



*Governing Urban Diversity:  
Creating Social Cohesion, Social Mobility and Economic Performance in Today's Hyper-diversified Cities*

## **Governance arrangements and initiatives in Rotterdam, the Netherlands**

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## 1 Introduction

Urban policy discourses on diversity in Rotterdam have undergone a shift on the matter of diversity from pluralism and integrationism by the end of the 1990s to assimilationism today. Diversity is mostly understood as a matter of ethnicity and seen as a problem rather than an asset. Newcomers to the city are asked to catch up with mainstream society, ‘the Dutch’ middle and upper classes. When diversity is discussed as an asset it is seen as an economic quality. Improving social mobility of residents is thought to generate economic success. Urban policy in Rotterdam has little attention for social cohesion, let alone for facilitating encounters between diverse groups. This is one of the main conclusions of a previous report we have written on the basis of the analysis of policy documents and interviews with stakeholders (Tersteeg et al., 2014).

This does not mean that the picture of urban diversity and its possible advantages is the same everywhere in the city. Especially at the neighbourhood level numerous initiatives exist that perceive urban diversity in a more positive way, as a quality for society. In this report we focus on governance arrangements in the city district of Feijenoord in Rotterdam that seek to increase social cohesion, social mobility and/or economic performance of residents in this area. After Tasan-Kok et al. (2014: 8), we define governance arrangements as “*a diversity of partnerships at different spatial and policy levels, with the aim to better govern complex problems*”. Hence, by local governance arrangements<sup>1</sup> we mean local initiatives with a clear, local impact. The selected local initiatives differ in size, management structure, target groups and impact. We are especially interested in how such initiatives adapt to a context of urban diversity, how they work and what determines their success (or failure). Feijenoord is a dynamic and diverse area in many respects (e.g. as regards to ethnicity, age, household types, cultures, entrepreneurs, uses of public spaces). A large part of its population has low socio-economic statuses and experiences limited upward mobility. Social cohesion between residents with so many different backgrounds is a challenge in this area. Consequently, it has been labelled one of the most deprived areas of the Netherlands (NPRZ, 2012). Nevertheless, Feijenoord is home to a wide range of local initiatives that use diversity in positive ways. The district consists of 9 distinctive neighbourhoods including Bloemhof, Katendrecht, Hillesluis and the Afrikaander and Feijenoord neighbourhoods, in which most of the examined local initiatives are located.

Our analysis is guided by three research questions.

1. *How do the examined governance arrangements perceive and use urban diversity?*
2. *What factors contribute to the success or failure of the governance arrangements?*
3. *What ideas can we identify for innovative policies and governance concepts regarding urban diversity?*

Success and fail factors are defined as factors that respectively contribute to or counter the initiative’s main goals.

For our research, we have conducted qualitative interviews with 20 leaders and executives of local initiatives, participant observations and a focus group interview with the leaders of governance arrangements in and outside of Feijenoord. In addition, we have examined written and electronic documents on the examined initiatives when available. Fieldwork was conducted between February and July 2014. Various local professionals were consulted to identify possible initiatives. We have generated a diverse sample of initiatives on the basis of six criteria: its

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<sup>1</sup> In the report we use the concepts local initiatives and local governance arrangements interchangeably.

objective (social cohesion, social mobility and/or economic performance), its basis (area or group based), its origin (at the neighbourhood, city or other level), stakeholders (public, private, non-profit, grassroots, etc.), duration (short, medium or long term) and stage (early, advanced or completed stage).

The report is structured as follows. First, we provide an analysis of the ten local initiatives. To organise the section, we have structured it according to the main objective of the initiatives (social cohesion, social mobility and economic performance). Nevertheless, we recognise that the categories are not mutually exclusive or exhaustive. Indeed, most initiatives focus at multiple of these objectives (see Table 1, page 28). Second, we synthesise the main findings to identify ideas for innovative policies and governance concepts. In the conclusions we discuss how the findings relate to those of the previous report and we draw lessons for urban policy in Rotterdam. Our analysis will highlight a gap between the perceptions and uses of urban diversity in policy and in local practices on the ground.

## 2 Governance arrangements

### 2.1 Arrangements targeting social cohesion

#### **The Experimental Garden of Feijenoord [De Proeftuin Feijenoord]**

##### *Strategy, focus and organisation*

In response to municipal budget cuts in the subsidies for local initiatives in Rotterdam, 16 of them in Feijenoord in the fields of business, culture, education, healthcare and sports, joined forces in the summer of 2013. Together, they settled in a vacant part of a building owned by the district government and started a community centre, which they named the Experimental Garden of Feijenoord [De Proeftuin Feijenoord]. The other half of the building is a sports hall that is rented by local sports clubs and is managed by civil servants. The Experimental Garden currently exists of 69 initiatives and the number continues to grow. It wants to become a long-term community facility (Maroned, 2014). It is run by volunteers, including the leaders and participants of the initiatives and other visitors of the centre. The City<sup>2</sup> supports the project with a grant of € 450,000 per year for the fulltime employment of a coordinator and curator, building maintenance and by leasing the building low-cost for the first year (Van der Leeuwkring, n.d.). From the fall of 2014, the City will gradually decrease its financial support. Eventually, they want the initiative to become self-sufficient (Alacritas, 2014).

The 69 initiatives target different resident groups. Altogether, the Experimental Garden wants to attract participants who represent the population of Feijenoord, an interviewed project leader explains. Amongst other resident groups, the project aims to attract vulnerable groups: (informal) caregivers, elderly people, lonely people, (Muslim) women who do not leave their homes often and youths. Interviews with project leaders and the coordinator confirm that the project attracts a diverse group of participants, in terms of age, ethnicity, culture and religion, education and occupation, household type, interests and needs and knowledge and skills. Like the majority of residents in Feijenoord, most participants have low incomes. Most live in Feijenoord, some have their residence in other parts of Rotterdam South and a few live outside Rotterdam South.

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<sup>2</sup> In the report we refer to the government of Rotterdam as the ‘City’ and to the socio-spatial configuration of Rotterdam as the ‘city’.

The main goals of the Experimental Garden are to increase social cohesion among and social mobility of participants (e.g. Maroned, 2014). According to interviewed project leaders, the City finds the latter goal most important. Yet, the direction and participants of the Garden give priority to both (Maroned, 2014). According to five interviewed project leaders and the project coordinator, the project achieves to raise social cohesion by facilitating positive encounters between the different local initiatives and different audiences. Encounters are enabled through weekly meals for participants and leaders of initiatives, monthly roundtable meetings with the leaders, thematic working groups (e.g. on building maintenance) with participants of different initiatives and by letting initiatives share resources (e.g. cookware) and activity spaces (e.g. a knitting club and a youth organisation are active in the same room at the same time). Through the range of activities at the Experimental Garden local residents can become acquainted with unfamiliar activities and people. The coordinator and initiative leaders ensure that activities are accessible to diverse groups, encourage participants to join (new) activities, recruit new participants and encourage participants to treat one another with respect. The coordinator also facilitates connections between participants and organisers and ensures that groups collaborate on an equal basis (Alacritas, 2014). Regulations are collectively decided upon with project leaders and volunteers. According to the interviewees, the project achieves to increase the social mobility of participants by offering a range of activities through which they can improve their health and social and professional skills, enhancing their social networks through interactions with other participants, professionals and project leaders and encouraging participants to support and learn from one another.

The Experimental Garden is open to visitors 7 days a week from 8am – 10pm on weekdays and from 10am – 10pm in the weekends. In about 18 different rooms, the project offers about 20 activities per day during the week and 10 per day in the weekends (We Love the City, n.d.). Every month, the initiative is visited by 1000 visitors. Participants and leaders of organisations are responsible for the programme (We Love the City, n.d.). Volunteers and trainees support the project as hostesses, homework supervisors, course leaders, or handymen. A management board supports the volunteers and trainees. The board exists of a coordinator, a trainee (a university graduate) and a sports ‘programmer’. A supervisory board, comprising volunteers from outside Feijenoord, advises the management (We Love the City, n.d.).

#### *Perceptions and use of the concept of diversity*

The diversity of initiatives and visitors of the Experimental Garden originated when local initiatives decided to collaborate out of financial necessity. After its foundation, this diversity is explicitly understood as the project’s main quality by the interviewed project’s leaders and the central coordinator. The project builds upon this diversity to achieve its main objectives. By partaking in a diverse environment, participants learn to live and work, and profit from differences. According to interviewees, this helps them to better understand, tolerate, appreciate and connect with diverse people outside the Experimental Garden. The diverse activities and the encounters between residents increase the social mobility of participants as well (Alacritas, 2014).

