strategies. While developers recognize the importance of social investments in improving neighborhoods, they face challenges incorporating these investments into a cost-benefit analysis. This difficulty arises from the intangible nature of social improvements, which are often hard to quantify. As a result, justifying these investments becomes challenging. However, social investments made in the short term have the potential to yield significant benefits over the long term.

*Table 29: Social investment - Cross-case analysis (interviews)*

|  | Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten | Van Deysselbuurt | Van Meekeren |
|---|---|---|---|
| Financial challenge | Up-front investments, preventive investments, delayed benefits | Prioritize social impact - not direct financial returns | Allocating surplus profits, balancing financial results and social measures |
| Social promotions | Loneliness, physical activities | Reduced rates for local entrepreneurs, community facilities, emergency housing, cleanup projects | Placemaking, community building, educational programs, address poverty, mindful construction |
| Spatial planning | Jogging paths, walking trails |  |  |
| Partnerships | Explore potential partnerships with health insurers | Close cooperation with the municipality | Explore potential partnerships with health insurers |
| Return on investment | Challenges in quantifying long-term returns | Challenges in justifying and showcasing social initiatives values |  |

All three neighborhoods prioritize social well-being and community-focused initiatives over immediate financial returns. Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten and Van Meekeren highlight the difficulty of justifying upfront investments in long-term benefits, such as improved health and social cohesion. Similarly, Van Deysselbuurt emphasizes the importance of affordable housing and community facilities to enhance neighborhood livability. Collaboration between developers, municipalities, and stakeholders is a shared approach, aiming to optimize resources and outcomes.

The neighborhoods vary in specific approaches. Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten focuses on infrastructure investments, such as jogging paths and public spaces, while grappling with regulatory constraints in securing insurer partnerships. Van Deysselbuurt supports social programs like emergency housing and collaborative projects with municipalities. In contrast, Van Meekeren addresses broader social challenges, such as poverty and education, while advocating for surplus profits to benefit the community and promoting socially mindful construction practices.

## Long-term commitment

A long-term commitment is essential for creating social impact. Early engagement allows for greater input during the development process, as it is in these initial stages that social impact is most effectively shaped. In addition to early involvement, sustained effort over time is equally critical. Entrusting commercial spaces to housing associations can help secure their long-term vision. Another viable approach is collaborating with investor-developers, as construction-focused developers are more likely to disengage once a project is completed. Through partnership agreements, municipalities, developers, and housing associations can collectively safeguard social interests and ensure sustained focus on community well-being.

*Table 30: Long term commitment - Cross-case analysis (interviews)*

|  | Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten | Van Deysselbuurt | Van Meekeren |
|---|---|---|---|
| Engagement | 10-20 years of involvement | "Soft side" investment, staying embedded in the community long after construction is complete, property management, maintenance, and neighborhood cleanliness | Short term involvement |
| Local focus | Leverage existing community strengths, key figures, and opportunities for placemaking | Social commitment | Focus on process instead of result |
| Ownership | Exploring options to transfer ownership of commercial spaces to ensure better control over future use | Keeps ownership of commercial assets to influence and adapt business operations, maintaining quality and alignment with neighborhood needs | Engaging investors, |
| Partnerships | National Program, housing corporations | Local partnerships | Social impact obligations |

All three neighborhoods emphasize the importance of sustained involvement and collaboration. Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten commits to long-term engagement through partnerships with local organizations and the national program, aligning with its goal of leaving a lasting positive impact. Similarly, Van Deysselbuurt highlights long-term accountability by retaining ownership of commercial spaces and maintaining property quality. Van Meekeren advocates for long-term partnerships and integrated structures involving multiple stakeholders to address urban challenges effectively.

Their approaches differ in execution. Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten focuses on leveraging community strengths and transferring commercial ownership to trusted entities for future control. Van Deysselbuurt prioritizes collaboration with local partners and ongoing neighborhood management. In contrast, Van Meekeren tackles urban complexity through alternative structures and social impact obligations, aiming for sustained investment and process-oriented development.

## Key figures

Close collaboration with key figures in a neighborhood provides developers with highly detailed, localized insights. Key figures are deeply connected to their communities, well-known among residents, and actively foster social cohesion. While this approach has the potential to deliver significant benefits, it is not yet widely adopted. This may be due to the time-intensive nature of identifying these key figures and assessing whether their involvement can effectively contribute to achieving social objectives.

*Table 31: Key figures - Cross-case analysis (interviews)*

|  | Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten | Van Deysselbuurt | Van Meekeren |
|---|---|---|---|
| Community engagement | Socially engaging activities with local entrepreneurs |  | Entrepreneurs as role models |
| Local presence | Open-door project office | Open-door project office |  |
| Business support | Support during construction and relocation, reduced rents |  |  |
| Partnerships | Residents, businesses | Residents | Residents, businesses |

All three neighborhoods emphasize empowering residents and leveraging local strengths. Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten promotes partnerships with residents and businesses, supporting sustainability and community networks through initiatives like energy coaching. Similarly, Van Meekeren focuses on entrepreneurship, encouraging personal growth and presenting entrepreneurs as role models to inspire community advancement. Both emphasize the importance of involving the community in redevelopment efforts.

Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten adopts a hands-on approach with a local project office, partnerships, and tailored business support during construction. It also incorporates sustainability and tenant accountability into its commercial strategy. Van Deysselbuurt has an open-door project office but does not elaborate further on similar initiatives. In contrast, Van Meekeren prioritizes entrepreneurship as a tool for economic and social development, focusing on broader growth opportunities.

## Relocation

The process of relocation has a profound impact on the lives of current residents, as they are uprooted from their existing social structures. Municipalities, housing corporations, and developers recognize the negative effects this can have and strive to minimize these disruptions. By collaborating effectively, they ensure that only a portion of residents must temporarily leave the area. A phased approach, resembling a "train" moving through the neighborhood, allows for only the first group of residents to be rehoused elsewhere, while subsequent residents are offered new homes within the neighborhood.

Not all residents are satisfied with the rehousing process. The allocation of new homes is based on criteria such as income and household composition, meaning some residents will move into smaller, more expensive homes. However, families previously living in overcrowded conditions may now have access to larger accommodations.

Although the process may initially cause dissatisfaction, all residents will ultimately benefit from better quality housing, featuring amenities such as elevators and mold-free conditions.

In practice, only 30-40% of residents return to their original neighborhood following relocation.

*Table 32: Relocation - Cross-case analysis (interviews)*

| | Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten | Van Deysselbuurt | Van Meekeren |
|---|---|---|---|
| Return policy | Return guarantee + compensation | Option to return | Return guarantee |
| Alternative housing options | Individualized support, early planning, three options in the same municipality | Prioritizing rehousing residents into permanent, new homes within the same area to minimize disruption and preserve social connections | Some residents may use this as a chance to explore better housing options, such as single-family homes, beyond the neighborhood |
| Relocation process | Initial housing availability decreases but gradually increases as new units are completed, densification advantage | Initial housing availability decreases but gradually increases as new units are completed, densification advantage | Some residents will relocate temporarily but can return, ensuring they feel supported and not forced out |
| Redistribution | Based on income, household composition and preferences | Match housing to residents' needs, addressing issues of homes being too large or small for households | Promise that residents can stay within the neighborhood if suitable housing is available |
| Collaboration | Staedion and Heijmans lead the initiative, supported by the municipality | | Municipal commitment |

All neighborhoods prioritize providing rehousing options and ensuring that residents feel secure during redevelopment. Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten and Van Meekeren emphasize return guarantees, allowing residents to come back after relocation. Similarly, Van Deysselbuurt works to minimize disruption by prioritizing permanent rehousing within the same area. All three consider resident preferences and aim to improve living conditions post-redevelopment.

The challenges and methods differ. Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten focuses on individualized support, early planning, and financial compensation to smooth the relocation process. Van Deysselbuurt addresses a shortage of large family homes and uses densification to create a housing buffer for smoother transitions. In contrast, Van Meekeren emphasizes temporary relocation with opportunities for residents to explore better housing options beyond the neighborhood, supported by a clear municipal commitment.

## Participation

Engaging residents fosters greater trust within the community. By employing various forms of participation, such as informing, gathering input, and co-creation, a broad base of support within the neighborhood can be achieved. At the start of the participatory process, residents often focus on concerns about their own situations. However, as the process progresses and initial anxieties are alleviated, they are more willing to contribute to discussions about the future of their neighborhood and articulate their preferences. Building a strong relationship with the community enables developers to gather more valuable insights from participation efforts, ultimately benefiting the project. Clear and transparent communication with residents is essential to prevent unnecessary unrest and to cultivate a dependable relationship with the neighborhood.

*Table 33: Participation - Cross-case analysis (interviews)*

| | Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten | Van Deysselbuurt | Van Meekeren |
|---|---|---|---|
| Participation levels | Communication, limited participation, co-creation | Communication, limited participation, co-creation | Communication, limited participation, co-creation |
| Participation team | Staedion, Heijmans and the municipality participate as one, visiting neighborhoods at fixed times, maintaining a unified message | Collaboration with youth organizations ensures social needs are integrated with housing to provide additional support for young people who require it | Mainly Havensteder with support from VORM |
| Process | Ongoing engagement, clear communication, regular updates, encouraging residents to prioritize community needs over individual concerns | Surveys residents to determine interest in community spaces and their purposes, such as social activities, consultations with social workers, or resident-organized events | Personalized home visits, community meetings, feedback group, extra budget allocated to support resident-driven ideas |
| Resident interests | Initially focused on practical relocation concerns, residents have grown more interested in long-term plans, housing types, public spaces, and amenities as construction progresses | Senior housing, main street | Renewal process |

All three neighborhoods prioritize resident engagement and transparency. Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten emphasizes different levels of participation, from communication to co-creation, while Van Meekeren employs a comprehensive participation strategy, including personalized home visits and feedback groups. Similarly, Van Deysselbuurt integrates residents in decisions about housing, community spaces, and main street redevelopment, ensuring their voices are considered.

Each neighborhood tailors its approach. Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten focuses on a unified approach with specialist teams and frequent engagement during the design phase, encouraging collective responsibility. Van Deysselbuurt addresses specific needs such as senior housing and youth support, using surveys to shape community spaces. Van Meekeren goes further by allocating extra budgets for resident-driven ideas and ensuring multi-layered participation throughout the process.

Collaboration

To ensure the success of an area development project, effective collaboration between municipalities, housing associations, and developers is crucial. The municipality serves as a framework-setting and facilitating authority. Housing associations often require the expertise of developers, as they may lack the technical skills and resources necessary to execute the development. A significant aspect of this collaboration involves land exploitation. Achieving financial viability in such projects often necessitates densification through the inclusion of market-rate housing, which is also desirable in the case studies to increase diversity in the housing supply. Collaboration is equally essential for the design and execution of public spaces. Stakeholders must work together to reach consensus on a comprehensive public spatial plan. Partnerships with national government entities can provide additional financial support to fulfill the neighborhood's social mission. Furthermore, social impact agreements offer a structured approach to ensuring measurable social impact within the community. Beyond the core collaboration between municipalities, housing associations, and developers, partnerships with social organizations, schools, and institutions such as museums are instrumental in enhancing the social vitality of the area.

