Meaningful urban neighbourhoods, measurable social impact

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IMAGINE YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

Think of your own neighbourhood,

what is the first thing that comes to mind?

NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTERISTICS

Neighbourhoods are not just physical places

People, routines, everyday encounters

NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACT

Source: https://drevengaardenzichten.nl/ontdek/ [winkels]
Shirazi & Keivani (2018); indicator – access to facilities
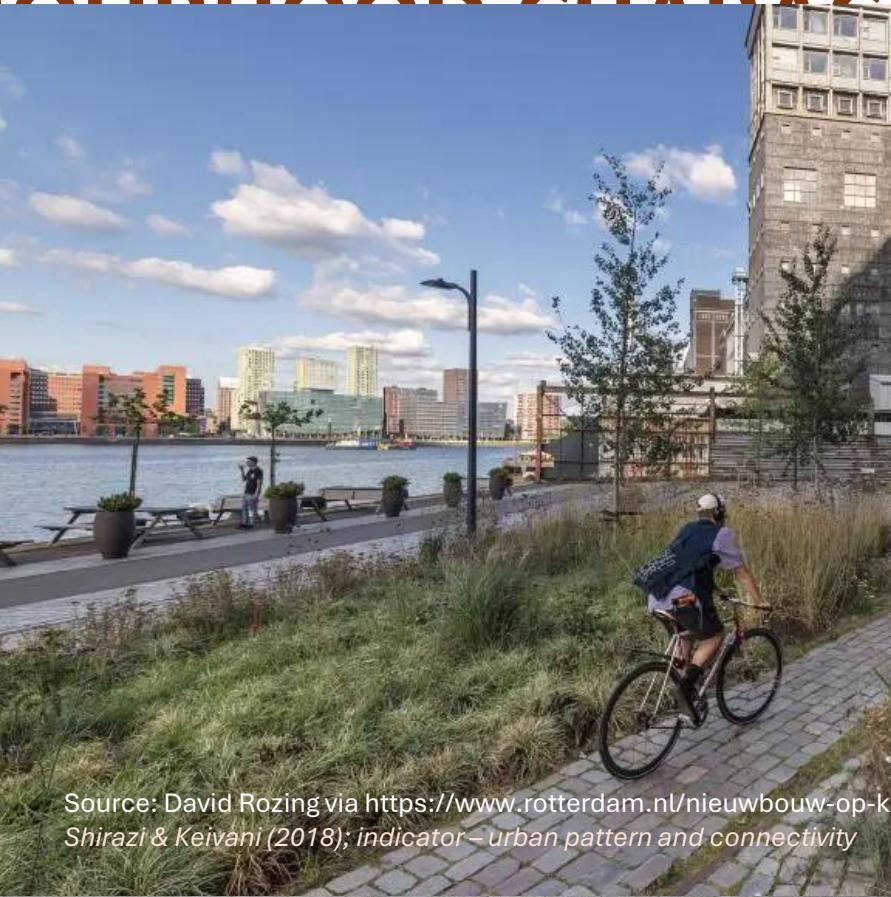
Source: David Rozing via https://www.rotterdam.nl/nieuwbouw-op-k
Shirazi & Keivani (2018); indicator – urban pattern and connectivity

Source: https://drevengaardenzichten.nl/ondernemen/
Shirazi & Keivani (2018); indicator – social networking and interaction

BUT WHAT IF CHANGE HAPPENS?

What is the effect on you and on future generations?