#### *Main factors influencing success or failure*

The following factors contribute to the project’s success. First, the method of learning through interaction as well as sharing the building and materials allows the project to achieve its goals in an inexpensive way. Before the start of the Experimental Garden, the 69 initiatives together received € 450,000 of municipal subsidies for which they individually organised a few activities a week in separate locations throughout the neighbourhood (Van der LeeuwKring, n.d.). In contrast, currently all activities are concentrated in the Garden, which is currently open 14 hours a day and provides 10 to 20 activities per day. Second, the shared objective to preserve the initiatives and the Experiment Garden encourages participants and project leaders to cooperate.

Third, as the project is carried out by the community, it is responsive to local needs. A leader of an initiative is for instance currently setting up a project for, about and with people with dementia after he identified local demand for this. Fourth, by building upon the qualities of the community and offering activities that are in their demand the project is visited by a wide range of local residents. Fifth, because visitors are diverse, most local residents can identify with one or more social groups. Therefore, an interviewed project executive explains that the project is a safe place for many local groups, also vulnerable ones. Sixth, according to an interviewed organiser, the fact that project leaders get along well both personally and professionally contributes to the projects successes. Seventh, an interviewee mentions that the policy that obliges residents who receive benefits in Rotterdam to conduct voluntary work in exchange might act as a push factor for local residents to become a volunteer. Finally, we find that the coordinator of the Experimental Garden contributes to the success because she is trusted by participants as she has no interest in a particular person or initiative, she encourages participants to develop their talents and builds the project on this, she encourages interaction on the base of respect and equality, and she uses her social network to give participants and organisers fruitful connections.

The project faces three main difficulties. First, the City is currently reducing its subsidies and cutting back on the salaries of the coordinator and the curator. The analysis above has shown that the coordinator's function is essential for the project's success and the task of maintaining the building for 69 initiatives and about 1000 visitors per month requires too much time and responsibility for volunteers. As the project mostly facilitates low-income groups, the participants cannot be asked to pay for this, project leaders argue. Alternate financial constructions are conceivable (e.g. involving local companies or other prosperous actors). Nevertheless, hitherto, there is no alternative financial plan. Second, the Experimental Garden faces a shortage of local volunteers who are able to perform responsible and complex (managerial) tasks. As Feijenoord has few high-skilled residents, those who volunteer at the Experimental Garden are charged with high workloads, interviewees explain. Finally, the Experimental Garden is in conflict with the district government about the use of the municipal sports hall in the building. Participants want to make more use of and eventually run the sports centre on a voluntary base. But, the City refuses to give tasks to volunteers, although they have promised to do so as citizen participation is a key priority for them.

### *Conclusions*

The Experimental Garden has received significant attention by municipalities, research and other local initiatives in the Netherlands, where public subsidies for local initiatives are structurally declining. The arrangements' partnership construction (of 69 local initiatives) and method of generating social cohesion and social mobility through exchanges between residents with diverse backgrounds and skills, offer an innovative and low-cost solution for preserving the initiatives. For the continued existence of the Experimental Garden it is important that the initiative retains a professional coordinator, that the project leaders develop an alternative financial plan to adjust to continuing budget cuts, and that the City acknowledges the importance of such a facility in a low-income area and provides more (organisational) support.

## **Spectacle at the Cape [Spektakel op de Kaap]**

### *Strategy, focus and organisation*

Spectacle at the Cape (SC) is a culture, music and art festival in the neighbourhood of Katendrecht in Rotterdam South that is organised for and by local residents. It aims to increase social cohesion among residents of Katendrecht. Initiated and organised by the local Cultural Energy Katendrecht (CEK) foundation, the first edition of the festival took place in 2012 and the second in June 2014. Katendrecht is located on a small peninsula and was once an infamous red-

light district and residential area for harbour workers. Due to severe urban restructuring in the recent decennium, there have been tensions between some traditional residents (hereinafter referred to as old Katendrecht) and some new, mostly younger and wealthier residents (hereinafter referred to as new Katendrecht) on the 'island'. Therefore, an interviewed director of the event argues that the festival focuses particularly on increasing social cohesion among these two groups. This is done, he explains, by visualising the cultural capital of the community through which the festival organisation hopes to rise the pride of residents in the area; by providing a range of activities that attract diverse resident groups; by hosting the activities in public spaces and in people's homes to make them as accessible as possible; and by involving diverse resident groups in the organisation and management of the festival, including old Katendrecht.

The festival is aimed at all residents in Katendrecht: old and new Katendrecht, residents of all ages, household types and ethnic backgrounds, and all people with cultural interests, and possibly cultural talents. An evaluation of the 2012 festival showed that it was visited by approximately 500 people both from Katendrecht and outside the area, which indeed appear to belong to diverse resident groups. Nevertheless, according to an interviewed director, old Katendrecht were slightly underrepresented. The organisation of the festival is trying to include more old Katendrecht in the (organisation of the) 2014 festival.

The 2012 festival hosted activities in theatre, literature, arts, music, dance, film and photography in different locations on the island on a Saturday from 10am to 10pm. In 2014, the activities will be concentrated at a square located centrally in Katendrecht to increase the visibility of the festival. The activities are organised in different working groups which exist of local residents. The groups are coordinated by the management of the CEK foundation, all new Katendrecht. All organisers work on a voluntary basis. The budgets of the 2012 and 2014 festivals are € 14,000 and € 14,450 respectively. Subsidies are provided by the district government of Feijenoord and the Art and Culture Fund of the City [Dienst Kunst en Cultuur]. In addition, a local theatre which is subsidised by diverse public and private parties supports the festival with spaces.

#### *Perception and use of the concept of diversity*

Spectacle at the Cape uses local diversity as a strategy to achieve social cohesion. It does so by facilitating spaces for positive encounters, both while organising and during the festival. It focusses particularly on encounters between old and new Katendrecht. A director argues:

*"We aim to attract diverse people, to enable crossovers. So that people can experience how great the performances are or how beautiful the new design houses [from New Katendrecht] are from the inside, because they are allowed inside. We hope that people will talk with each other".*

Also, by visualising and celebrating cultural diversity, the festival seeks to stimulate the emergence of a common pride among residents in the area.

#### *Main factors influencing success or failure*

The event contributes to social cohesion among diverse local resident groups (CEK, 2012). Several factors contribute to this success. First, the management of the festival uses an outreaching approach in which they actively invite a mix of local residents (e.g. both old and new Katendrecht) to participate in (the organisation of) the event. The management for instance seeks to attract old Katendrecht to the 2014 festival by regularly communicating about the festival with visitors and members of a local community centre which is mostly visited by old Katendrecht, and by inviting a writer who grew up in Katendrecht to read from a book that he



wrote about ‘old’ Katendrecht at the 2012 festival. Second, the management has explicitly organised a wide range of activities at the festival to cater for the diverse cultural interests of the community. Third, a diverse group of local residents was involved in the organisation of the event. Several informal get-togethers were organised by the CEK management to meet local residents and invite them to help organise the event. Finally, by providing space for (any) local resident to share their cultural ‘talents’ with fellow residents, the festival communicates that diversity is a shared quality of the community:

*“We have shown them [old and new Katendrecht] [...] all that is there, [so they can] together be proud of it. [We] prove that we share a very nice little island” [Director].*

Spectacle at the Cape also faces difficulties. An interviewed manager of a resident organisation mentions that a significant part of the old Katendrecht is not interested in ‘cultural’ activities. He also argues that the old Katendrecht as well as other resident groups (e.g. the Chinese community) have a long history of not mixing with other groups on the ‘island’. Organising a festival might not be enough to break this pattern for all old Katendrecht. Also, the festival experiences difficulties with finding sponsors for the event. The 2013 festival was cancelled after the City did not provide the granted budgets for the festival. As social cohesion has not been a priority in urban policy in Rotterdam under the recent two municipal governments, less money will be available for the festival in the future.

### *Conclusions*

By celebrating local cultural diversity and acknowledging existing social structures the Spectacle at the Cape festival encourages the formation of a common pride among local residents in one another. The outreaching approach of the management, the organisational trajectory with diverse resident groups and the inclusive and diverse festival programme contribute to this success. However, the festival is largely dependent on public funding, and activities that aim at increasing social cohesion are not a key priority of the City of Rotterdam at present. Without alternative funding resources the continued existence of the festival is at stake.