*Table 34: Collaboration - Cross-case analysis (interviews)*

| | Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten | Van Deysselbuurt | Van Meekeren |
|---|---|---|---|
| Collaboration framework | Public, private, partnership | Public, private, partnership | Public, private, partnership |
| Land exploitation | Staedion leases property from the municipality, contributing it for redevelopment. The municipality reallocates land to Staedion or Heijmans, who demolish, prepare, and rebuild, while the municipality manages public spaces and land exploitation. Zoning amendments are jointly handled by Heijmans and the municipality throughout the project | Rochdale prepares plots for development in Van Deysselbuurt, allocating sites for social rental and owner-occupied housing. Proceeds from market-rate sales to Heijmans are reinvested into the project | |
| Municipal role | Framework-setting, facilitating public space development, and ensuring public interest | Framework-setting, yet facilitating, agreements on land price distribution and investment plans, equalization fund | Comprehensive neighborhood strategy |
| Public space and mobility | Heijmans is responsible | Coordinated design and parking, improved accessibility | Integrated collaboration |
| Agreements | | Increased housing density | "Goed in Crooswijk" framework |
| Relocation | Staedion and Heijmans align schedules for rehousing residents and relocating entrepreneurs, coordinating with the municipality to manage city-wide displacement | | |
| Social partnerships | Museums, schools, National program | Local contractor, youth organizations, National program | Joint "entrance hall" conversations with the police |
| Insurer involvement | Limited | | |

All three neighborhoods emphasize public-private partnerships and coordinated frameworks for development. Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten highlights collaboration between Heijmans, Staedion, and the municipality to align housing and public space projects. Similarly, Van Deysselbuurt relies on agreements for land distribution and densification to address housing shortages, while Van Meekeren integrates collaboration between Havensteder, contractors, and local stakeholders to ensure long-term impact. All three aim to combine physical redevelopment with social initiatives, such as youth programs and public space improvements.

Their approaches differ in focus. Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten emphasizes integrated spatial planning and profitability alignment to support cohesive urban growth. Van Deysselbuurt prioritizes densification and advocacy for schools and daycare to meet community needs. In contrast, Van Meekeren uses a Social Impact Agreement to promote community benefits beyond construction, fostering a broader sense of social responsibility.

### 4.4.5  Results

In conclusion, creating safer, more inclusive neighborhoods requires a multifaceted approach that integrates public and social investments, long-term commitments of the developer, and effective stakeholder collaboration.

Investments in public spaces, such as green areas, infrastructure redesigns, and community-centered facilities, not only enhance livability but also address pressing challenges like climate resilience and social cohesion. Social investments, including entrepreneurship support and placemaking, further strengthen communities, though their long-term benefits often remain difficult to quantify in traditional cost-benefit analyses. Resulting in lower willingness of the developers to make social investments which puts pressure on creating social impact.

Long-term commitment and early engagement of the developers are critical for creating social impact, allowing for sustained focus on community well-being. Partnerships between municipalities, housing associations, developers, and social organizations ensure that diverse expertise and resources are aligned toward shared goals. Collaboration with key community figures provides invaluable local insights, fostering trust and improving project outcomes, though such approaches remain underutilized due to their complexity.

Relocation processes, while necessary in many developments, require careful management to minimize disruption to residents' social structures. A phased approach that prioritizes rehousing within the neighborhood helps mitigate negative impacts, even if not all residents return post-relocation. Clear communication and resident participation are essential to build trust and align redevelopment efforts with community needs and preferences.

Ultimately, to fostering vibrant, resilient neighborhoods, partnerships with national entities and social organizations further enhance the capacity to meet these goals, ensuring both immediate and long-term benefits for communities.

## 4.5　Framework

Based on the empirical research, the focus can be placed on the component of "social impact strategies". This aspect was further elaborated through interviews. By openly listening to how the interviewed parties create social impact, the following categorization was independently developed: public space investment, social investment, long-term commitment, key figures, relocation, participation, and collaboration. These social impact strategies, describe how developers, guided by their social ambitions, can implement improvements in livability dimensions, including housing stock, physical environment, amenities, social cohesion, and disturbance & insecurity. Figure 30 is focusing in on the social impact strategies element.
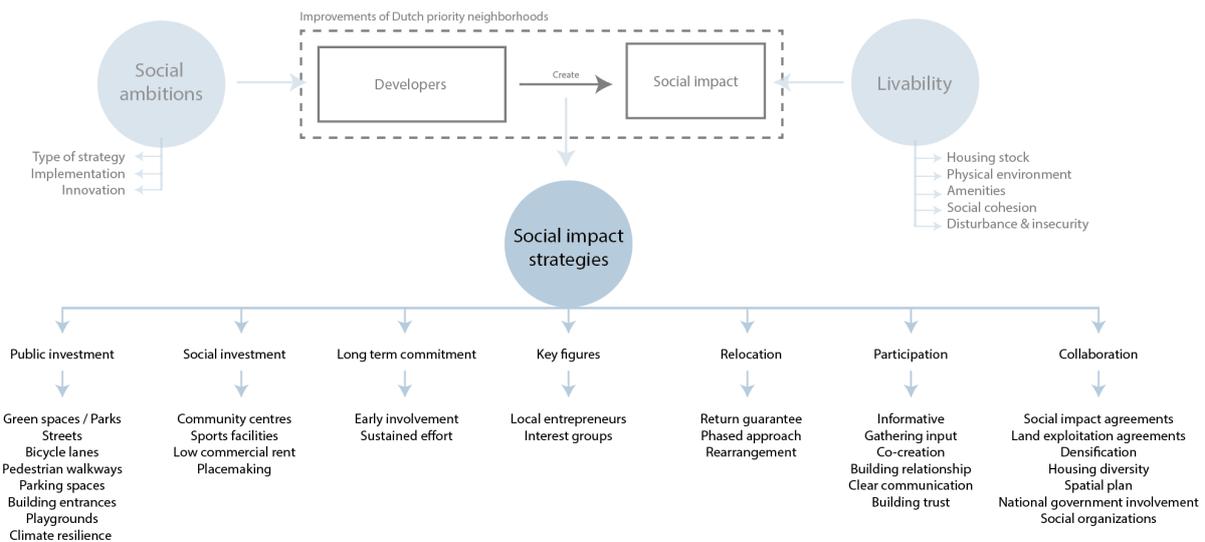


*Figure 30: Focused on the social impact strategies element of the framework (Damen, 2025)*

# PART 5 — Synthesis

## 5.1    Expert panel

The expert panel is utilized to evaluate the results of the framework based on the experience of professionals within the field of the built environment. During the online panel of one hour, the professionals were presented with the framework and provided an explanation of how the results were derived. Subsequently, discussions were conducted based on five statements concerning social impact strategies that developers can employ to achieve social impact. These statements were directly linked to the framework (Figure 31).
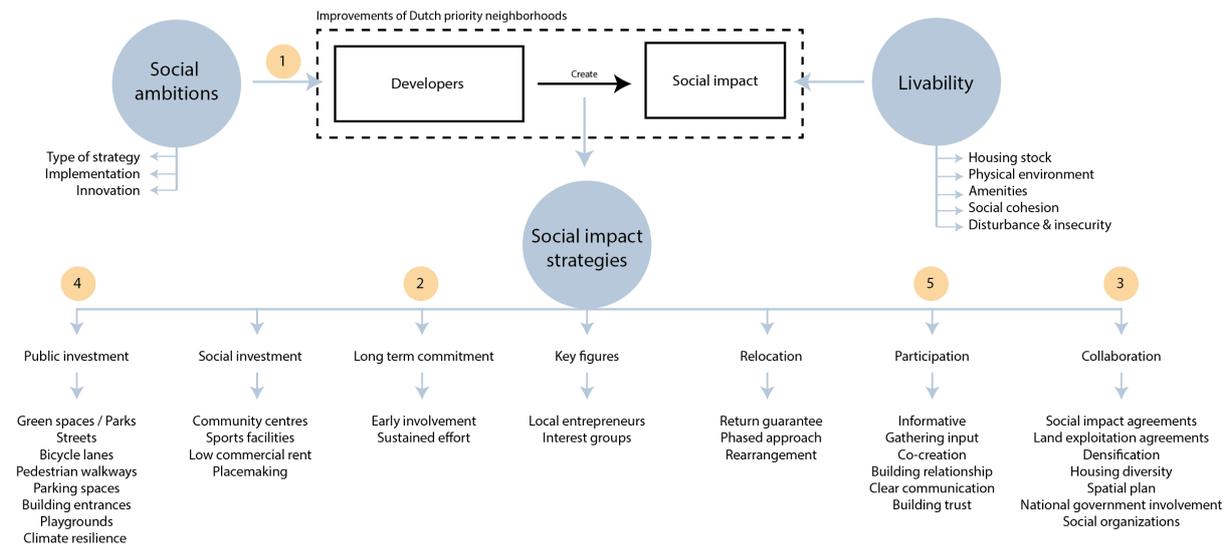


*Figure 31: Expert panel statements related to the framework (Damen, 2025)*

### 5.1.1   Expert selection

The experts are chosen according to specific selection criteria (Table 35) to verify the panel's conclusions. To ensure differentiation of the participants, four professionals with different backgrounds in social development and the built environment comprise the expert panel. The participants must at least be familiar with the theme's "social impact" and "social impact strategies". The participants are excluded from the research's interviews to foster greater support and boost the validity of the findings.

*Table 35: Expert panel selection criteria (Damen, 2025)*

| Expert panel selection criteria |
|---|
| Professionals with backgrounds in social development and the built environment. |
| Participants must at least be familiar with the theme's "social impact" and "social impact strategies". |
| Not involved in the semi-structured interviews. |
| Differentiation in participants |
| Constructing-developer who wants to make social impact. |
| Investing-developer who want to make social impact. |
| Academic researcher on the topic of social impact. |
| Social mediator in the built environment. |

The selection criteria resulted in the participation of a neighborhood development manager working for a construction developer, the head researcher of an investment area developer, a postdoctoral researcher specializing in social sustainability, and the co-founder of a social foundation.

### 5.1.2 Statement development

To extract valuable information from the expert panel, five statements were formulated. These statements address topics the researcher sought to explore in greater depth to examine whether the findings from the cross-case analysis align with or differ from the perspectives of professionals in the field.

The first statement pertains to the social ambitions of developers. As discussed in Chapter 4, only two out of three developers explicitly express their social ambitions. This statement was designed to verify whether having social ambitions is essential for developers to achieve social impact. Statement two focuses on the long-term commitment and early involvement of developers. Given the differences identified between the three projects in the cross-case analysis, this statement investigates the various forms of long-term commitment present in practice. The third statement examines whether social impact agreements are necessary to achieve meaningful social impact. The case study revealed that such agreements ensure commitments are fulfilled. However, their inconsistent application suggests uncertainty about their contribution to the process. Statement four addresses public investments that could enhance social cohesion within neighborhoods. Since it is challenging to measure whether these investments contribute to the social objectives of a project, this statement explores whether professionals support or embrace such investments. The fifth and final statement relates to participation. All three case studies highlighted the critical importance of communication during social and community development projects. This statement aims to confirm this observation.

### 5.1.3 Findings of the expert panel

**Statement 1: "Developers must openly and clearly articulate their social ambitions and strategies."**

It is crucial for developers not only to formulate social ambitions but also to actively implement them. As noted, ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) is playing an increasingly significant role. Establishing KPIs related to social impact is instrumental in this process. It clarifies what you aim to achieve, why it matters, and ensures that outcomes are measurable. Communicating these goals externally enables meaningful dialogue with municipalities while also holding developers accountable for fulfilling their ambitions. This approach helps avoid the pitfalls of superficial "social greenwashing."