New buildings appear

Houses are demolished

Social structure can change

Source: Frans Blok for www.3develop.nl
Shirazi & Keivani (2018); indicator – density
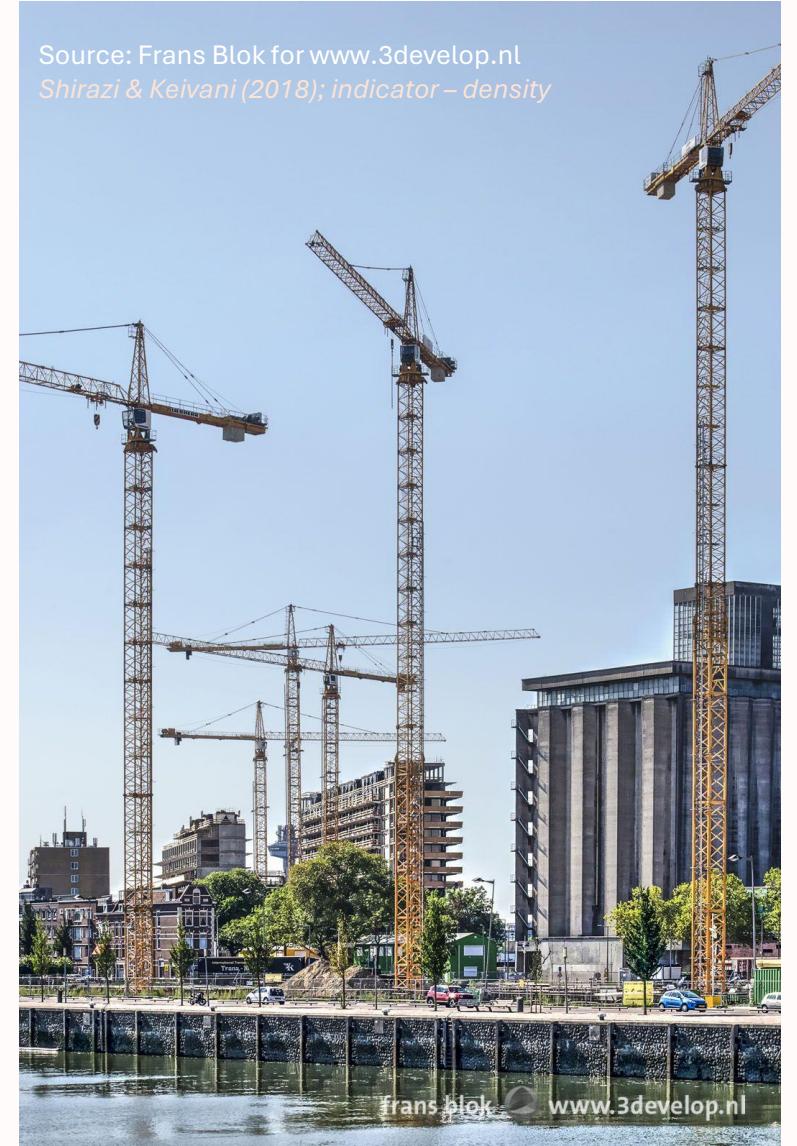
How do developers in the Netherlands interpret and integrate social sustainability in neighbourhood development, and how does this align with ESRS S3 reporting requirements on affected communities?

Main research question

DEVELOPERS

AFFECTED COMMUNITY

Strategies ←————————————————→ **Experiences**

TWO CASE STUDIES

Positive change socially, developers' involvement, affected community

Katendrecht – Rotterdam

Improving area image

Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten – Den Haag

Improving living conditions

KATENDRECHT

Historical context
Harbour district, migrant communities, unsafe area

Social network & cohesion
Strong community identity [Kapenezen], village-like social networks

Developer involvement
Heijmans since 2006

Policy context
Focus on heritage led renewal, image improvement, expensive housing, making the area safer

Type of intervention
Gradual transformation and densification around edges

Affected community
Residents mostly remained, no houses demolished, redevelopment around existing community

Socio-spatial context
Emerging mixed income urban district

Placemaking with local entrepreneurs
Fenix Food Factory

Active campaigns, boosting area
Nacht van de Kaap

Mixed housing segments
De Groene Kaap

DEVELOPERS		AFFECTED COMMUNITY
Strategies	←→	Experiences

LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES

- **Social cohesion** between old and new residents

- **Information asymmetry and mistrust** due to late participation

- **Identity and belonging** felt lost

- **Everyday places and informal encounters** matter, community feels divided

- **Community groups** and initiatives hold more knowledge and information than thought