## **Do-it-yourself Houses [Klushuizen]**

### *Strategy, focus and organisation*

The City of Rotterdam has bought several hundreds of privately let, poorly maintained houses in 9 so-called hotspots<sup>3</sup>, of which 3 are located in the district of Feijenoord. They have done this over a period of 7 years as a strategy with the aim to restructure disadvantaged neighbourhoods: by renovating dilapidated housing, the quality of the housing and the neighbourhood would increase. However, renovated houses proved unaffordable for local residents with low incomes and unattractive for higher-income house-seekers because of the (still) low neighbourhood status. Therefore, the City decided to give the renovated houses away (in a 2004-2006 pilot) or sell them at a bargain (as of 2006) to those who are willing and able to renovate a house in a neighbourhood with a low socio-economic status. From then on the houses were called Do-It-Yourself (DIY) houses. An evaluation of the initiative in the period 2004-2011 by Deuten (2011) shows that participants were often aged 25 to 35 years old, employed in the creative sector, young families and single men, and often had medium to high annual household incomes and high education levels. Almost one in three buyers had their previous residence outside

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<sup>3</sup> The City speaks of a ‘hotspot’ when an area is deprived, experiences high levels of crime, and residents feel unsafe.

Rotterdam. Half of the DIY-houses were sold individually and half in collective renovation projects.

The initiative aims to regenerate low-income areas in Rotterdam, amongst others by structurally increasing social cohesion among residents with different socio-economic statuses in the neighbourhoods in which the DIY-houses are located (Gijsberts and Dagevos, 2007). It seeks to do so by attracting residents with high social and cultural capitals, by obligating buyers to renovate the house, to live in the house and not to let it out for at least 3 years (Eurocities, 2012). Nonetheless, it remains unclear how the new and existing residents are supposed to connect.

Between 2004 and 2011, 534 old apartments were combined into 238 residences and sold to private buyers in Rotterdam. In Rotterdam and in the neighbourhood Hillesluis in Feijenoord, demand has greatly exceeded supply so far (Sour, 2009; Huitzing, 2011). During the implementation of the initiative, the City collaborates with an architect who helps buyers develop a construction plan, government employees who advise buyers on legal matters, 2 banks that are prepared to provide mortgages, local housing corporations that are willing to buy the houses when a project fails, and the organisation Urbannerdam that supports buyers in the process of getting a house and promotes the DIY-housing project to other cities and organisations (Eurocities, 2012). Purchasing, preparing DIY-houses for sale and guiding buyers during the renovation costs the City € 30,000 on average per dwelling. Buyers pay an acquisition price and renovation costs that depend on the state and size of the house. The value of most DIY-houses increases as buyers renovate the houses themselves.

Nienhuis (2012) finds that the initiative manages to improve the socio-economic status of the direct surroundings of the dwelling, but not of the entire neighbourhoods in which the DIY-projects are located. The DIY-houses do attract higher-income groups to the projects. Their presence can also pave the way, both psychologically and economically, for more upmarket buyers to settle near the projects. New residents have more financial and social capital to invest in the public spaces and facilities in the neighbourhood. In Hillesluis, we find that they indeed initiate and participate in various local activities in collaboration with residents who have lived there for a longer time. For instance, participants have successfully restructured a local park in collaboration with existing residents and voluntarily read to children in a local school with many disadvantaged children. Nevertheless, activities, friendships and other support relations mostly occur within and not among the two groups, so in terms of social cohesion it remains to be seen how effective the initiative is.

#### *Perception and use of the concept of diversity*

In the DIY-houses project diversity is used as a strategy to upgrade the neighbourhood of Feijenoord. We find that it does so in three ways. First, the project contributes to the diversification of the housing stock. DIY-houses are owner-occupied while the neighbourhoods in which they are located have high percentages of social housing and low-priced private rental housing. In addition, because buyers design their house themselves the interior and exterior design and size of all DIY-houses is unique. In contrast, local (social) housing is mainly similar in these respects. Second, the DIY-houses project differentiates the population of Feijenoord by attracting more affluent people with diverse household types (e.g. families, singles, couples, etc.) from other neighbourhoods, or from outside Rotterdam. Also, the new residents often have high-skilled and creative occupations while the traditional residents often work in low-skilled, manufacturing jobs and are more often unemployed. Third, the new residents contribute to the diversification of institutions, facilities and public spaces. In Feijenoord, they have for instance attracted and initiated new sports clubs and a new online platform for local green initiatives for all residents.

*Main factors influencing success or failure*

Rotterdam has continued to sell DIY-houses. Other Dutch and German cities are using the concept as well. Four factors contribute to the project successes. First, buyers of DIY-houses in Rotterdam must prove to have the financial means to renovate the house before the sale; agree to live in the house for at least 3 years after renovation; and agree not to sell or rent out the house during this period. These strict conditions and the active monitoring by the City helps buyers to succeed in the renovation. Second, the condition of no sale or rent in the first 3 years encourages buyers to invest in the neighbourhood with a long-term perspective (Eurocities, 2012). Third, an extensive guidance of the team of professionals in e.g. architecture and law enables the buyers, who are unexperienced with the complex process of renovation, to accomplish the task. Finally, the DIY-houses attract buyers who are open-minded, resourceful and willing to improve the quality of local facilities and public spaces *in collaboration* with existing resident groups (Huitzing, 2011). For example, in Hillesluis, we find that new residents visit all residents in their street to motivate them for collective gardening activities.

The DIY-houses project faces difficulties as well. The project does not generate strong social cohesion between high- and low-income groups. Local activities are less often initiated and visited by traditional residents than by newcomers. According to an interviewee:

*“Those people [existing residents] do not take initiative [...] [Instead,] they worry about other things, not about joyfully undertaking activities together. They worry about money; they have no perspectives. You cannot blame them, but with those people you just cannot build a community”.*

Consequently, the current activities, facilities and public spaces in the neighbourhood might not accurately reflect the interests and needs of existing resident groups. In addition, some activities by newcomers exclude the traditional residents because they are not in their interest or (financially or socially) less accessible. This raises the question whether the initiative actually achieves urban diversity in a just way. Also, an interviewed promoter and resident of a DIY-house explains that within some projects residents counteract one another as they disagree over the use of public space. But, the project is still in an early stage. It is unclear what it will bring in the long term.

*Conclusions*

The DIY-houses project is particularly interesting for cities that have areas with high concentrations of inexpensive and low-quality housing. Combining and renovating existing houses is less expensive and has less impact on the environment than demolishing them and building new houses. The concept of DIY-houses attracts residents who are not afraid of settling in a disadvantaged neighbourhood and who want to invest in local facilities and public spaces in collaboration with existing residents. However, the small scale of the projects only allows for positive socio-economic effects in the direct environment of the project (Nienhuis, 2012). Also, the experience of DIY-houses in Hillesluis shows that it does not generate strong social cohesion between high- and low-income groups. In order to achieve the latter, and to let all residents profit from the regeneration, it is important that the traditional residents are included in the processes of change.

## 2.2 Arrangements targeting social mobility

### Another Chance [De Nieuwe Kans]

#### *Strategy, focus and organisation*

Another Chance provides a multidisciplinary programme for young people, who live in the city of Rotterdam, are aged 18 to 27 and who have not followed a study or found a job in the past year. The project targets people who experience multiple and complex barriers to (legal) participation in society, and for whom regular social services have failed to work. According to the director of Another Chance, many participants have a criminal record; homogenous and unstable social networks; multiple children whom they cannot maintain; no formal education; a “*mild intellectual disability*”; and (frequent) experiences with violence and abuse. Therefore, many face difficulties trusting other people, society and themselves (Bieleman and Boendermaker, 2010). Most participants are male and live in the area of Rotterdam South. A few live in Rotterdam West.

According to the interviewed director, the main goals of the project are to increase the social mobility of participants, and to better understand why and how this group remains “*under the radar*”. Evaluations by Bieleman and Boendermaker (2010), De Nieuwe Kans (2010), and Toxopeus (2011) confirm that Another Chance achieves its goal to foster social mobility. Our study finds that this happens in three ways. First, the programme aims at stabilising participants’ lives by providing adequate (health) care; stimulating a healthy day and night rhythm and regular physical exercise; tackling debts; mapping financial resources as well as social networks. Second, Another Chance seeks to improve participants’ knowledge and skills, e.g. concerning cooking, communication, health and hygiene, language and mathematics, ICT, parenting and physical wellbeing. Third, the programme aims to diversify and to strengthen the social networks of participants (what Putnam (2000: 22) calls ‘*bridging social capital*’). Therefore, Another Chance makes use of the method of Assertive Community Treatment (ACT)<sup>4</sup>: it seeks to diversify and strengthen the social networks of participants by involving the local community (residents and organisations) of Feijenoord in the programme. For instance, the interviewed director explains that presently a neighbourhood resident conducts weekly African drumming sessions with participants. Also, a local group of young rappers called B.R.I.G.H.T.N.E.S.S. [Brightness] undertake rapping sessions with participants on Friday afternoons. According to the director, this is important because:

*“When they [participants] walk out here, there is nobody else than people like themselves before [they attended Another Chance]. It is important that where they live, they at least have a few [supportive] contacts. They can also always come back to us. We call them”.*

Furthermore, the social networks of (employees of) Another Chance are actively used to introduce participants to people and organisations that can help them increase their socio-economic opportunities. Another Chance contributes to knowledge about the target group by monitoring participants and programmes through academic research.