However, it is not enough to merely formulate ambitions. Developers must also be transparent about the choices they make and the positions they adopt. Social impact is a broad and multifaceted concept that can be interpreted in numerous ways. Making explicit and intentional decisions is therefore critical. In some cases, this process can even become political: *When do you consider an initiative good or just?* Prolonged ambiguity in these choices increases the risk of project failure or misalignment.

The connection between social ambition and strategy is pivotal in this regard. While anyone can declare, "This is important to me," the real question is *how*. How will the ambition be realized? This determines whether ambitions are translated into meaningful actions or remain mere rhetoric.

Another critical aspect is understanding and addressing the specific needs of the neighborhood where a project is being developed. Instead of starting with the developer's goals, it is essential to begin with the local context. What are the pressing issues in the community, such as loneliness, health challenges, or safety concerns? What can the developer contribute to address these needs? By reversing the perspective and starting with what is genuinely required, developers can take a meaningful step toward societal engagement. This calls for a location-specific approach rather than a one-size-fits-all strategy.

Social engagement extends beyond organizing a community meeting or setting up a tent for residents to ask questions about upcoming developments. While such activities may suffice in certain cases, they are often insufficient. Effective social engagement requires a clear understanding of the neighborhood's social challenges and tailoring strategies to address them. These actions must be carefully aligned and designed to achieve tangible societal impact.

A valuable example of this approach is the work of the Council for Public Health, which focuses on significant societal issues such as obesity, loneliness, and safety. However, there is often a disconnect between the insights provided by such organizations and the practices of developers or investors. Bridging this gap is vital to ensuring that the built environment can positively contribute to these challenges. This necessitates a service-oriented mindset: not only developing projects based on self-interest but asking, *What does the community need, and how can we help address those needs?* Such an approach aligns projects more closely with the community's requirements, making them both more relevant and impactful.

All of this underscores the importance of developers taking action—not just through lofty ambitions but through concrete strategies that respond to local contexts. Only through this approach can developers create lasting social impact.

### Statement 2: "Long-term involvement and early engagement of developers are crucial for achieving social impact."
Long-term involvement of the developer and collaboration are essential for realizing social impact in area developments. For example, BPD utilizes the BPD Housing Fund, which not only manages middle-income rental housing but also ensures sustained engagement with the community. This fund focuses on community building, addressing questions such as: *How can we foster connections between residents?* and *How can we maintain contact with the community?* By prioritizing these aspects early in the design phase, a sustainable relationship with the neighborhood is established.

A notable example is a project in The Hague, where a new village was co-developed with future residents from the outset. Residents provided input on their vision for an ideal village, including features such as a central green (brink) and a church. This feedback guided a collaborative approach to community building. Through this process, residents were involved

at every stage, resulting in not only affordable housing but also a strong sense of community connection.

This demonstrates how the deliberate integration of social aspects can reflect a sense of 'noblesse oblige', the belief that the wealthy and privileged are obliged to help those less fortunate. As the largest developer in the Netherlands, BPD feels a responsibility to create livable neighborhoods where social impact aligns with economic feasibility. Building a strong community requires more than a few participatory meetings; it demands a dialogue that addresses the real issues in the neighborhood and meets the actual needs of its residents.

A valuable approach involves partnerships with housing associations, schools, and social organizations. For example, in inner-city redevelopments, agreements are often made about the relocation of residents and the creation of mixed-income neighborhoods. Collaboration is essential but should not be hastily considered the ultimate solution. Schools and other partners have their own responsibilities, and it is crucial not to overburden them with tasks such as organizing resident engagement.

The success of this approach hinges on building trust, clear communication, and establishing explicit agreements. Developers must clearly define the areas where residents can contribute and provide transparency about how their input will be used. This prevents frustration and ensures realistic expectations.

Although not all developers have a dedicated housing fund to guarantee long-term involvement, alternative solutions exist. Collaborations with entities that play a lasting role in the neighborhood, such as housing corporations, municipalities, or social organizations, offer opportunities to sustain social impact. This requires clear agreements and a shared vision for long-term goals.

Ultimately, social impact must move beyond being a promise and become a tangible reality. Achieving this entails investing in relationships, engaging the right partners, and continuously exploring ways to place residents and the community at the center of development. Only through this approach can we create livable, green, and socially cohesive neighborhoods that are not only sustainable but also genuinely responsive to the needs of their residents.

**Statement 3: "Social impact agreements between municipalities, housing association, and developers ensure that impact is achieved."**
In the Netherlands, many agreements and covenants are established, but the question remains: what do they actually achieve? The concept of a social impact agreement is inherently valuable, but it must go beyond being a formal document. The real difference lies in taking action and achieving tangible results. Instead of a "social impact agreement," a term like *social impact goal agenda* might be more appropriate. This term suggests a goal-oriented and dynamic approach that can evolve and adapt to changing circumstances.

Such an agenda should not only define goals but also address the *how*: how will these goals be achieved, who is responsible for each aspect, and how can collaboration be effectively organized? The success of such initiatives depends on trust and cooperation among all stakeholders. Key figures must come together, align their goals, and commit to working

collaboratively toward a shared vision. Building trust and establishing clear expectations are critical components of this process.

In practice, collaboration sometimes remains too superficial. For example, housing associations may impose requirements, such as organizing social return, but then delegate these responsibilities without clear direction. This approach is ineffective. It is essential for stakeholders to collectively define their objectives and clarify the division of roles and responsibilities. This ensures that efforts are genuinely focused on addressing the needs of the neighborhood, rather than devolving into a mere checklist exercise.

In area development projects, the role of developers is particularly significant. While their primary focus is on creating and delivering projects, developers also have a social responsibility. This does not mean they are expected to solve every problem within a neighborhood—some challenges lie beyond their scope—but it does mean they should contribute to social objectives within their expertise. For this to work, all stakeholders must clearly define their roles, enabling realistic expectations and effective collaboration.

In some cases, developers deliberately take on additional responsibilities, such as investing in social infrastructure or accepting lower margins. These decisions are often strategic, aimed at fostering stronger relationships with municipalities or achieving broader goals. Such conscious choices strengthen social impact when they are based on clear agreements and shared ambitions.

Establishing goals and ambitions early in the process is crucial. This creates a solid foundation to fall back on, particularly in unexpected situations or when complex, tailored solutions are needed. At the same time, there must be room for flexibility. A social impact agenda can articulate aspirations, such as engaging existing and new residents in the development process, without rigidly formalizing every aspect. This prevents bureaucratic inefficiencies and allows for responsiveness to local needs.

The success of a project, however, does not rely solely on formal agreements. It also requires involving the right people, building relationships, and actively listening to the community. Participation means more than organizing a few meetings; it requires an ongoing dialogue with residents, ensuring their input is genuinely integrated. This reduces frustration and leads to better plans that address the community's actual needs.

A practical tool, such as a guide with best practices, can support this process. Many developers and organizations are willing to engage in participation but lack the knowledge to do so effectively. A resource providing examples and insights could facilitate improved collaboration and help create plans that not only meet requirements but also add real value.

Ultimately, the goal is not just to avoid problems such as legal disputes or delays but to seize opportunities. Participation and social impact should be leveraged to improve plans and deliver genuine value for residents and communities. This requires a strategic and flexible approach focused on long-term impact and multi-level collaboration.

**Statement 4: "Investments in public spaces not only enhance livability but also address urgent challenges such as social cohesion."**

Investing in social infrastructure and public spaces is a broad strategic choice that can be implemented in various ways. For example, as highlighted by the Council for Public Health, investing in public spaces can encourage physical activity. The decisions made regarding such investments determine whether pressing challenges, such as obesity, can be effectively addressed. This requires careful consideration to ensure the approach aligns with local needs and the specific context of the project.

However, merely improving an area, such as installing a fitness park, does not automatically mean that residents with a high BMI will utilize the facility. There is often a significant gap between the design of public spaces and achieving actual behavioral change. While it is hoped that usage will follow naturally by creating enabling conditions, additional efforts are often required to motivate people and facilitate genuine behavioral transformation.

Understanding the context and the life situations of individuals is critical in this process. For someone dealing with significant personal challenges, the idea of going outside to use fitness equipment may be far removed from their daily priorities. This raises the question: *How impactful is such an investment if it does not resonate with the target group's lived realities?*

The success of these interventions depends on involving the right expertise and institutions. It is crucial to avoid a paternalistic approach, such as: *"Here's a beautiful park with fitness equipment—enjoy!"* Without a deeper understanding of the target group's needs, there is a risk that the facility could be misused, for instance, by groups like loitering youths, undermining the original goals. The key lies in going a step further to ensure that public spaces are effectively tailored to the needs of the intended users.

This may require developers to step outside their traditional roles. Instead of solely focusing on visible solutions like fitness parks, the real solution might lie in addressing residents' home environments. This could involve investing in areas typically closer to social welfare, such as partnerships with social organizations or targeted family support. While this may fall outside the conventional scope of a developer's responsibilities, it can be essential for achieving sustainable impact.

Another important consideration is the preservation and strengthening of existing social infrastructure. Trusted spaces such as community centers and sports facilities are under pressure. For example, in Amsterdam, the sale of social real estate has resulted in commercial community centers with high rental costs, making them less accessible to residents in social housing. Yet these spaces are crucial for fostering social cohesion and providing community support.

Preserving these spaces requires a collaborative approach. Municipalities, often constrained by financial pressures, cannot shoulder this responsibility alone. Developers, investors, housing corporations, and other stakeholders can play a critical role in maintaining and improving social infrastructure. Supporting existing initiatives, rather than starting anew, often yields greater results and strengthens the community.

This approach emphasizes not just placemaking—the creation of new spaces—but also *place keeping*: maintaining and enhancing what already exists. This applies not only to community centers but also to sports facilities that struggle to remain viable. Developers can contribute significantly by collaborating with local stakeholders to ensure these spaces continue to function and serve their essential roles in the community.

The core of this strategy lies in cross-sector collaboration and a thoughtful approach that goes beyond superficial solutions. It requires insight, commitment, and a willingness to invest in the genuine needs of people. Only through such a comprehensive approach can sustainable impact be achieved, contributing to both social cohesion and improved livability in neighborhoods.

**Statement 5: "Clear communication and resident participation are essential for building trust and aligning redevelopment efforts with the needs and preferences of the community."**
Communication and participation with residents are critical in area development. This goes beyond merely informing residents; it involves engaging in an open and equitable dialogue. Such an approach underscores the importance of transparency and collaboration in building trust and ensuring that plans are better aligned with community needs.

A common issue is the lack of clarity regarding the aspects of a project where residents can and cannot provide input. Certain elements, such as adding housing to address housing shortages, are often non-negotiable due to overarching priorities. However, residents can still have opinions on these matters. It is therefore essential to clearly delineate where residents have influence and where they do not. Transparent communication about these boundaries prevents frustration and fosters realistic expectations.

Participation extends far beyond hosting a few community meetings. It requires a more in-depth and integrated approach that becomes part of the daily life of the community. This involves not just gathering input but actively engaging with the neighborhood—for instance, by attending existing community activities or scheduling sessions at times and locations convenient for residents. Building a sustainable relationship demands flexibility and a commitment to equitable and collaborative practices.