- **Acknowledging affected communities** and negative effects is the first step

DEVELOPERS ← → **AFFECTED COMMUNITY**

Strategies ← → Experiences

KATENDRECHT

DEVELOPERS

AFFECTED COMMUNITY

Strategies ⟷ Experiences

Improved area image
Liveability score positive

Mistrust
Feeling of lost identity
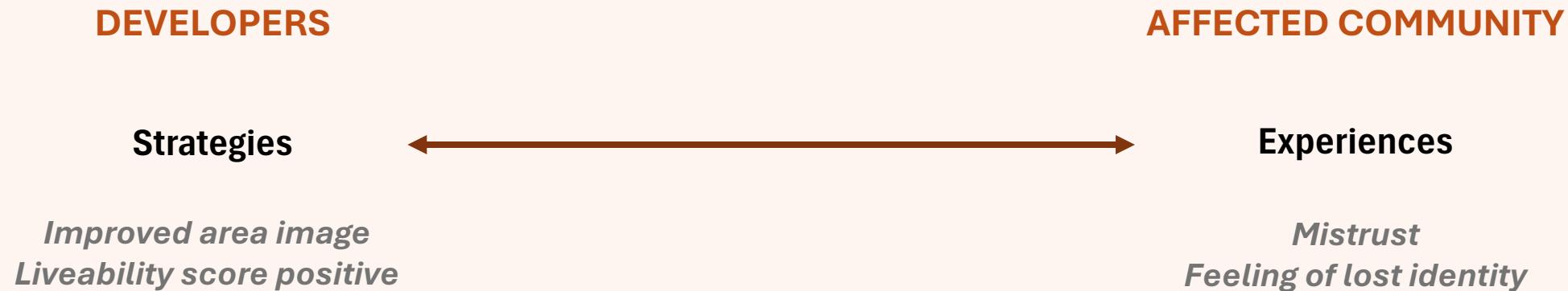
DREVEN, GAARDEN, ZICHTEN

Historical context
Stamp like architecture, post-war housing

Socio-economic challenges
'*Achterstandswijk*'; unemployment, poverty, education

Developer involvement
Heijmans since 2019

Policy context
Focus on participation, housing renewal and inclusion

Type of intervention
Phased demolition and renewal of housing stock

Affected community
Residents directly affected, temporary housing and phasing required

Socio-spatial context
Post-war architecture and neighbourhood with structural socio-economic disadvantage

Partnership & co-governance
Municipality, Staedion & Heijmans

Right to return policy

Community programming
Local businesses involved

Area renewal
Green spaces, more than only housing

DEVELOPERS
Strategies

AFFECTED COMMUNITY
Experiences

LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES

- **Cultural life-world** aspects determine experiences

- **Displacement effects** come with emotional and social consequences

- **Informal community figures need to be protected** because they are essential for creating awareness and understanding of the redevelopment plan

- **Structural coordination** is felt by residents and thus marked even more important than thought

- **Monitoring wellbeing** should be long-term and reported

DEVELOPERS   AFFECTED COMMUNITY

Strategies   Experiences

DREVEN, GAARDEN, ZICHTEN

DEVELOPERS   **AFFECTED COMMUNITY**

Strategies   ⟷   **Experiences**

Improved liveability score   *Relation with projectteam*
Renewal housing stock   *Anxiety and excitement*

MAIN TAKEAWAYS

✓ **Strategies** are oriented on positive effects

✓ Developers are **aware** of the people

✓ But the **social dynamics** are not always understood

✓ Developers focus mostly on **spatial interventions**

✓ **Experiences** of the affected community are often **more emotional**

✓ **Capturing** the social effects remain difficult

✓ **Strategizing** around social effects even more difficult

WHAT IS THE BARRIER?