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<sup>4</sup> Assertive Community Treatment is an integrated approach in health care for people with multiple and complex mental disabilities (see e.g. Johnson, 2011).

The programme of Another Chance was initiated by the Albeda College<sup>5</sup> in 2007, on the request of a Vice-Mayor of the City of Rotterdam who wanted to generate more coherence in the facilities for young people who are not served well by existing social services in the City. In 2010, Another Chance became an independent association. From the start, various parties at multiple levels of scale have been involved in the governance of Another Chance, including the district government, police, various (local) social services and schools.

Most trajectories at Another Chance last 6 to 9 months. When possible and necessary, young people can be strongly advised or even forced to follow the programme at DNK by law. However, most participate on a voluntary basis. Every week, the programme facilitates 60 to 70 people. The programme is funded by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports with € 1.8 million annually in the previous 5 years. At present, 19 people are employed fulltime. Since 2010, Another Chance is monitored by an academic workplace that exists of 4 fulltime PhD students and a few interns and is supervised by two professors of VU University, Amsterdam. The academic workplace is funded by the philanthropic Association The Far Mountains [Stichting De Verre Bergen] with € 400,000 a year. The director of Another Chance explains that resources are insufficient to meet the local demand for participation in the project. Moreover, in 2015, the governance of healthcare services will become a responsibility of municipalities and simultaneously budgets for health care will decrease. The City has informed Another Chance that they will not be able to fund the programme as of 2015. Thus, at present, the continued existence of the organisation is unclear.

#### *Perception and use of the concept of diversity*

Although the project does not explicitly address diversity, it has significant implications for the management of diversity. First, the project fills a gap in the policy system by providing a programme for a group of disadvantaged young people whom regular urban policy programmes fail to reach. Second, Another Chance provides an integrated and personalised programme that recognises and caters for the diverse needs of the participants. Therefore, the programme is carried out by a variety of professionals. This approach implies that a complex understanding of diversity underlies the project. For instance, the diverse needs of the target audience are thought to derive from e.g. the diverse family backgrounds, socio-economic opportunities, support networks and social experiences of participants. Third, Another Chance actively uses diversity as a strategy to strengthen the social networks of participants. In this way, diversity is used as an asset, to increase social mobility.

#### *Main factors influencing success or failure*

Six aspects of the programme's approach contribute to its success. First, due to the current segmentation both in policy for and the practice of social services, no proper support exists for a group of people with diverse and complex disabilities. This is reinforced by the abolition of the focus on target groups and the introduction of mainstream policy by the City (Tersteeg et al., 2014). The latter ignores that people are subject to different circumstances. According to the director, the multidisciplinary and personalised approach of Another Chance fills the gap:

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<sup>5</sup> Albeda College is a school for general vocational training in the Metropolitan region of Rotterdam. The school has 50 locations of which one in Rotterdam South. In order to support deprived young people in this area, the school has participated in (the development of) various local social programs such as *Another Chance*.

*“You have to watch out for being naïve. It makes no sense to ask for unrealistic things. [...] [For instance] If you make a big fuss about drugs and alcohol use, they [participants] will be gone. Everyone smokes and uses [drugs], everyone drinks. [...] Instead you should base your intervention on the lives that they live and generate a discussion about it”.*

Second, Another Chance facilitates multidisciplinary and customised care (on location) that adequately addresses the diverse disabilities that participants have. Third, the way in which the programme actively approaches the target population in their own neighbourhoods increases their participation in the programme (Bieleman and Boendermaker, 2010). An outreaching approach is used to reduce the barriers to participate in a trajectory of Another Chance (on location) among the target audience. Fourth, even though it is sometimes difficult to involve local parties in the programme this turns out to be key for increasing the wellbeing of participants. The experiences of Another Chance with embedding the project in the local neighbourhood, has proven to successfully strengthen the social networks of the participants. Fifth, the interviewed director argues that the emergence of complex and dynamic diversities causes a focus in society on the individual. The process of individualisation makes that traditional institutions in society such as churches, unions and local football clubs become less important. The director argues that especially disadvantaged groups, of which there are many in Rotterdam South, experience difficulties with creating and organising new institutions. For its participants, Another Chance acts as such an institution. He argues that there is a lack of institutions for disadvantaged groups in Rotterdam South and in society. Finally, the continuous evaluation of Another Chance by an Academic Workplace will not only contribute to innovation in the programme itself, but will also facilitate better knowledge of the target group and of methodological approaches.

The budget is the main difficulty the organisation faces. In its annual plan for 2012, the organisation states that they would like to accompany more participants because the demand for the programme is much higher than they can handle. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports refuses to increase the annual budget of € 1.8 million (not even to correct for inflation). With a higher budget the director of Another Chance would also invest in the quality of its personnel. Nevertheless, the upcoming budget cuts and decentralisation of health care forms a threat to the existence of the entire programme, particularly because Another Chance has not developed an alternative financial plan. According to the director, the government fails to see “*the business case*”. By business case he means that the costs for society are much lower with the presence of organisations such as Another Chance than without. Another Chance lessens crime by keeping the target audience off the streets and teaching them good citizenship.

### *Conclusions*

Another Chance teaches us that recognising diversity of circumstances and needs of people facing multiple and complex barriers to participation in society, is key for increasing their social mobility. The multidisciplinary, personalised and outreaching methods of the project, as well as its embeddedness in the local community fill a gap in urban policy in Rotterdam. The programme has successfully increased the visibility of the target group. Unless the City provides an alternative for Another Chance or the organisation develops an alternative financial plan, the upcoming budget cuts will cause the target audience to disappear under the radar again, counteracting the projects goals.

### **B.R.I.G.H.T.N.E.S.S. [H.E.L.D.E.R.H.E.I.D.]**

#### *Strategy, focus and organisation*

B.R.I.G.H.T.N.E.S.S. stands for Learn Every Lesson That Has A Reason And Ignore Foolishness (in Dutch: Hoor Elke Les Die Een Reden Heeft En Ignoreer Dwaasheid), which is the nickname of 25-year old rapper Breyten Muskiet, who lived in Feijenoord in Rotterdam and

suddenly died from a heart attack in 2004. After his death and in his name, B.R.I.G.H.T.N.E.S.S. became a Feijenoord-based movement of young people who encourage youth in Rotterdam South to develop their talents and participate in society through education and (paid or unpaid) work. B.R.I.G.H.T.N.E.S.S. is also a platform for local youth to raise their voice and to share experiences. This is done through the use of music, dialogues and other creative activities. The movement is initiated and coordinated by the mother of the deceased rapper: Joany Muskiet.

The initiative is aimed at all young people in Rotterdam South who “*are neglected [by society], live in the streets, are school drop-outs, use drugs, smoke [marijuana], are anti-social*” [Mrs. Muskiet] and who want to enable their talents and improve their socio-economic status in society. According to Mrs. Muskiet, many participants feel dissociated from and are angry with society and grew up in unstable, single-parent families, in which they did not receive enough attention and love. Participants have diverse ethnic backgrounds (e.g. Surinamese, Antilleans, Cape Verdeans and Moroccans) and religions (e.g. Muslims, Christians and non-believers). Many have experienced racism during job applications. Most participants live in Feijenoord.

The main goal of the initiative is to increase the social mobility of the target group. The initiative achieves this by: providing space for the target group to meet; welcoming them to the movement, regardless of their (criminal) background; listening to and acknowledging their experiences, interests and needs; providing a safe and caring environment (e.g. sharing meals); encouraging them to discover and develop their talents; coaching them to become more self-confident, social and supportive; letting more experienced and successful participants act as coaches and role models for other participants; facilitating work experiences and courses in e.g. catering, music and management; and using the social networks of participants for new socio-economic opportunities.

The activities that the movement organises include a yearly ‘B.R.I.G.H.T.N.E.S.S. bowl’ for the best rap talent in Rotterdam South, football tournaments, music workshops with youths e.g. at local schools, in penitentiaries and at Another Chance and weekly informal get-togethers with food and an open mic. In 2010, the City named a square in Feijenoord ‘B.R.I.G.H.T.N.E.S.S.’ to memorise Breyten Muskiet and to acknowledge (the positive contribution of the movement for) youths in Rotterdam South (Van Wamelen, 2012). The square was restructured through a joint-collaboration of professionals and participants of B.R.I.G.H.T.N.E.S.S.