Participation is not just about disseminating information but about fostering a dialogue that treats residents as equal partners. In practice, however, participation in underserved neighborhoods often remains limited to informational meetings or minimal interaction. Genuine involvement occurs only when residents are given a voice in the planning process. This requires developers to be flexible, such as by scheduling meetings at times and places that align with residents' schedules and routines.

In successful projects, developers have often immersed themselves in the neighborhood. For example, they have connected with community leaders and social workers to understand who the residents are and what their needs are. One developer described using a local community center for a meeting, only to discover unforeseen issues that required a complete revision of the plan. Ultimately, a municipal contact with deeper knowledge of the neighborhood played a pivotal role in driving the project forward.

This highlights the importance of self-reflection and recognizing the limits of one's own knowledge. The key questions are: *Who truly understands the neighborhood?* and *Who has the trust of the residents?* Properly executed participation not only leads to better feedback but also results in stronger plans. However, it requires a careful and thoughtful approach. A quick or superficial strategy will not work and can even be counterproductive.

An effective approach combines clear communication with equitable dialogue. On the one hand, this means explicitly stating where residents can and cannot contribute. On the other hand, it involves genuinely considering their input in areas where they do have influence. It is equally important to communicate transparently at a later stage, explaining why certain suggestions were incorporated while others were not. This fosters transparency, prevents misunderstandings, and strengthens mutual trust.

The concept of "dialogue" emphasizes the importance of equity in collaboration. Even when residents cannot contribute to every decision, the way in which discussions are conducted remains critical. Residents need to feel heard, and their input should be meaningfully integrated into the process wherever possible. Communication and participation are not just tools to mitigate resistance, but powerful means of co-creating plans that are widely supported and add genuine value to the community.

### 5.1.4   Conclusion

The expert panel highlights key lessons for developers aiming to create social impact in Dutch priority neighborhoods.

*Table 36: Conclusion of the expert panel (Damen, 2025)*

| Statement | Results |
|---|---|
| 1: Developers must openly and clearly articulate their social ambitions and strategies. | *Define and Measure Social Impact:* Articulate ambitions clearly, establish measurable KPIs, and avoid superficial "social greenwashing." |
| | *Transparency in Decision-Making:* Make explicit choices to mitigate risks of ambiguity. |
| | *Local Context and Tailored Actions:* Address specific neighborhood needs like health or safety. |
| | *Community Engagement Beyond Formalities:* Move beyond token gestures to address real societal challenges. |
| 2: Long-term involvement and early engagement of developers are crucial for achieving social impact. | *Sustained Commitment*: Maintain long-term involvement through initiatives like housing funds. |
| | *Collaborative Co-Development*: Engage residents early and continuously. |
| | *Strategic Partnerships*: Collaborate with housing associations and clarify roles. |
| | *Building Trust Through Transparency*: Communicate openly about scope and limitations of resident influence. |
| 3: Social impact agreements between municipalities, housing associations, and developers ensure that impact is achieved. | *Dynamic and Actionable Agreements*: Shift to adaptable social impact agendas. |
| | *Role Clarity and Cooperation*: Define roles and establish shared objectives. |
| | *Early Alignment of Goals*: Set clear ambitions at the start while maintaining flexibility. |
| | *Ongoing Community Involvement*: Build trust by integrating resident feedback and utilizing best practices. |

| | |
|---|---|
| 4: Investments in public spaces not only enhance livability but also address urgent challenges such as social cohesion. | *Strategic Investments in Public Spaces*: Align improvements with community needs and avoid assuming physical changes alone are sufficient. |
| | *Address Root Causes*: Understand residents' realities to design meaningful interventions. |
| | *Preserve and Strengthen Social Infrastructure*: Maintain community centers and sports facilities. |
| | *Collaborative and Inclusive Placemaking and keeping*: Balance creating new spaces with enhancing existing ones. |
| 5: Clear communication and resident participation are essential for building trust and aligning redevelopment efforts with the needs and preferences of the community. | *Transparent Communication*: Clearly define areas of resident influence and manage expectations. |
| | *Integrated Resident Participation*: Establish ongoing, meaningful engagement. |
| | *Equitable Collaboration*: Treat residents as equal partners and actively consider their input. |
| | *Feedback and Reflection*: Communicate how feedback was used and build sustainable relationships through transparency. |

First, developers must move from stating social ambitions to actively implementing strategies tailored to community needs. Setting measurable KPIs and ensuring transparency are crucial to avoiding superficial "social greenwashing." Second, long-term involvement of the developer and early engagement are vital for sustainable impact. Examples like the BPD Housing Fund show the value of embedding social goals from the start and fostering partnerships with housing corporations, municipalities, and social organizations. Clear roles and shared accountability are essential for effective collaboration. Third, trust and meaningful resident engagement are critical. Developers should prioritize transparent communication, integrate into the community, and involve trusted local figures. Addressing residents' input—explaining what is adopted and why—is key to aligning efforts with community needs. Finally, investments in public spaces and social infrastructure must address local challenges thoughtfully. While visible projects like fitness parks improve livability, they should be paired with broader initiatives to drive meaningful social change, including preserving essential community spaces.

## 5.1.5  Reflection on the expert panel

Critically reflecting on the expert panel, it is noteworthy that all four participants exhibited a highly positive attitude regarding the potential social contribution that developers could make in the redevelopment of Dutch priority neighborhoods. Since all four participants shared largely similar views, the discussions tended to build upon each other's ideas rather than challenge them. As a result, the session resembled more of a collaborative workshop on the proposed social strategies than a genuine debate.

This consensus among the participants led to the statements being addressed from a single, unified perspective, representing a collective input. Despite the initial intention to foster a debate, the expert panel nonetheless provided new, detailed insights. These insights have been incorporated into a revised framework, which is synthesized in the next paragraph.

## 5.2    Synthesis

Based on the findings from the expert panel, several modifications and additions are made to the framework (Figure 32).
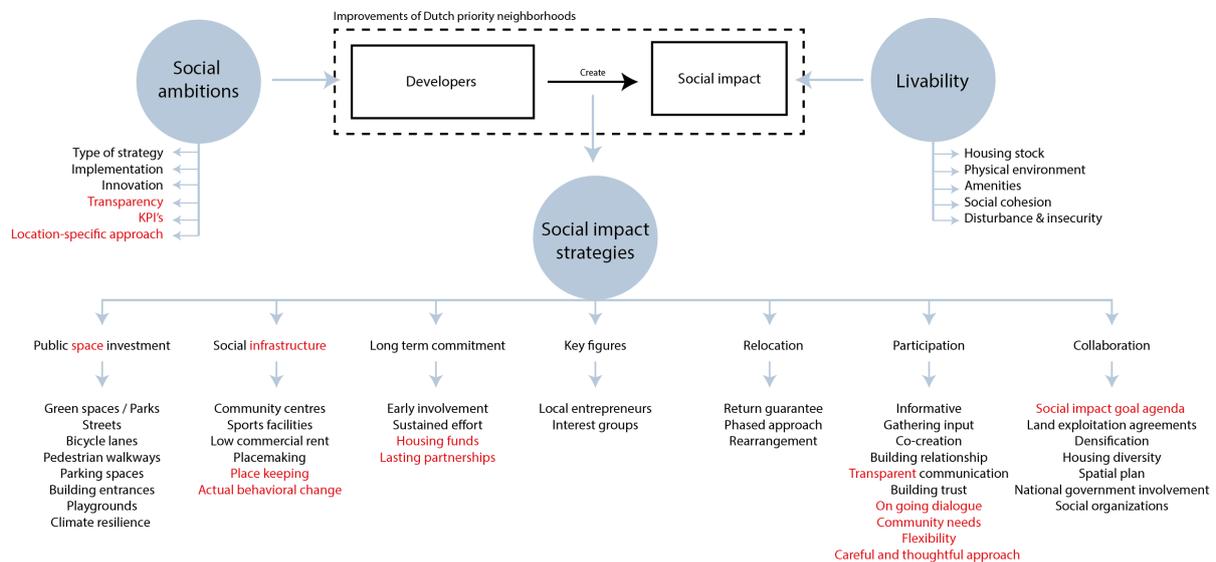


*Figure 32: Modifications and additions to the framework (Damen, 2025)*

Under the category of social ambitions, the elements *transparency*, *KPIs*, and *location-specific approach* are added. The expert panel highlighted the importance of developers being transparent about their social ambitions. This approach helps avoid the pitfalls of superficial "social greenwashing."

It is crucial for developers not only to formulate social ambitions but also to actively implement them. As noted, ESG is playing an increasingly significant role. Establishing KPIs related to social impact is instrumental in this process. It clarifies what you aim to achieve, why it matters, and ensures that outcomes are measurable.

Next to this, a key consideration is recognizing and responding to the unique needs of the neighborhood where a project is being implemented. Rather than prioritizing the developer's objectives, the focus should begin with the local context. What are the community's most pressing challenges, such as social isolation, health issues, or safety concerns? How can the developer's efforts contribute to addressing these priorities? Shifting the perspective to prioritize genuine community needs allows developers to engage more meaningfully with society. This requires a tailored, location-specific approach instead of a generic, one-size-fits-all strategy.

To clarify the strategies of public investment and social investment, these aspects have been redefined as *public space investment* and *social infrastructure*. Public space investment focuses on physical interventions in public spaces, while social infrastructure emphasizes creating spaces that foster social engagement.

Under social infrastructure, the elements *place keeping* and *actual behavioral change* have been added. Not only creating new spaces (placemaking) but also preserving and enhancing existing ones (place keeping) are important. This principle extends beyond community centers

to include sports facilities that face challenges in sustaining their operations. Developers can play a crucial role by partnering with local stakeholders to ensure these spaces remain functional and continue to fulfill their vital roles within the community.

A substantial disconnect often exists between the design of spaces and the realization of meaningful behavioral change. Although the assumption is that creating conducive conditions will naturally lead to increased use, further efforts are typically necessary to actively encourage participation and support behavioral change.

Under long term commitment, *housing funds* and *lasting partnerships* are added. Broadly speaking, there are two primary ways for developers to maintain a long-term commitment to a development. The first approach involves utilizing a housing fund, where the developer retains ownership of mid-market rental properties. This ensures that the developer is directly responsible for safeguarding long-term interests during the development process. The second approach involves establishing partnerships with organizations that maintain a long-term presence in the neighborhood, such as housing associations, local governments, or social institutions, provide valuable opportunities to ensure lasting social impact. Achieving this requires well-defined agreements and a shared vision for long-term objectives.

The participation aspect has undergone significant additions. An effective strategy combines *transparent communication* with balanced and equitable *dialogue*. This involves clearly delineating where residents can and cannot influence decisions while genuinely considering their input in areas where they do have a say. Additionally, transparent follow-up communication is crucial, explaining why certain suggestions were implemented and why others were not. This approach enhances *transparency*, reduces misunderstandings, and builds mutual *trust*. The concept of "dialogue" underscores the importance of fairness in collaboration. Even when residents cannot influence every decision, the way discussions are handled is vital. Residents must feel their voices are heard, and their input should be thoughtfully incorporated wherever feasible. Communication and participation are not merely tools for managing opposition but essential elements for co-creating plans that are widely supported and genuinely beneficial to the community.