Alignment and misalignment of social strategies vs. the local impact

DEVELOPERS   **AFFECTED COMMUNITY**

Strategies   ←——————————————————→   **Experiences**

SYSTEM WORLD   **LIFEWORLD**

Language barrier

Reporting on impact   ←——————————————————→   **Local context**

Developers, investors,   *People from the*
policymakers   *neighbourhood*
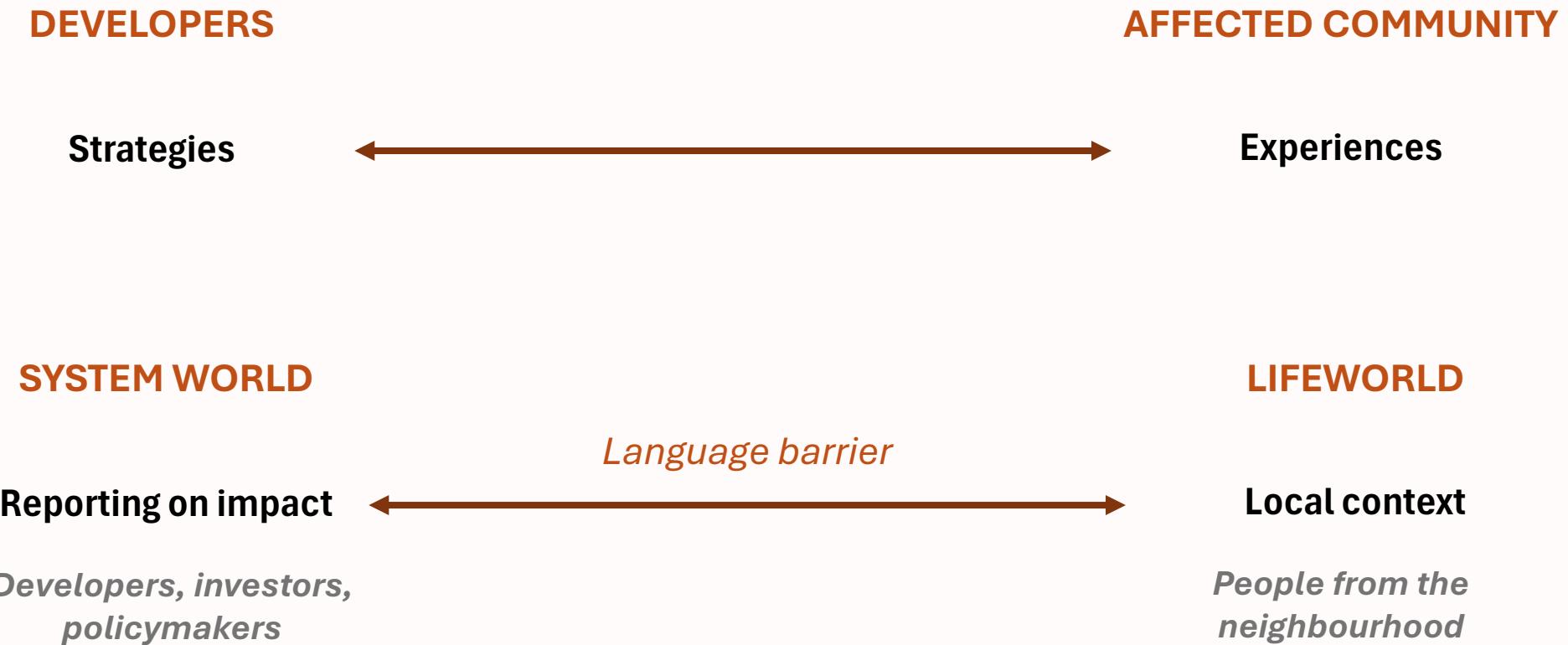
EUROPEAN DIRECTIVES