Joany Muskiet cooks for, listens to and coaches the youngsters. She also “*encourages the youths to express their stories in a positive way, without using bad words*”. According to Mrs. Muskiet, participants have internalised this message and remind each other of it continuously. A team of 5 to 10 volunteers support Mrs. Muskiet with the financial administration, acquisition, organisation of activities and spaces, coaching, promotion and external communication. The team coordinates various working groups in which the youths participate. Depending on the event, 50 to 250 young people participate in activities of H.E.L.D.E.R.H.E.I.D, a volunteer explains. The initiative has a budget of € 25,000 per year including € 10,000 for the organisation of the ‘B.R.I.G.H.T.N.E.S.S. bowl’. The initiative is funded by multiple and altering private and public parties. In addition, a local school and a multinational design firm support the movement with free spaces. The initiative collaborates with various other public, private and non-profit organisations in the area, including a record studio that was set up by one of B.R.I.G.H.T.N.E.S.S.’s main team members.

#### *Perception and use of the concept of diversity*

According to Mrs. Muskiet, B.R.I.G.H.T.N.E.S.S. communicates that diversity, particularly among young people in Rotterdam South, is a quality. We find that it does so in three ways. First,

the initiative literally and symbolically provides space for a group of young people within the diverse city of Rotterdam who are in need of support, but who are often excluded from regular institutions in the city. Second, the initiative is open to all young people who experience exclusion and who want to improve their social position in society, regardless of their age, ethnicity, experiences, gender, housing situation, interests, religion and talents. Indeed, participants are diverse regarding most of these aspects. Yet, the majority of participants are men, even though the initiative is home to and open to women too. Third, the initiative celebrates and encourages participants to develop and carry out their diverse skills and talents, e.g. regarding music, management and education.

#### *Main factors influencing success or failure*

The movement is still growing. Participants develop themselves personally (e.g. by becoming aware of their qualities) and socio-economically (e.g. by enriching their social networks). Several youths have for instance managed to start their own businesses. Several factors contribute to the success of the initiative. First, the initiative addresses a niche in urban policy in Rotterdam: it supports a group of young people who experience complex social problems that withheld them from developing themselves. Its inclusive, individual approach enables B.R.I.G.H.T.N.E.S.S. to reach this group. The unconventional approach of listening, acknowledging, caring and coaching by Mrs. Muskiet also fills a gap in the local institutional climate for these youths. Second, the participants share both the feeling of exclusion and the loss of Breyten Muskiet, which enables them to connect with one another, even when they are diverse in many other respects. Mrs. Muskiet explains that participants call each other and welcome newcomers as “*brothers*”. Third, educating participants and letting them educate other participants like a flywheel mechanism, provides an educational environment for both newcomers and more experienced participants that is relatively inexpensive. Also, as participants share the experience of exclusion, participants who have been involved for a longer period of time are able to understand and address the barriers which newcomers experience to social mobility more effectively than outsiders. Fourth, the initiative actively counteracts exclusion by acknowledging the target group and providing space for them to develop their talents such as making rap music and graffiti, even though these are often not recognised as such by more powerful actors in society. Finally, according to Mrs. Muskiet, the movement reaches its goals because she and her team communicate with participants in a transparent way and keep their promises.

A main difficulty the initiative faces is to find sufficient, appropriate and affordable meeting space. Over the years, the home of Mrs. Muskiet has become a communal area and a storage space. Fortunately, a multinational firm with a local office has recently offered the initiative space to settle. In addition, the movement is dependent of Mrs. Muskiet, practically and emotionally. This can be a weakness of the initiative in the long-term.

#### *Conclusions*

Although B.R.I.G.H.T.N.E.S.S. has arisen under unique conditions, we can draw some important lessons from the initiative. It has managed to lift a group of young people with multiple social problems, whom regular social institutions often fail to reach. Its accessible, inclusive, caring and educational climate contributes to this success. The shared feeling of exclusion among participants enables them to connect. Rather than focussing on how the target group affects the city negatively, the initiative recognises their values for society. Hereby, the movement justifies participants’ existence and encourages them to participate in the city’s economy.



## **The Flywheel [Het Vliegwiel]**

### *Strategy, focus and organisation*

The Flywheel is a social network centre for and by women who live in the Rotterdam area of Feijenoord. The centre provides (free) meeting spaces and a variety of activities. The Flywheel was initiated by the district government in 2009, in response to high levels of unemployment among women in the area. It is funded and managed by the district government. The Flywheel targets all local women who do not participate in paid or unpaid work, e.g. due to language barriers. According to a manager at the Flywheel, activities are attended by *'individual'* local women of diverse ethnic minority groups, including Afghans, Brazilians, Moroccans, Pakistanis, Poles, Surinamese, Turks and Antilleans with diverse Dutch language proficiencies.

The main goal of the Flywheel is to increase the social mobility of the target group. The concept of social mobility is defined loosely, as *'personal growth'*. The Flywheel uses two main approaches to achieve its goal. First, the centre organises activities and courses in e.g. budgeting, catering, crafts, health, hospitality and philosophy, and encourages local women to participate in them. Second, women are encouraged to organise activities in which they share their knowledge and skills with other local women. They can for instance teach a cooking class or a Dutch language course. Sometimes, external professionals are asked to teach a course at the centre (for a small sum of money). Participants who have followed such a course are then stimulated to teach the course to new participants. By following and carrying out workshops, the centre is thought to act as a *'flywheel'* for personal development.

The Flywheel is run by 20-25 volunteers who both teach or assist with courses, or help maintain the building and follow courses themselves. At present, the Flywheel offers about 20 short and medium-term activities and courses which women can attend on a voluntary basis. Women pay a small contribution: about € 1 - € 5 per class, depending on the activity. Volunteers get a 50 per cent discount. Activities are organised by two managers and carried out by volunteers. The Flywheel collaborates with various local non-profit organisations to carry out the activities. Every year, the centre is visited 30,000 times by 600 individual women (including 20-25 volunteers), of which 8 succeeded in moving into more highly qualified (paid) work. The district government provides € 70,000 a year for (the organisation of) activities. Also, three civil servants are employed at the centre: one full-time secretary and two part-time managers. The budget has not changed significantly in recent years.

### *Perception and use of the concept of diversity*

Diversity is explicitly addressed in the management of and activities at the Flywheel. The initiative recognises that its target groups are diverse, e.g. regarding age, culture, ethnicity, lifestyles, (mental) health, skills, socio-economic status, work experiences, interests and needs. The two managers promote inclusiveness by offering activities that collectively and individually fit the interests and needs of diverse groups; by stimulating participants to use one language (Dutch) to counteract exclusion; and by encouraging participants to treat one another with respect and regard one another as equals. Some activities at the Flywheel also explicitly address social diversity. For example, a weekly discussion group gives participants the opportunity to encounter different opinions on homosexuality, parenting, politics and relationships. Also, in a weekly cooking club, participants become familiar with diverse cuisines and food traditions.

### *Main factors influencing success and failure*

The Flywheel manages to attract a diverse group of local women, who develop themselves considerably. The following factors contribute to this success. First, the management of the centre acknowledges the diverse starting points, interests and needs of the target group. It promotes inclusive practices during activities, for instance by stimulating participants to

communicate in the same language. Furthermore, by facilitating dialogues between people with diverse ages, ethnic backgrounds, family situations, lifestyles, opinions, etc. in its activities the centre stimulates positive understandings of differences and connections between women with diverse backgrounds as well. Second, the management seeks to provide a personalised programme for participants as it recognises that they have different needs.

*“When we have a new activity we ask the volunteers [or other participants]: would you like to [participate]? With some women we [say]: that would be good for you” [Manager].*

Also, progress meetings are held with volunteers. Third, the centre uses an outreaching approach to get to the target group by not only approaching (potential) participants in the centre itself, but also providing information about the Flywheel on local markets and through flyers at people’s homes. Fourth, according to an interviewed manager, the disinterested and external position of the management (not being part of the target group) contributes significantly to an inclusive social climate. The management deliberately does not practice a particular religion in the centre, sets up rules that promote equality and respect among participants, maintains the rules and stimulates positive interactions between participants. It is in the interest of the managers to prevent dominant group formation. Fifth, the managers use their social networks to stimulate social mobility among participants. An interviewed manager discusses how she and her colleague actively look for and finds (paid) work for participants at businesses and organisations in her personal network.