The idea of a social impact agreement holds significant value, but its effectiveness lies beyond its existence as a formal document. The real impact comes from taking action and delivering measurable outcomes. A term like "*social impact goal agenda*" may better capture this dynamic and goal-oriented approach, emphasizing adaptability to evolving circumstances. This agenda should not only outline the objectives but also detail the methods: how these goals will be achieved, who will be responsible for each component, and how collaboration will be effectively structured. The success of such initiatives hinges on fostering trust and cooperation among all stakeholders involved.

# PART 6 –

# Discussion and Limitations

## 6.1　Discussion

This chapter examines the differences and similarities between the literature and the results from practice. These differences and similarities are analyzed based on the main components of the framework: social ambition, livability impact, and social impact strategies.

### 6.1.1　Social ambition

Theory

CSR integrates social, ethical, and environmental considerations into a company's operations, ensuring accountability to stakeholders (Lindgreen & Swaen, 2010). CSR emphasizes ethical practices beyond legal compliance, promoting trust and loyalty (Carroll, 1999). It also advocates for social equity, including fair wages, diversity, and community development (Porter & Kramer, 2006), and environmental sustainability through renewable resources and waste reduction (Hart & Milstein, 1999). Implementing CSR poses challenges, such as aligning it with business strategies, addressing stakeholder skepticism, and establishing meaningful impact metrics (Mohr, Webb, & Harris, 2001; Wood, 2010). CSR demands long-term commitment, which may conflict with short-term business goals (Doppelt, 2003). However, its integration can enhance reputation, efficiency, and competitive advantage.

ESG criteria evaluate companies based on environmental stewardship, social relationships, and governance practices, shaping socially conscious investments (Zaccack, 2020). ESG aligns financial performance with sustainable development through governance, creating long-term value (van der Griendt, 2022). The environmental dimension assesses resource use, waste management, and regulatory compliance. Social criteria focus on labor standards, diversity, community involvement, and customer satisfaction. Governance addresses leadership transparency, executive pay, shareholder rights, and ethical practices. Together, ESG provides a framework to balance profitability with environmental and social responsibility, meeting both investor and societal expectations.

Practice

In practice, developers haven't mentioned terms like CSR and ESG at all, suggesting that the interviewed parties are not actively implementing these frameworks as formal strategies. However, all interviewees demonstrated awareness of the social and societal challenges they are required to address. This awareness is also reflected in how the parties approach their social ambitions.

Heijmans' social ambition is centered around the pillar of well-being, which has been integrated into the company's overall corporate strategy. However, this pillar was not created in isolation. Heijmans had already been actively engaged in creating social impact before conceptualizing the well-being pillar. Mintzberg (1987) describes this phenomenon as "strategy as a pattern," where strategy is identified retrospectively based on a consistent pattern of past decisions. He refers to this as an "emergent strategy," signifying that strategy is not a pre-determined plan but rather evolves organically over time.

As a housing association, creating social impact is deeply embedded in Rochdale's organizational DNA. As a non-profit organization, its social approach is firmly ingrained in its culture. Mintzberg (1987) describes this as "strategy as a perspective," where the organization's core values are central to its strategic approach. These values, deeply embedded

in the organizational culture, provide guidance and direction, distinguishing the organization from its competitors and playing a pivotal role in shaping its strategic goals.

VORM does not provide a clear definition of its social ambition. However, the interview strongly indicates that the company is actively engaged with the social aspects of development, viewing it as a distinct approach from standard development practices. Mintzberg (1987) describes this as "strategy as a position." This approach emphasizes the organization's market positioning, focusing on achieving a 'strategic fit' between its capabilities and the market environment. Central to this interpretation of strategy is gaining a competitive advantage, with concepts such as market analysis, organizational analysis, and SWOT analysis forming the foundation of this approach.

### 6.1.2 Livability impact

<u>Theory</u>

Shafer, Lee, and Turner (2000) present a human ecological model that links urban greenway trails to quality of life through factors like social engagement, physical environment, and economic impact. Trails enhance cohesion, health, and local economies by fostering social networks, access to nature, and increased property values. Similarly, RIVM (2003) offers a comprehensive framework that positions quality of life as the interplay of local environment, health, and social conditions. Livability, a related concept, addresses how well environments meet human needs, focusing on elements like housing stock, physical environment, amenities, social cohesion, and disturbance & insecurity. Both models emphasize the multidimensional nature of quality of life, suggesting that effective strategies must address environmental, social, and personal factors simultaneously.

<u>Practice</u>

During the interviews, participants were specifically asked how they aim to improve the livability of the neighborhood and the goals they prioritize in this context. These discussions were not framed using the theoretical framework of RIVM (2003). Instead, after the interviews, the data were analyzed and subsequently categorized based on the five dimensions of livability: housing stock, physical environment, amenities, social cohesion, and disturbance & insecurity. Based on this categorization, the following conclusions were drawn.

*Housing stock:* Balancing social housing, mid-range rentals, and private-sector housing is key to creating a diverse resident mix without reducing social housing units. Adding homes while ensuring they are mold-free, accessible, and adaptable to different household needs is crucial.

*Physical environment:* Neighborhood development must also prioritize well-designed outdoor spaces that encourage social interaction and play, enhancing livability and fostering community engagement. Amenities like shops, healthcare, schools, and community centers are essential for supporting social and economic growth.

*Amenities:* Social cohesion plays a critical role in creating safer, connected communities. Shared spaces and events encourage interaction, while middle-income rentals and senior housing help residents stay rooted in their neighborhood, promoting stability.

*Social cohesion:* Addressing youth challenges is vital for neighborhood safety. Entrepreneurs can serve as role models, and community centers offer positive spaces for youth to gather, reducing street-related issues.

*Disturbance & insecurity:* Active ground-floor spaces are essential for safety, particularly in the evenings. Temporary uses of vacant areas help maintain vibrancy and enhance perceptions of security.

### 6.1.3   Social impact strategies

Practice

During the interviews, a flexible approach was adopted to explore how developers address the creation of social impact. This open-ended methodology ensured that the questions did not impose limitations, allowing for a broad understanding of developers' social impact strategies for fostering social impact. Based on the responses from the interviewees, the following categories emerged: public space investment, social infrastructure investment, long-term commitment, key figures, relocation, participation, and collaboration.

Investing in public spaces is essential for safer, more resilient neighborhoods. Redesigning infrastructure such as streets, bike paths, parks, and green spaces fosters accessibility, social interaction, and environmental resilience. Strategic building layouts and greenery also help address climate change challenges.

Social infrastructure investments like community centers, sports facilities, placemaking, and supporting entrepreneurship with low rents enhance neighborhoods but are challenging to justify in cost analyses due to their intangible, long-term benefits. Early and sustained commitments to these initiatives, along with partnerships with housing associations or investor-developers, ensure lasting social impact.

Engaging key community figures provides valuable insights and strengthens social cohesion, though this approach can be time intensive. Relocation processes, while disruptive, are managed collaboratively to minimize impacts. Phased rehousing allows most residents to remain in the area, with better housing featuring accessibility improvements. However, only 30-40% of residents typically return to their original neighborhoods post-relocation.

Community engagement builds trust and support through transparent communication and participatory methods, helping address concerns and foster collaboration. Effective area development relies on partnerships between municipalities, housing associations, and developers. These collaborations support land exploitation, public space planning, and social impact agreements, while partnerships with social organizations and institutions further enrich neighborhood vitality.

Theory

Several of these aspects can be linked to the literature reviewed. For instance, social infrastructure investment can be connected to the Social Return on Investment (SROI) framework. The SROI framework evaluates and enhances the social, environmental, and economic value generated by organizations. It identifies both positive and negative externalities and provides a comprehensive framework to measure and address inequality and

environmental issues while promoting well-being (Nicholls et al., 2012; Krlev et al., 2013). Unlike traditional financial metrics, SROI emphasizes value creation by measuring outcomes that impact people and communities, helping organizations understand their effectiveness (Lewis & nef, 2008). SROI combines cost-benefit analysis, stakeholder engagement, and financial proxies to assess socio-economic and environmental impacts. It applies to diverse sectors, focusing either retrospectively on completed projects or prospectively to predict potential social value (Maldonado & Corbey, 2016). The six stages of SROI include defining scope and stakeholders, mapping outcomes, valuing outcomes with financial proxies, assessing impact factors like deadweight and attribution, calculating the SROI ratio, and transparently reporting results for better decision-making. While the ratio quantifies benefits relative to investment, it should be complemented by qualitative evidence to capture the broader social value.

Also, the social innovation framework can be linked to the themes of collaboration and participation. The partnership between developers, housing associations, municipalities, and residents exemplifies cross-sector collaboration, where the public sector, private sector, non-profit sector, and informal sector work together. Social innovation spans public, private, non-profit, and informal sectors, relying on collaborative and co-creative efforts (Rehfeld et al., 2015). Partnerships across diverse social, cultural, and technological contexts are critical, with networks playing a key role in driving institutional change (Berkhout et al., 2004; Chesbrough, 2003). Successful innovation requires cross-sector collaboration, as no single organization can lead in all areas of progress (Powell & Grodal, 2006). Despite challenges like differing objectives and structures, collaboration fosters knowledge sharing, co-creation, and collective learning (Piller & Reichwald, 2009). Social innovation supports societal needs by building local institutions and leveraging social, environmental, and institutional capital.

## 6.2   Limitations

While this study makes a valuable contribution to advancing a more resilient built environment, it is essential to acknowledge several limitations that may have influenced the results.

The research was conducted within a constrained timeframe, necessitating choices that prioritized efficiency over solely enhancing the depth of findings. One key limitation lies in the scope of the case studies and the number of stakeholders surveyed. The limited number of case studies and interviews may have affected the robustness and reliability of the conclusions. Nevertheless, by focusing on fewer examples, the study was able to conduct an in-depth analysis of each case, allowing for a comprehensive cross-case examination. Despite the small sample size, the interviews revealed meaningful similarities and differences among the cases, thereby enhancing the study's overall validity.

In the case selection process, strict adherence was maintained to the criterion that the case must be situated within an existing urban structure where social impact is expected to be achieved. Given that the theme of social impact is still relatively new in practice, only a limited number of cases were deemed suitable for this study.

Another limitation is the absence of a case involving an investing developer. The cases examined pertain to building developers and a developing housing corporation. Including a

case involving an investing developer could potentially provide greater insight into their long-term relationship within an area development.

In the case of the Van Deysselbuurt, Rochdale fulfills the role of a developer. In this case study, research was conducted solely on Rochdale's role; however, additional developers are also involved in this area. For instance, Heijmans is responsible for several property developments. The role of Heijmans was not investigated, which represents a significant limitation of the research.

Moreover, the results of the case studies rely heavily on conducted interviews and less on document analyses. As a result, some information may have been overlooked.

Furthermore, since the expert panel was conducted in a single (online) session, there is a risk that participants may have been more inclined to reach consensus rather than express clear differences of opinion.

It is important to recognize that this study was carried out within the specific context of the Netherlands, which may limit its applicability to other regulatory or market environments. These factors highlight the importance of critically evaluating the findings and suggest areas for further exploration to enhance the reliability and applicability of the results in broader contexts.

# PART 7 –

# Conclusion and Recommendations

## 7.1 Conclusion

This chapter addresses the sub-questions of the research to ultimately provide an answer to the main research question: "How can developers create social impact in Dutch priority neighborhoods?"

### 7.1.1 *"What is social impact in the built environment?"*

Social impact refers to any significant or positive changes that address or solve social injustices and challenges. It can be categorized alongside economic and environmental impacts but remains the least developed area both academically and in practical applications compared to the other dimensions. Social impact entails understanding the broader societal consequences of actions, focusing on creating improvements in quality of life, equity, and sustainability within communities.