LOCAL IMPACT

E   S   G
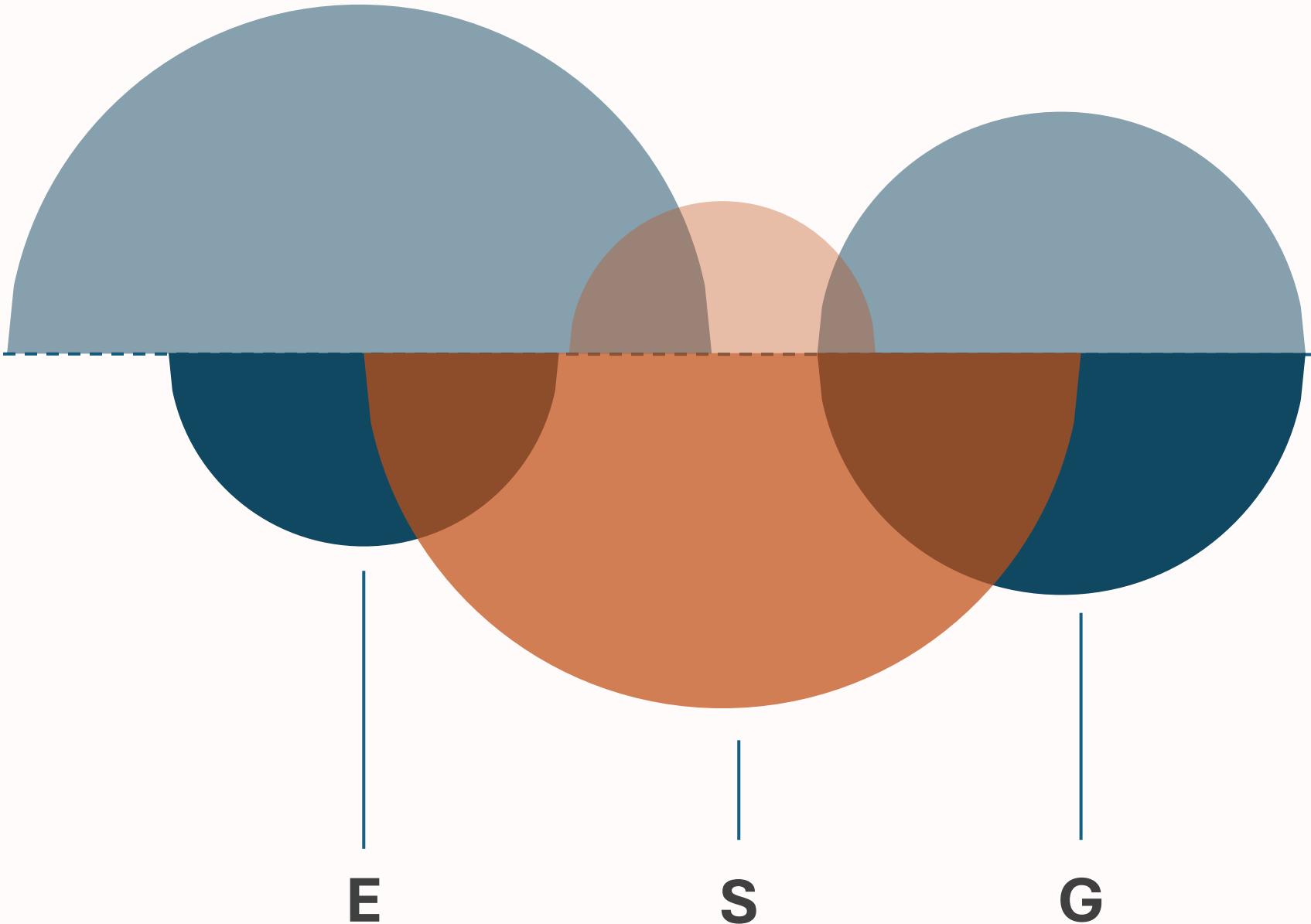
ANALYSIS OF BOTH CASES

✓ **Different stakeholders**: developers, housing associations, municipalities, local representatives

✓ **Reporting requirement translated into a tool**: better understanding on the local impact