The Flywheel also faces challenges. First, the centre excludes men as well as women who do not feel comfortable to take part in diverse social groups. Local men point out that there is a need for activities for them as well. Also, some women drop out because they prefer to participate within a group which they are familiar with, for instance a solely Turkish Community Centre. Second, although the management introduces this as a success factor, supposedly because it makes activities more special, asking a financial contribution for activities can exclude women from participation. Third, relatedly, the management sometimes does not know when to allow or discourage the formation of social groups within the centre. Distinctive social groups can help one another, but they can also exclude and even dictate other participants in the centre, the managers have experienced. Fourth, the centre would like to welcome more participants. Yet, they experience difficulties motivating more local women to join. Fifth, the centre would like to monitor how women do after they moved into more highly qualified (paid) work but has not yet been able to do so. Sixth, the budget of the centre is not enough to achieve as much social mobility as some participants and the managers wish for. Women want to obtain formal degrees, which the centre cannot pay for. The low budget also affects the quality of the activities of which all are carried out by (semi-)volunteers. Finally, the recent municipal budget cuts, particularly in the budgets for community organisations, threaten the existence of the Flywheel.

### *Conclusions*

The Flywheel effectively uses diversity as a strategy to achieve social mobility, by providing courses and encouraging local women without (paid) work to share skills and talents with other participants. Hereby, the initiative empowers local women in Feijenoord with limited social capitals and communicates a positive understanding of diversity. Rather than problematising the target group, it highlights the qualities of the group for society. The varied and accessible activities, personalised and outreaching approach, independent position and the use of professional networks of the centre’s management enable the initiative to cater for the diverse needs and interests of the target group. With a better evaluation of its results and more budgets the centre could improve the quality and inclusiveness of activities.

## **Primary School Bloemhof [OBS Bloemhof]**

### *Strategy, focus and organisation*

Bloemhof is a primary school in the disadvantaged district of Feijenoord in Rotterdam. It provides primary education for approximately 350 children aged between 4 and 12 years old. The school is aimed at, and majorly visited by, children in the Feijenoord district. Nine in ten children have a parent who was born abroad. Many children have language deficiencies, unhealthy eating habits and parents who are unemployed and/or who have low education levels.

The main objective of the Bloemhof School is to increase the social mobility of children in the disadvantaged area of Feijenoord (e.g. Boonstra et al., 2012). According to the interviewed director, it achieves this by means of the Wanita<sup>6</sup> and the Physical Integrity approaches. These successful new teaching methods were introduced by the director in 2003 and 2008 respectively, after a critical report of the Dutch Inspectorate of Education about the quality of education at Bloemhof in 2000.

The Wanita approach allows children to explore and express their interests at school by using arts education. For two hours a week, under the guidance of an artist and a teacher, children undertake projects that are based on their perceptions in the subjects of biology, geography, history and physics. The artists stimulate the children to use their creativity. By involving artists, the children learn to express themselves both verbally and non-verbally (e.g. through plays, paintings and dance) (Boonstra et al., 2012). The method contributes to a positive perception of school among children as well. The Physical Integrity approach comprises four trajectories: judo classes to improve the health of children and to teach children to respect themselves and others; cookery classes and daily warm meals to provide and teach children about healthy foods and to expose them to cultural differences; philosophy classes to teach children about diverse perspectives on social phenomena and to communicate with respect for others; and ecology classes to teach children about nature. With this method, the school wants to compensate for the various disadvantages which the children experience when growing up in a poor household and neighbourhood. As many parents have insufficient means for these types of activities, the school has decided to provide for this. Physical Integrity is the legacy of a philosopher, called Henk Oosterling. After a positive evaluation by the Verweij-Jonker Institution in 2012, it became an integrated method of education at the Bloemhof School. Both the Wanita and Physical Integrity methods provide the children with better socio-economic perspectives.

The programmes are carried out by teachers, supporting staff (e.g. interns and students of local universities and colleges), several artists, two judo teachers, two philosophers, two ecologists, a professional cook and circa forty volunteers who are mothers of pupils. The latter receive € 20 a week for their support during four warm school meals. Children aged 4 to 9 years receive 31 hours of education, and children aged 10 to 12 receive 32 of these, in contrast with 23 and 26 hours respectively at regular Dutch schools. Besides the regular subsidies for education, the school is supported by the City with € 450,000 a year under the Children's Zone programme<sup>7</sup>, and by philanthropic association The Far Mountains [Stichting de Verre Bergen] under the Skill

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<sup>6</sup> Wanita is the name of a figurative schoolgirl after whom the educational method is named. The method was developed by the Arts Centre [Centrum voor de Kunsten] and the Irene Primary School in the town of Krimpen aan de Lek (Jacobse et al., 2006). Several Dutch schools have implemented the method.

<sup>7</sup> Children's Zone is a City programme that aims to increase the social mobility of children in deprived neighbourhoods in Rotterdam South through education, extra-curricular activities and support for parents.

City programme<sup>8</sup> with € 100,000 a year for a full-time cook and foods. Incidentally, the school receives money from diverse associations or municipal programmes for specific projects and facilities. Several local companies sponsor the cookery trajectory of the school with (unprocessed) foods.

#### *Perception and use of the concept of diversity*

For the Bloemhof School, a diversity of socio-economic opportunities, ethnicities, interests, and skills of pupils, is a key feature of society that educational programmes need to address. The school does this as follows. First, the school programme fulfils two niches in educational policy in Rotterdam. The Physical Integrity approach offers pupils from disadvantaged households a learning programme that seeks to give them the same opportunities in their further educational careers as children from more advantaged households. In addition, the Wanita concept allows the school to adjust standardised educational programmes to the knowledge and skills of the children. Second, by taking the interests and skills of the children as a starting point the school teaches children to deal with and to be open to differences. Moreover, by acknowledging their questions and talents, the school encourages children's self-esteem. Finally, by exposing children to diverse disciplines (e.g. sports, philosophy, gardening, etc.) and to diverse subjects within the disciplines (e.g. various cuisines within the cookery classes) the school teaches children to handle, be open to, and value differences as well.

#### *Main factors influencing success and failure*

The following factors contribute to the school programmes success. First, the Wanita concept allows the school to provide education that caters well to the educational and socio-economic disadvantages of the children. Second, by building on the knowledge and talents of the children and providing them equal opportunities, the school acknowledges their existence and their rights. Third, the pedagogic and methodological skills of the staff are key for the school's educational successes. For example, an interviewed director explains that:

*“School staff communicate openly [with one another and with pupils], this generates trust. [...] Children notice this: ‘when I have a problem, I can approach anyone about it’”.*

Fourth, the various partnerships that the director of the school has built with other public and educational institutions and programmes, volunteers, professionals and local businesses, enable the school to conduct its successful methods. According to Boonstra et al. (2012), involving mothers increases the effectiveness of school methods as they can improve their pedagogic and language skills and practice the methods at home (e.g. healthy food, expressing oneself respectfully). It also increases inter-ethnic contact as volunteers have diverse ethnic backgrounds. Finally, a long-term vision for society underlies the school's methods. The school aims to turn the pupils into social, open-minded and skilled citizens with an eye for sustainability, the interviewed director explains, while most Dutch schools lack such a focus.

The Bloemhof faces several difficulties. First, the didactic qualities of the philosophers, ecologists, artists and volunteers are not always sufficient. Boonstra et al. (2012) find that they are not always able to maintain order, as they are not trained as teachers. Second, relatedly, the inabilities and occasional absenteeism of these professionals puts (too) much pressure on regular

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<sup>8</sup> Skill City is an urban revitalisation programme for Rotterdam South supported by the City in collaboration with various local private and non-profit organisations including primary school Bloemhof.

teachers, who then have to work overtime. Third, the unhealthy lifestyles of children at home do sometimes counteract health achievements at school. Fourth, the financial dependency of the alternative school programmes on the assistances of external parties makes the school vulnerable. The school sometimes has insufficient resources (e.g. for gardening and judo materials). The director seeks to solve these problems with new partnerships. Finally, the educational inspectorate monitors the school's performance through short-term test results. Yet, the director argues that more time is needed for the programmes to achieve their goals.

### *Conclusions*

Primary School Bloemhof offers innovative schooling for disadvantaged pupils in the district of Feijenoord. It gives them better socio-economic perspectives by teaching them extra-curricular subjects and providing an educational programme that is based on the individual interests and needs of the children. The school's long-term vision that underlies the programme and the various partnerships, e.g. with artists, philosophers, ecologists, local companies, and parents of pupils who provide (financial) support, contribute particularly to its successes. To further improve its results, it is important that the school improves the quality of its (external) staff (e.g. professionals and volunteers) and its programmes.