The concept is closely associated with methodologies such as Social Impact Assessment (SIA), which is described as a systematic process to optimize positive outcomes and mitigate negative consequences of planned developments. This process is deeply rooted in values like human rights, equity, and sustainability, aiming to foster community development, resilience, and social justice while ensuring sustainability and minimizing adverse effects. SIA goes beyond immediate outcomes to include indirect, cumulative, and higher-order impacts, engaging stakeholders to ensure that developments align with societal goals.

Moreover, various frameworks like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Social Return on Investment (SROI) provide tools to measure and track social impacts. The SDGs set a global agenda to address challenges like poverty, inequality, and peace, offering metrics to evaluate initiatives. SROI helps organizations evaluate the value created through social, environmental, and economic contributions, emphasizing qualitative and quantitative evidence of impact.

### 7.1.2 *"How do developers implement social ambitions?"*

Developers implement social ambitions by aligning their operational and strategic activities with societal needs and values.

**Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)**: CSR is a foundational framework for integrating social, ethical, and environmental concerns into a developer's operations and decision-making. Developers adopt CSR practices to address societal expectations and enhance their reputations. This involves going beyond compliance to create value for society through ethical labor practices, environmental sustainability, and contributions to community well-being.

**Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG)**: ESG criteria serve as a guideline for developers to align their business practices with social and environmental considerations. For instance, under the "social" dimension, developers focus on workplace safety, diversity, and community engagement. These strategies ensure that projects benefit communities while aligning with sustainable and ethical business practices.

**Shared Value Creation (SVC)**: Developers utilize SVC to link business success with social progress. Unlike CSR, which often operates separately from core business goals, SVC integrates social value creation directly into the developer's competitive strategy. Developers focus on

improving community conditions, such as enhancing local economic opportunities or providing better housing, in ways that also strengthen their business position.

Developers implement social ambitions in various ways, shaped by their organizational values, goals, and operational contexts. The strategies of Heijmans, Rochdale, and VORM, showcase distinct approaches to integrating social impact into their development practices.

Heijmans embeds its social ambitions into its corporate strategy through the well-being pillar, which evolved organically from the company's historical actions, reflecting Mintzberg's concept of "strategy as a pattern." This emergent strategy indicates that the company's focus on well-being was a natural progression from its consistent past decisions rather than a pre-planned initiative. Heijmans combines its construction expertise with innovative, community-focused methods. These include developing mixed-income housing projects to foster social diversity, utilizing Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) to leverage community strengths and assets for development, and employing data-driven impact measurement through collaborations with partners to evaluate the effectiveness of social interventions. The company excels in systematic and measurable innovations, employing structured tools to evaluate and enhance its social contributions.

As a non-profit housing association, Rochdale's social ambition is deeply ingrained in its DNA, exemplifying Mintzberg's "strategy as a perspective." This reflects an alignment of the organization's core values with its strategic goals, ensuring that social impact is a natural and central aspect of its operations. The implementation approach emphasizes long-term property ownership, aiming to maintain high-quality social and middle-income rentals to enhance community stability. Additionally, it leverages concentrated property holdings to drive transformative neighborhood development, although this strategy carries certain risks during periods of economic fluctuation. Rochdale leverages data to enhance decision-making and strategic improvements, ensuring its initiatives are well-targeted and impactful.

VORM's social ambition aligns with Mintzberg's "strategy as a position," focusing on aligning the company's capabilities with market demands to achieve competitive advantage. This reflects a practical approach that integrates social considerations into its development practices. The implementation approach prioritizes delivering cost-effective, high-quality housing, ensuring neighborhood objectives are met while maintaining operational efficiency. It also emphasizes collaborative efforts, including partnerships with organizations like Havensteder, to align housing solutions with broader community goals. VORM prioritizes practical implementation, providing housing solutions that complement redevelopment goals through efficient construction and collaborative frameworks.

Each organization adopts a unique approach to implementing social ambitions, influenced by their operational models and organizational values. While Heijmans emphasizes innovation and data-driven practices, Rochdale builds on its cultural foundation of long-term social commitment, and VORM excels in practical, collaborative housing delivery. Together, these strategies illustrate diverse pathways for developers to achieve social impact in neighborhood development.

### 7.1.3 *"How do developers create social impact in collaboration with housing associations in urban redevelopment projects?"*

Developers create social impact in collaboration with housing associations by employing a combination of strategies focused on public investments, social investments, long-term commitments, participation, and collaboration. These efforts aim to address community challenges, improve livability, and ensure sustainable development.

Enhancing public spaces is a priority for developers and housing associations to create safer and more inclusive neighborhoods. This involves designing shared spaces, such as Heijmans' "Now and Later" strategy, which includes early investments in parks and pathways to foster social interaction and build long-term community support. Infrastructure improvements, like redesigning building entrances and creating walkable courtyards, contribute to better accessibility and neighborhood aesthetics. Additionally, environmental enhancements, including water storage solutions and expanded green spaces, address climate challenges like heat stress while improving livability and resilience.

Social investments are another cornerstone of community improvement, focusing on both tangible and intangible aspects of neighborhood life. Developers and housing associations invest in community-oriented facilities, such as youth centers, schools, and daycare facilities, which provide essential services to residents. Supporting local entrepreneurs through affordable makerspaces and reduced rents for community-driven organizations stimulates local economies and fosters innovation. Placemaking initiatives, including educational programs and health-focused city projects, further engage residents and contribute to long-term well-being.

Long-term commitment is essential for ensuring that projects have sustained positive impacts. Developers like Heijmans commit to ongoing neighborhood engagement for 10–20 years, deploying community managers and leveraging local strengths to maintain focus on improvement efforts. Housing associations such as Rochdale retain ownership of properties to align with community needs and priorities, ensuring consistent quality and service over time.

Relocation management, a critical component of redevelopment, is carefully planned to minimize disruption to residents. Phased approaches ensure that most residents can remain in the neighborhood during construction. Return guarantees provide reassurance, allowing displaced residents to move back to their redeveloped neighborhoods and reducing the stress of displacement.

Active resident participation ensures that redevelopment projects align with community needs and priorities. Developers like Heijmans employ a multi-level approach to participation, ranging from communication to co-creation, encouraging residents to contribute to decision-making processes. Tailored approaches, such as home visits, surveys, and community meetings, further personalize engagement and address specific concerns like relocation and future neighborhood plans.

Collaboration between developers, housing associations, municipalities, and other stakeholders is critical to the success of area redevelopment projects. Integrated planning aligns resources and goals for zoning, housing density, and public space development. Social

Impact Agreements formalize commitments to community outcomes and enable partnerships with social organizations, schools, and institutions like museums, enriching the social fabric of the neighborhood.

Through these combined efforts, developers and housing associations foster vibrant, resilient communities, ensuring both immediate and long-term benefits for residents while addressing broader social and environmental challenges.

### 7.1.4 *"What do we learn from existing practices for the possible future of creating social impact in Dutch priority neighborhoods by developers?"*

The analysis of existing practices reveals several key lessons for the future of creating social impact in Dutch priority neighborhoods by developers. First, developers must go beyond articulating social ambitions to actively implementing strategies that align with the specific needs of the communities they serve. Setting measurable KPIs and committing to transparency in decision-making are critical steps to ensuring that ambitions translate into meaningful action and avoid superficial "social greenwashing."

Second, long-term involvement and early engagement are essential to achieving sustainable social impact. Successful examples, such as the BPD Housing Fund and co-development projects, underscore the importance of embedding social considerations into the development process from the outset. Partnerships with housing corporations, municipalities, and social organizations play a pivotal role in fostering community connections and addressing challenges such as social cohesion and inclusivity. However, these collaborations must be carefully managed to ensure clarity in roles, avoid overburdening partners, and maintain shared accountability.

Third, the success of social impact initiatives depends not only on formal agreements but also on building trust, fostering equitable dialogue, and engaging residents in meaningful ways. Developers must prioritize clear communication and ensure that participation is more than a procedural formality. Effective participation requires integrating into the community, understanding its unique dynamics, and involving trusted local figures. Transparency in addressing residents' input—both what is adopted and why certain suggestions are not—is critical to maintaining trust and aligning redevelopment efforts with community needs.

Finally, investments in public spaces and social infrastructure must be thoughtfully designed to address local challenges effectively. While visible interventions, such as fitness parks, can enhance livability, they often require complementary efforts to ensure they lead to meaningful behavioral changes. Developers should be willing to step beyond traditional boundaries, investing in partnerships and initiatives that address broader social and welfare needs, such as preserving essential community spaces.

### 7.1.5 *"How can developers create social impact in Dutch priority neighborhoods?"*

Developers can create social impact in Dutch priority neighborhoods by adopting a comprehensive and integrated approach that focuses on collaboration, long-term vision, and social innovation. Central to this effort is working closely with key stakeholders such as housing associations, municipalities, and local communities. These partnerships are essential for aligning objectives and pooling resources to address the specific needs of these

neighborhoods effectively. Resident participation and input from local organizations play a critical role in shaping initiatives that are genuinely beneficial to the community.

Developers must integrate social ambitions into their project designs by prioritizing improvements in livability. This includes enhancing housing quality, ensuring accessibility, creating green spaces, and fostering community cohesion. By embedding these goals into their strategies, developers can ensure that their work goes beyond physical infrastructure to address the social and environmental dimensions of urban renewal.

A long-term commitment is crucial to achieving lasting social impact. Developers must focus on sustainable outcomes such as maintaining affordability, fostering inclusivity, and improving overall livability. This requires continuous monitoring and refinement of strategies, which can be supported by methodologies like Impact Measurement & Management (IMM). Tools like Social Return on Investment (SROI) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) offer valuable frameworks for evaluating and maximizing the positive outcomes of redevelopment efforts.

Creating inclusive environments is another key aspect of generating social impact. Developers can achieve this by enhancing public spaces, providing essential amenities such as educational and healthcare facilities, and implementing initiatives that promote inclusivity and social cohesion. Addressing issues of safety and insecurity is also critical, as it helps create neighborhoods that are not only physically improved but also socially vibrant and secure.