✓ **Aim**: tool for developers

✓ **Awareness** of both positive and negative effects
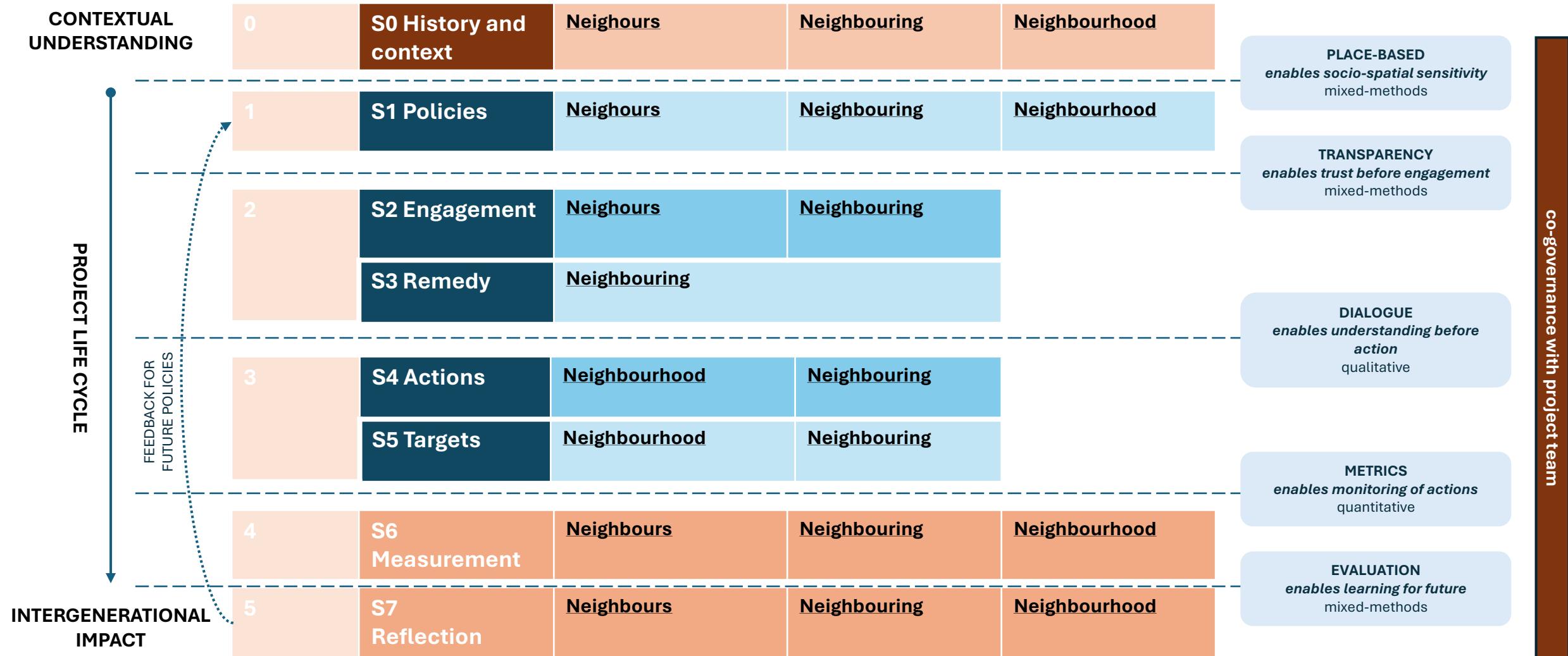
The adapted framework translates structural logic into context-sensitive principles that reflect neighbourhood realities.

How we can use the findings

WHAT I FOUND

Conclusion

Developers acknowledge social sustainability
> *but strategies remain system-oriented*

Lived experiences include; identity, cultural practices, everyday routines
> *and are underrepresented in formal strategies*

Both cases confirm the gap between the system- and the lifeworld
> *where the same topics exist but are expressed, prioritized and experienced differently*

An adapted framework which
> *results in a more operational, context-sensitive tool for developers*

WHAT THIS MEANS

Discussion

Organizational systems are not yet designed for the social dynamics

The adapted framework is a project-level tool which helps understand the social dynamics

Context is decisive for what social sustainability means

S0 history & context

Engagement should be relational instead of procedural

Meaningful participation occurs through trust, everyday presence, safe spaces and continuity not through a participation checklist

Social sustainability outcomes require long-term co-governance

Partnership between the municipality, developers, investors and the community and shared responsibility is essential

WHY THIS MATTERS

Reflection

Reshaping how affected communities are approached
and the translation into reports
Deliberate consideration of social structures and lived experiences
not an after thought
Reflective checkpoint
instead of a checklist
Context-sensitive dialogue is needed
a place-based approach

DISCUSSION & QUESTIONS