## **2.3 Arrangements targeting economic performance**

### **The Creative Factory [De Creative Factory]**

#### *Strategy, focus and organisation*

The Creative Factory provides affordable working spaces for young, starting businesses that are active in the creative industries (e.g. architecture, consultancy, design, entertainment, music, media). Entrepreneurs are encouraged to collaborate in shared office spaces. The Creative Factory seeks to attract locally based companies (e.g. universities, banks, housing associations, consultancy and real estate offices; hereafter referred to as 'partners') to support the entrepreneurs financially and professionally. The Creative Factory aims to bring together the start-ups and involve successful companies to enable the start-ups to grow. As it is located in a low-income district in Rotterdam South, it particularly seeks to encourage local residents to start a creative business as part of the Creative Factory.

The Creative Factory is located in a former granary that is located in the deprived area of Rotterdam South and that is owned by the City and was renovated by the City for its current purpose. It was founded in 2008 by the young entrepreneur Leo van Loon in consultation with the City, who wanted to regenerate Rotterdam South. It currently houses 40 businesses that rent office spaces from the City. On average, businesses pay € 120 per month for a flexible office space (a desk) and € 250 per month for a permanent office space of 20 square meters. These prices include service costs (professional coaching and matchmaking by partners, electricity, heating, internet, maintenance, meeting rooms, reception and security). The relatively low prices are made possible by the low building rent asked by the City.

The Creative Factory houses entrepreneurs, interns and students who work in the creative sector and are mostly aged between 20 and 40 years old. According to an interviewed manager, participants have a "*metropolitan mindset*": they want to learn, enjoy working in a diverse and dynamic environment, and are willing to collaborate and share "*both their adhesive tape [materials] and knowledge*" with others. The Creative Factory aims to house the businesses for about 3 years, after which their success should allow them to move on. In practice, some businesses stay longer. Businesses vary in entrepreneurial experience of employees (0 to 15 years) and size (1 to 10 employees). Most participants reside in Rotterdam, but not in the South where the Creative

Factory is located. Existing businesses have a say in the establishment of new ones. A community manager is appointed to attract, select and manage (exchanges between) the companies in the Creative Factory. She is responsible for internal and external communications, the composition of the work units and the connection of the Creative Factory with residents and entrepreneurs in Rotterdam South.

The Creative Factory achieves its goal to support starting entrepreneurs in the creative industries in Rotterdam in the following ways. First, the affordable office spaces and services of the Creative Factory lower the financial barriers for entrepreneurs to start a creative business. Second, the Creative Factory encourages social ties among starting entrepreneurs. It does so by housing diverse creative businesses in co-working spaces and by encouraging them to interact regularly and support one another. The initiative also wants to bring entrepreneurs in contact with experienced professionals from local companies. However, an interviewed manager explains that this has not succeeded in a structural way in recent years. The Community Manager plays a key role in facilitating entrepreneurs with useful connections. She regularly organises meetings to attract new entrepreneurs and helps participants with connections through her extensive social network. Third, through these exchanges the entrepreneurs improve their skills and competences and gain new knowledge and inspiration.

The Community Manager seeks to achieve the Creative Factory second main goal, attracting local start-ups, by informing residents, entrepreneurs and other initiatives in Rotterdam South about the Creative Factory, she says. She also organises activities for these groups to become acquainted with the Creative Factory (e.g. drinks, open days, interactive activities). Nevertheless, the Creative Factory only succeeds to achieve this goal modestly as the majority of its entrepreneurs and customers still live outside Rotterdam South (Nijkamp, 2011).

#### *Perception and use of the concept of diversity*

The Creative Factory was found to address diversity in two ways. First, it brings together entrepreneurs in a diversity of business sectors, with diverse work experiences, personal and professional competences and social networks as a strategy to increase their economic success. An interviewed manager explains:

*“For instance, I have two people at the 7<sup>th</sup> floor who [...] hire office space together. He is a web-developer and she is a graphic designer. They share a desk but both have their own business. When she gets an assignment she will ask him ‘could you build my website?’, and [vice versa] he will then for instance ask her whether she can make a graphic design”.*

According to this manager, the Creative Factory explicitly carries out these diversities as its core quality. Second, the Creative Factory contributes to the diversification of businesses in Rotterdam South: it brings creative industries to the area, with workers with high cultural and social capitals (Bongers and Visser, 2011).

#### *Main factors influencing success and failure*

The following factors contribute to the popularity and successes of the Creative Factory. First, learning through interaction within an organisation that houses professional diversity, allows entrepreneurs to grow in a fast and relatively inexpensive way. It also allows the Creative Factory to provide customised services and guidance for the entrepreneurs (Bongers and Visser, 2011). Second, the Community Manager plays a key role in the success of the Creative Factory. She acts as a neutral coordinator, treats all businesses as equals and encourages informal and professional interactions through her social network. Additionally, the Community Manager is vital for the internal cohesion of the Creative Factory. Third, the City supports the Creative Factory by

renovating and leasing the building at low cost. Finally, by offering low-cost, all-inclusive services the Creative Factory is able to attract its target group.

The Creative Factory faces several problems. First, it currently aims but does not accomplish to involve local companies and organisations to support entrepreneurs, even though it was supported (both financially and professionally) by three universities, two banks, a housing association and a consultancy and real estate office, in the first years of its existence. According to an interviewed manager, this is because numerous local initiatives in Rotterdam South such as the Creative Factory compete for public and private financial support. The partners have chosen to support other promising local initiatives. Also, she argues that the Creative Factory did not put enough effort in preserving the partnerships. Second, as the initiative targets a vulnerable socio-economic group, it is sensitive to vacancies. The initiative presently houses 40 but aims to house over 70 businesses. A higher number of businesses generates more diversity and hence provides better opportunities for successful encounters. With many vacancies, the Community Manager is currently allowing businesses that do not fulfil all criteria of the target group. This sometimes undermines the goals of the initiative, she argues. Third, although the diversity of the Creative Factory enables economic success, it sometimes causes tensions as well. An interviewed manager explains that conflicts sometimes emerge both within and between units over the use of space (e.g. noise; different office hours). Finally, the Creative Factory does not manage to involve residents of Rotterdam South in its economic success. As the majority of local residents have intermediate vocational training, the sociologist Nijkamp (2011) argues that the initiative should become more accessible to low(er)-educated workers. According to an interviewed manager, the isolated location of the building prevents interaction with the surrounding areas as well. She argues that a public space (e.g. a café) where both locals and the Creative Factory can meet outside the building might serve as a solution.

### *Conclusions*

The concept of the Creative Factory is promising: diverse young start-ups in the creative industries share office spaces, exchange skills and knowledge, share their social networks and are supported financially and professionally by successful companies in Rotterdam. Nevertheless, much can be improved. For the continued existence of the Creative Factory, it is important that it better maintains existing and develops new (financial) partnerships. A diverse financial basis allows the initiative to better achieve its goals. It also makes the initiative less vulnerable to (municipal) budget cuts. By making the Creative Factory more accessible for local, low-educated entrepreneurs, it could tackle the problem of high vacancy rates as well.

## **The Neighbourhood Kitchen of South [De Wijkkeuken van Zuid]**

### *Strategy, focus and organisation*

The Neighbourhood Kitchen of South is a community kitchen in the Afrikaander neighbourhood in Feijenoord where home cooks prepare diverse cuisines together, mostly for caterings. As of 2013, the Kitchen is an independent, grant-free social enterprise. However, it started as one of the several social projects of the Freehouse Foundation in 2010. This foundation was set up by a professional artist, Jeanne van Heeswijk. It seeks to empower the community of the Afrikaander neighbourhood socio-economically and culturally. Also, the foundation aims to strengthen the economic independence of the neighbourhood by involving local residents in local economic activities and by generating activities that take the qualities of these residents as a starting point. Participants, local residents and local businesses collaborate to generate cultural, social and economic capital in the community. Hereby, all parties are thought to benefit.

Participants of the Neighbourhood Kitchen are 10 to 15 local women with limited working experience who experience multiple barriers to participation in both outdoor activities and (paid and unpaid) work. Both the cultural background of the participants and the dishes they prepare reflect the cultural diversity among the residents in the Afrikaander neighbourhood. The Kitchen houses chefs of at least 12 different ethnic groups. At present, the initiative has four waiters (of which a few men), a marketing and communication officer and an administrative officer. Participants are aged between 20 and 58 years old and work as volunteers. They receive € 120 for 6.5 hours of work a week at the Neighbourhood Kitchen, but often work 20 hours a week. Since 2013, the Neighbourhood Kitchen is run by the current manager. She works at the Kitchen 7 days a week and gets paid for 3. The initiative only allows participants who are committed to the job and have time for and affinity with cooking and catering.