Focusing on authentic community needs enables developers to build more meaningful connections with society. Achieving this involves adopting a customized, location-sensitive approach rather than relying on a standardized, universal strategy.
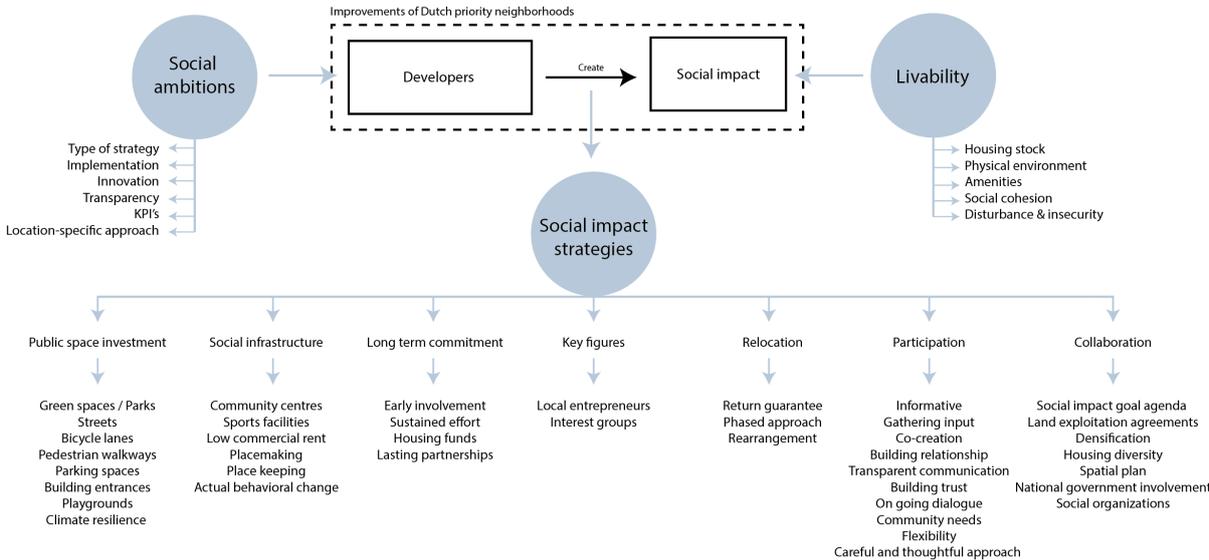


*Figure 33: Social impact strategies framework (Damen, 2025)*

## 7.2   Recommendations

Further research can provide actionable insights for enhancing the role of developers in creating sustainable, inclusive, and impactful urban redevelopment projects. These

recommendations align with the overarching aim of improving Dutch priority neighborhoods by balancing profitability with social responsibility.

**Further developing the social impact framework**
The study's limited number of case studies and interviews necessitates a broader and more structured framework to validate findings across diverse contexts. Future research should aim to further develop the social impact framework so it can be applied to a larger sample size. This framework would enable researchers to evaluate a wider range of cases, including different types of developers (e.g., investing developers), ensuring a more robust and generalizable understanding of social impact across various urban redevelopment scenarios.

Topics for further development:
- Social goal agenda/agreements: Further research could explore the various forms of collaboration in the field of social impact. Delving deeper into this subject could strengthen the framework. Additionally, there is an opportunity to examine this from a legal perspective.
- Long-term commitment: Investigating how developers can contribute to long-term goals would be highly valuable. Researching how lasting partnerships and sustained efforts can drive social impact would provide important insights.

**Social impact strategies in different international contexts**
While this study's findings are rooted in the Dutch regulatory and market environment, future research should examine the applicability of the social impact strategies in different international contexts. Comparative studies could explore how varying regulatory frameworks, cultural values, and market dynamics influence the implementation and outcomes of social impact strategies. This would help adapt the social impact framework to other regions and ensure its broader relevance.

**Advice for developers: maximizing social impact**
Developers play a crucial role in shaping communities and fostering social value through urban redevelopment. To achieve this, prioritize collaboration with housing associations and municipalities, using co-design processes and shared value frameworks to align profit motives with community needs. Adopt and refine social impact assessment tools, like Social Return on Investment (SROI), adapting them to local contexts by incorporating cultural, social, and economic factors. Long-term commitments are vital for sustained impact. Address financing challenges by exploring innovative models like social impact bonds or blended finance, which attract investment while ensuring community benefits. Resident engagement is equally essential. Empower communities through participatory frameworks, fostering social cohesion and integrating their priorities into your projects. Finally, embrace flexibility to adapt to evolving social, economic, and environmental contexts, ensuring your developments remain relevant and impactful over time. By embedding these principles, you can achieve both business success and lasting social impact.

# PART 8- Reflection

# Reflection

During my Bachelor's in architecture and Master's in Management in the Built Environment at Delft University of Technology, sustainability was a recurring theme. However, the focus often lay on environmental sustainability, with limited attention given to social sustainability. Since the social domain receives minimal emphasis and driven by my intrinsic motivation to positively transform underprivileged neighborhoods so that their residents feel comfortable in their homes and surroundings, I decided to focus my graduation project on the social aspect of area development, particularly within existing urban structures.

This graduation research aims to explore how so-called Dutch "priority neighborhoods" (aandachtswijken) can be revitalized, viewed from the perspective of a real estate developer. I chose this perspective because I assumed that developers dedicate little attention to the social domain, despite their significant influence on a project's success. By examining practical cases, I hope to emphasize the urgency of social investments, ensuring that the social dimension of area development gains more prominence alongside other considerations.

## 8.1    Method

For this research, I employed a qualitative empirical approach, preceded by a literature review focusing on the themes of "impact," "social impact," "strategies," "impact strategies," and "social impact strategies." During the literature review, I observed a high degree of overlap among existing studies, although subtle differences in nuance were often present. Furthermore, terms such as "livability" and "quality of life" were frequently used interchangeably, occasionally leading to confusion. Establishing an operational theoretical framework based on the literature proved challenging due to the abstract and broad nature of these concepts. Many elements can be subsumed under umbrella terms like "impact" and "strategy."

For the empirical part of the research, I studied three different case studies. Since I specifically sought projects aimed at generating social impact within existing urban structures, the selection pool was relatively small. Nevertheless, I believe these three cases align closely with the research objectives and provided the necessary insights to carry out the study as envisioned.

The case study data were primarily collected through semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis, both of which aligned well with the study's objectives. The interviews were conducted in a non-systematic, random manner to ensure a broad and unbiased perspective, rather than following a structured approach based on specific cases or stakeholders.

From each case, I conducted interviews with four individuals. The objective of these interviews was to understand how social ambitions can be translated into tangible social impact. Since I did not have a predefined framework for how this occurs, I conducted the interviews first and only categorized the responses afterward. This approach allowed the interviewees to respond freely, enabling me to gather a wealth of information. However, a drawback of this method is that the responses are less detailed and harder to compare directly. Nonetheless, I was able to draw meaningful comparisons, as it quickly became apparent that the projects often employed similar social impact strategies.

Additionally, a cross-case analyses was employed, allowing for a comparative review of the data to identify distinct patterns and draw meaningful conclusions.

To validate the results of my cross-case analysis, I organized an expert panel. The panel was a success as the experts were impressed by my findings, which sparked enthusiastic discussions between them and myself on the topics addressed. This enabled me to reach a high level of detail. Consequently, I was able to contribute significant additions to the framework, building upon the information I had obtained from the interviews.

## 8.2   Process

Reflecting on the progression of my graduation process, I have come a long way. My initial research idea focused on transforming winter sports villages in response to declining snowfall. From this concept, I shifted to redesigning Olympic villages to ensure they have a sustainable purpose post-Games. I emphasized that the residents should primarily benefit from these transformations. This social aspect led me to reconsider what I truly value in neighborhood redevelopment, quickly arriving at the notion of creating social impact. However, I realized I did not fully understand what social impact entails, even though I used the term frequently. This realization sparked my interest in exploring the concept further. I began my research by investigating which areas require social impact, the characteristics of these areas, and how they can be improved.

As part of my research, I conducted an interview with an official from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. He discussed the roles of the government, housing associations, volunteers, and the challenges they face in improving the 20 NPVL priority neighborhoods. Notably, he did not mention the role of private parties, which made me realize that little is known about the involvement of developers in enhancing the livability of these neighborhoods.

Building on this insight, I collaborated with Team 5, the Game Changers, towards my P1 presentation. At the time of my P1, my focus was still on improving livability in priority neighborhoods through developers. However, after P1, my two graduation supervisors and I quickly agreed that I should concentrate on the strategies developers can employ to achieve social impact. Conducting a literature review significantly broadened my understanding of social impact and the strategies associated with it.

Between my P2 and P3 presentations, the summer vacation occurred. This relatively long pause in my research allowed me to restart in September with a fresh perspective. With this renewed energy, I managed to conduct all my interviews at a rapid pace, which provided me with additional time to analyze the data gathered from the interviews. After my P3, I began integrating all the findings into my final report.

I particularly enjoyed the expert panel I organized a week before submitting my P4. The participants were highly enthusiastic about my research, methodology, and results. One of the participants even requested permission to use my framework for her company. I found this to be a tremendous honor, as it underscores that my research can genuinely contribute to highlighting the importance of social development in urban area projects.

I am very satisfied with my graduation process. To be honest, I found it much more enjoyable than I initially anticipated. This is because I feel genuinely knowledgeable about my subject, which energizes me.

I am very pleased with the extensive knowledge I have gained about social development. Equipped with this expertise, which I acquired not through the curriculum but through my own determination, I am excited to incorporate social initiatives into my future professional endeavors.

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# Appendix 1- Social impact assessment methods

| Methods used | Purpose | | Example methods |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Prove impact** Demonstrate achievement of results | **Improve impact** Monitor & optimize performance of activities theorized to lead to impact | |
| Monetary metrics | Prove impact using monetary units of measurement. Evaluated using cost-benefit analysis & other financial/accounting techniques. | | • Social Return on Investment (SROI) (Arvidson et al., 2013) • Social Cost Benefit Analysis (SCBA) • Trucost Environmental Impact (Jo et al., 2015) • Avoided cost methods (De Groot et al., 2002) • Contingent valuation (Carson & Hanemann, 2005 |
| Non-monetary metrics | Prove impact using single units of measurement adapted to specific innovation. Evaluated by net unit changes or cost-effectiveness per unit of change. | | • Disability-adjusted-life-years (DALYs) (Anand & Hanson, 1997) • Personal wellbeing/quality of life (Kroeger & Weber, 2014) • Level of poverty (Schreiner, 2014) • Capabilities (Nussbaum & Sen, 1993) • Gross national happiness (Ura et al., 2012) • Incremental Cost Effectiveness Ratios (ICERs) (Gafni & Birch, 2006) |
| Combined indicators & scorecards | Prove impact using a combined set of units of measurement adapted to specific innovation. Used when causal link between outcome and impact is clear and direct and outcome can thus be used as a proxy for impact. | Improve impact by clarifying and monitoring performance of individual activities / steps along the value chain. | • Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) (Parmenter, 2015) • Balanced scorecards (Kaplan & Norton, 1995) • Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Schönherr & Martinezzi, 2019) • Impact Reporting and Investment Standards (IRIS) (GIIN, 2019) • MSCI / KLD 400 Social Index (Sun et al., 2011) • GRI? |
| Experimental approaches | Prove impact of innovation with additional validity by controlling for omitted variables and other biases. Experiments structured to control for differences between treated and non-treated groups. | Improve impact by experimenting with different factors that can be varied in value creation processes (e.g., design variations, beneficiary characteristics, implementation approaches) to validate and refine assumptions in theories of change. | • Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs) (Banarjee & Duflo, 2012) • Statistical analysis of correlations/causations, statistically significant differences among groups (Kirk, 1982) |
| Sociological & ethnological approaches | Prove impact through 'thick' holistic descriptions of changes in behavior and wellbeing. | Improve performance through gathering feedback & insights to identity barriers to performance and opportunities for improvement. | • Interviews • Participant observation • Content analysis of media/artifacts • Observational field notes • Action learning (Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Taylor et al., 2015) |
| Theories of change & logic models | | Improve impact by developing theoretical models of the critical activities and steps along the value chain and establishing performance metrics. | • Theory of Change • Maps / flow charts • Logic Models (Chen & Rossi, 1983; Rogers, 2008) • EVPA's five step model (EVPA, 2019) |

## Appendix 2 – SDG goals and indicators

| Goal | Indicators |
|---|---|
| **Goal 1:** End poverty in all its forms everywhere | 1.1.1: Proportion of population below the international poverty line 1.2.1: Proportion of population living below the national poverty line 1.3.1: Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems 1.4.1: Proportion of population living in households with access to basic services 1.5.1: Number of deaths and affected individuals by disaster per 100,000 people |
| **Goal 2:** End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture | 2.1.1: Prevalence of undernourishment 2.1.2: Prevalence of food insecurity 2.2.1: Prevalence of stunting and wasting in children under 5 years old 2.3.1: Volume of production per labor unit among small-scale food producers |
| **Goal 3:** Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages | 3.1.1: Maternal mortality ratio 3.2.1: Under-five mortality rate 3.3.1: Number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected population 3.4.1: Mortality rate from cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, or chronic respiratory disease |
| **Goal 4:** Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all | 4.1.1: Proportion of children achieving at least minimum proficiency levels in reading and mathematics 4.2.1: Proportion of children under 5 years of age who are developmentally on track 4.3.1: Participation rate in formal and non-formal education and training |
| **Goal 5:** Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls | 5.1.1: Existence of legal frameworks to promote gender equality 5.2.1: Proportion of women and girls experiencing violence 5.3.1: Proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married before age 18 |
| **Goal 6:** Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all | 6.1.1: Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services 6.2.1: Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services 6.3.1: Proportion of wastewater safely treated |
| **Goal 7:** Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all | 7.1.1: Proportion of population with access to electricity 7.2.1: Renewable energy share in the total final energy consumption 7.3.1: Energy intensity measured in terms of primary energy and GDP |
| **Goal 8:** Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all | 8.1.1: Annual growth rate of real GDP per capita 8.5.1: Average hourly earnings of female and male employees 8.6.1: Proportion of youth not in education, employment, or training |
| **Goal 9:** Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation | 9.2.1: Manufacturing value added as a proportion of GDP and per capita 9.4.1: $CO_2$ emission per unit of value added 9.5.1: Research and development expenditure as a proportion of GDP |

| Goal | Indicators |
|---|---|
| **Goal 10:** Reduce inequality within and among countries | 10.1.1: Growth rates of household expenditure or income per capita among the bottom 40 percent of the population 10.3.1: Proportion of the population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed |
| **Goal 11:** Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable | 11.1.1: Proportion of urban population living in slums 11.6.1: Proportion of urban solid waste regularly collected and managed |
| **Goal 12:** Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns | 12.2.1: Material footprint per capita and per GDP  12.4.1: Number of parties to international multilateral environmental agreements on hazardous waste |
| **Goal 13:** Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts | 13.1.1: Number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies 13.2.1: Number of countries that have communicated national policies to combat climate change |
| **Goal 14:** Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development | 14.1.1: Index of coastal eutrophication and floating plastic debris density 14.5.1: Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas |
| **Goal 15:** Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss | 15.1.1: Forest area as a proportion of total land area 15.2.1: Progress towards sustainable forest management |
| **Goal 16:** Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels | 16.1.1: Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population 16.9.1: Proportion of children under 5 whose births have been registered with a civil authority |
| **Goal 17:** Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development | 17.1.1: Total government revenue as a proportion of GDP, by source 17.18.1: Proportion of sustainable development indicators produced with full disaggregation |

# Appendix 3- Aanvullende informatie interview

TU Delft
Delft
University of
Technology

Delft, 07-10-2024

Geachte heer/mevrouw,

Dit interview maakt deel uit van een afstudeeronderzoek voor de master Management in The Built Environment aan de Technische Universiteit Delft, faculteit Bouwkunde. Het onderzoek wordt uitgevoerd door Willem Damen, die ook het interview zal afnemen.

Het onderzoek richt zich op sociale impactstrategieën in Nederlandse aandacht wijken, vanuit het perspectief van particuliere ontwikkelaars. Stedelijke gebieden in Nederland worden geconfronteerd met toenemende problemen zoals sociaaleconomische achterstand en slechte woningkwaliteit, vooral in wijken die vlak na de Tweede Wereldoorlog zijn gebouwd. Deze 'aandacht wijken' kampen met hoge werkloosheid, armoede, onderwijsachterstanden en onvoldoende infrastructuur. Het onderzoek verkent hoe particuliere ontwikkelaars, in samenwerking met woningcorporaties en gemeenten, sociale impact kunnen creëren om deze uitdagingen aan te pakken. Het doel van het onderzoek is te begrijpen hoe ontwikkelaars sociale impact integreren in hun bedrijfsstrategieën, waarbij ze de leefbaarheid van deze wijken verbeteren. Hiervoor worden meerdere casestudies uitgevoerd en interviews gehouden met de voorgenoemde stakeholders.

Uw deelname aan het onderzoek is volledig vrijwillig. U kunt te allen tijde uw medewerking zonder opgaaf van redenen intrekken. Ook kunt u ervoor kiezen bepaalde vragen niet te beantwoorden. Wij garanderen dat uw gegevens zorgvuldig worden behandeld en opgeslagen op een beveiligde Europese server. De gegevens worden geanonimiseerd en gescheiden van persoonlijke identificatie-informatie, welke na vijf jaar vernietigd wordt.

Voor vragen kunt u contact met mij opnemen via e-mail: w.b.a.damen@student.tudelft.nl of telefonisch op +31 6 55 81 14 89.

Wilt u deelnemen aan dit onderzoek? Dan verzoek ik u vriendelijk de bijgevoegde toestemmingsverklaring in te vullen en te ondertekenen.

Met vriendelijke groet,

Willem Damen

## Appendix 4- Interview vragen

**Introductie**
1. Kun je iets vertellen over jezelf? Wie ben je en wat is je huidige functie?
2. Wat is jouw definitie van sociale impact?
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**Sociale strategie**
3. In hoeverre is sociale impact opgenomen in de bedrijfsstrategie? Waarin zie je dat terug?
4. Hoe wordt deze strategie toegepast op de projecten die jullie doen?
5. Zijn er specifieke innovaties of technologieën die jullie inzetten om sociale impact te vergroten?
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**Leefbaarheid**
6. Op welke leefbaarheid doelen zetten jullie in bij dit project?
7. Met welke aspecten binnen dit project willen jullie sociale impact maken?
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**Aanpak**
8. Hoe verloopt het proces om de leefbaarheid doelen te behalen?
9. Hoe meet je het succes van de sociale impact van dit project?
10. Hoe onderhoud je deze sociale impact?
11. Wat zijn de grootste obstakels die je tegen bent komen bij het realiseren van de sociale impact?
12. Welke manier van samenwerken met andere stakeholders is van belang om de leefbaarheid doelen te behalen?
13. Hoe speelt participatie een rol binnen de aanpak om de leefbaarheid doelen te behalen?
14. Welke stappen onderneem je om de samenwerking met bewoners te versterken en hun input te integreren in het project?
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**Afronden**
15. Wil je nog wat kwijt/meegeven?

# Appendix 5- Aanvullende informatie expert panel

Geachte heer/mevrouw,                                                                                     25-11-2024

Dit expert panel maakt deel uit van een afstudeeronderzoek voor de master Management in The Built Environment aan de Technische Universiteit Delft, faculteit Bouwkunde. Het onderzoek wordt uitgevoerd door Willem Damen.

Allereerst wil ik u bedanken voor uw tijd en medewerking aan mijn afstudeeronderzoek "social impact strategies for Dutch priority neighborhoods". In dit document vindt u aanvullende informatie over het afstudeeronderzoek en het expert panel.

## Het onderzoek
Het onderzoek richt zich op sociale impactstrategieën in Nederlandse aandacht wijken, vanuit het perspectief van particuliere ontwikkelaars. Stedelijke gebieden in Nederland worden geconfronteerd met toenemende problemen zoals sociaaleconomische achterstand en slechte woningkwaliteit, vooral in wijken die vlak na de Tweede Wereldoorlog zijn gebouwd. Deze 'aandachtswijken' kampen met hoge werkloosheid, armoede, onderwijsachterstanden en onvoldoende infrastructuur. Het onderzoek verkent hoe particuliere ontwikkelaars, in samenwerking met woningcorporaties en gemeenten, sociale impact kunnen creëren om deze uitdagingen aan te pakken. Het doel van het onderzoek is te begrijpen hoe ontwikkelaars, geleid door hun sociale strategieën, verbeteringen kunnen doorvoeren in de leefbaarheidsdimensies van minder bedeelde wijken, waaronder de woningvoorraad, de fysieke omgeving, voorzieningen, sociale cohesie en overlast & onveiligheid.

## Het expert panel
Het expert panel vindt online plaats op dinsdag 26 november 2024 van 11:00 tot 12:00. Gedurende de meeting zal ik eerst mijn onderzoek verder toelichten door mijn resultaten te tonen. Vervolgens zal ik aan de hand van stelling een discussie opgang brengen. Deze stellingen hebben betrekking op de analyses welke ik heb verricht. Door middel van de discussie zal ik na afloop van het expert panel verbanden kunnen leggen tussen de door mij gevonden resultaten en de mening van de experts. Vanuit deze verbanden zal ik antwoord geven op de hoofdvraag van mijn onderzoek: "How can developers create social impact in Dutch priority neighborhoods?" Het expert panel zal opgenomen worden door middel van audioapparatuur, zodat ik na afloop de besproken informatie tot mijn beschikking heb.

Ik vraag u vriendelijk het toestemmingsformulier op de volgende pagina te lezen, eventuele vragen te stellen en deze vervolgens te ondertekenen.

Mocht u naar aanleiding hiervan vragen hebben dan kunt u uiteraard contact met mij opnemen.

Vriendelijke groet,

Willem Damen
+31 6 55 81 14 89
w.b.a.damen@student.tudelft.nl

## Appendix 6- Toestemmingsformulier

(1) Ik verklaar dat ik de informatiebrief d.d. 25-11-2024 heb gelezen of deze brief is aan mij voorgelezen. Ik heb deze informatie begrepen. Daarnaast heb ik de mogelijkheid gekregen om hier vragen over te stellen en deze vragen zijn naar tevredenheid beantwoord.

Ja    □    Nee   □

(2) Ik verklaar hierbij dat ik vrijwillig meedoe aan dit onderzoek. Ik begrijp dat ik mag weigeren om vragen te beantwoorden en dat ik mijn medewerking aan dit onderzoek op elk moment kan stoppen zonder opgave van reden. Ik begrijp dat het meedoen aan dit onderzoek betekent dat mijn antwoorden worden bewaard.

Ja    □    Nee   □

(3) Ik begrijp dat het geluidsmateriaal (of de bewerking daarvan) en de overige verzamelde gegevens uitsluitend voor analyse en wetenschappelijke presentatie en publicaties zal worden gebruikt.

Ja    □    Nee   □

(4) Ik begrijp dat de opgeslagen gegevens onder een code worden bewaard en anoniem worden verwerkt.

Ja    □    Nee   □

(5) ik geef hierbij apart toestemming dat de geanonimiseerde gegevens in de toekomst ook door andere onderzoekers mogen worden gebruikt.

Ja    □    Nee   □

**Ik heb dit formulier gelezen of het formulier is mij voorgelezen en ik stem in met deelname aan het onderzoek.**

Plaats: _____     Datum:_____

Volledige naam: _____

Handtekening:

'Wij hebben toelichting gegeven op het onderzoek. Wij verklaren ons bereid nog opkomende vragen over het onderzoek naar vermogen te beantwoorden.'

Naam onderzoeker(s):    Willem Damen