The main goals of the Neighbourhood Kitchen are to stimulate local entrepreneurship through cultural production and to increase social mobility of the target group. The initiative manages to achieve these goals through the following strategies. First, participants are trained to become professional cooks and start a catering business. Participants improve their cooking skills by receiving training from fellow participants. Taking part in the company teaches them about business management. All participants are treated as professional employees: they are given tasks where they are held accountable for. Second, volunteers are encouraged to set up a local business of their own or to join an existing one. The manager of the Neighbourhood Kitchen looks for such opportunities through her own social network. In the previous year, 5 participants have moved into paid work in this way. Third, the Kitchen buys most of its materials at local shops and the local market to support local entrepreneurs. Finally, by anticipating on their interests and needs, the business seeks to attract customers from more prosperous neighbouring areas (e.g. Katendrecht and Kop van Zuid) to profit from their wealth.

#### *Perception and use of the concept of diversity*

For the Neighbourhood Kitchen, cultural diversity is a selling point. The main product that the business sells is its diverse ethnic food. As an interviewed director of the Kitchen explains:

*“If we would only have a Moroccan or a Pakistani chef, we would not be home to all those [diverse] cuisines [...] It is the diversity that enables us to deliver the 12 cuisines [...] and all the variations to those [cuisines], because of the collaborations and differences between the participants”.*

The Neighbourhood Kitchen both builds on and contributes to the cultural richness of the neighbourhood. By doing so, it promotes diversity as an economic value and an intrinsic quality of the neighbourhood.

#### *Main factors influencing success and failure*

The Neighbourhood Kitchen has evolved from a social project into an enterprise that increases social mobility among participants and local entrepreneurship significantly. The following factors contribute to the success. First, by educating participants and letting them educate each other, participants achieve new skills and knowledge about cooking and each other in a fast and cheap way. Second, by selling gastronomic and ethnic diversity the business encourages both workers and customers of the Neighbourhood Kitchen to understand these diversities positively. Third, by building on the different talents of the volunteers, the initiative gives voice to a group of people who were previously excluded from paid or unpaid work and acknowledges and promotes their value for the economy. Fourth, according to an interviewed director and manager, the shared responsibility among participants over a catering order generates a connection that enables participants to bond with one another, despite of their different skills, knowledge and



taste. Finally, the leadership qualities of the manager contribute to the businesses' success as well. The manager treats all participants as equals. But she also stimulates participants to develop their distinctive qualities within the initiative and to work in partnerships. By using her own social networks when enabling women to move into paid work, she makes sure that the Neighbourhood Kitchen can remain to profit from the woman's success. She can for example hire former volunteers at low cost when the Neighbourhood Kitchen has a shortage of staff.

The main difficulties that the initiative faces relate to finance. The Neighbourhood Kitchen is a starting business with few reserve capitals. Although it would like to reward participants, it does not make enough profit yet to pay them or the manager a (full-time) salary. Also, the manager would like to improve both the quality of cooking classes and supplies (e.g. cookware) to improve the quality of the workforce (and hence their opportunities) and caterings. Although the business acts as a (re)integration site for many participants, it does not want to receive subsidies for this, because it might then be forced to allow people who are obliged to work in the company by the City but who are not committed to it.

### *Conclusions*

The Neighbourhood Kitchen makes participants into (independent) economic actors by acknowledging the economic value of their talents and by developing their professional skills. The initiative stimulates the local economy by offering diverse foods, buying local, collaborating with local entrepreneurs and attracting more affluent customers of neighbouring areas. By using ethnic diversity as a selling point, the initiative communicates a positive understanding of diversity. The methods of learning through exchange, treating volunteers as professionals, working towards a shared goal, and moving participants into better jobs via the managements' social network contribute particularly to the initiatives success. The main challenge that the Neighbourhood Kitchen faces is to balance the economic and social goals of the enterprise, namely to be profitable and function as a training site as well.

## **The Neighbourhood Cooperation [De Wijkcooperatie]**

### *Strategy, focus and organisation*

The Neighbourhood Cooperation is a network organisation of and for entrepreneurs in the disadvantaged Afrikaander neighbourhood in Feijenoord that aims to stimulate local entrepreneurship and employment. It was founded in November 2013 as a long-term, subsidy-free community facility by the Freehouse Foundation in collaboration with research institute Labyrinth and the platform for arts and society Cal-XL. It targets local entrepreneurs and local residents, particularly those distant from the labour market. The main goals of the Cooperation are to generate local social, cultural and economic capital and to keep these capitals circulating locally (Wijkcooperatie, n.d). It is the aim of the initiative to make profit, of which half will be distributed to members, 25 per cent will be invested in the Neighbourhood Cooperation and 25 per cent will be used for organising local cultural activities (Wijkcooperatie, n.d.).

The Neighbourhood Cooperation seeks to achieve its main goals in three ways. First, it wants to stimulate, attract and generate work for its members: local entrepreneurs, businesses and residents [Coordinator, Neighbourhood Cooperation]. Jobs and tasks for the Cooperation are acquired from its extensive professional network of 300 public, private and non-profit actors who operate in the Afrikaander neighbourhood. For instance, members of the Cooperation offer their services to local care homes, cleaning organisations, as well as municipal design, marketing and communication and maintenance services. Work is also generated by stimulating individual members to collaborate and by organising cultural events (Wijkcooperatie, n.d.). Second, the Cooperation seeks to foster entrepreneurship among local residents by offering members intern-

ships, jobs and training. Residents also receive professional guidance by other members, for instance to commercialise their talents (Wijkcooperatie, n.d.). Finally, in building Het Gemaal, the initiative offers work and meeting spaces for members, partners and other local residents and entrepreneurs to rent at low cost.

The Cooperation exists of a management, an executive and a supervisory board, professionals, and members. The management board is ultimately responsible for the Cooperation. The supervisory board supports the executive board. The professionals are 5 freelance workers (3.5 fte), mostly of the Freehouse foundation, who run the project start up. Amongst others, they attract jobs and tasks of external parties and distribute them among members. Members include natural or legal persons. The Cooperation currently has 40 ‘*active local residents*’, and 12-15 local entrepreneurs, including merchants, welfare foundations, creative businesses and social enterprises, such as the Neighbourhood Kitchen and Freehouse itself (Wijkcooperatie, n.d.: 11; Coordinator, Neighbourhood Cooperation). In the future, the initiative strives to comprise about 60 and 75 local entrepreneurs and residents respectively. The neighbourhood cooperation is composed of sub cooperation’s with different functions (e.g. work, work administration, activities for young people), which members may use for their own benefit (within the goals of the cooperation). A sub cooperation for services and sub cooperation for young people, a ‘*Young Peoples Cooperation*’, will be setup within a year.

#### *Perception and use of the concept of diversity*

In two ways, the Neighbourhood Cooperation uses diversity as a strategy to achieve its goals. First, it seeks to generate more local employment and stimulate entrepreneurship by connecting local residents and entrepreneurs, with a diversity of skills, ideas, cultures and knowledge, an interviewed coordinator argues. Together, the members are more visible to potential clients, they have a wider professional network through which they can obtain jobs and they can better support one another. Second, the Cooperation sees and wants to develop the entrepreneurial potential of local residents with distance from the labour market:

*‘Who looks at the [disadvantaged] neighbourhoods in large cities, with numerical and financial glasses, will initially see poverty, disadvantages and other threats. Yet, the Neighbourhood Cooperation has eyes for the large diversity of cultures, talents, knowledge and skills of residents. It sees the city as a large market for her [the Neighbourhood Cooperation’s] ‘product’. By means of work and other services and products, the Neighbourhood Cooperation sees the opportunity to enlarge the self-organising ability of people and to counteract the [current] waist of talent’* (Wijkcooperatie, n.d.: 4).

By highlighting the economic value of entrepreneurs and residents of a disadvantaged area, the initiative seeks to fill a niche in the economy of Rotterdam, and the Netherlands.

#### *Main factors influencing success and failure*

Although it is not possible to determine the extent to which the initiative is successful, as the project is still in the phase of starting up, we can identify several factors that enable the initiative to achieve its goals. First, the initiative recognises that different members and partners have different needs, interests and abilities. By offering customised memberships, the Cooperation can attract a wide variety of local actors and maintain an extensive professional network. The structure of the organisation allows participants to connect, despite of their diverse business interests, entrepreneurial experience, skills and knowledge. Second, the wide range of partners who the Cooperation relies on will create more (financial) stability for the Cooperation and allow the initiative more freedom to make independent decisions. Finally, according to an interviewed coordinator, professionals who run the Neighbourhood Cooperation fulfil an important role in

the project's success. He argues that the following competences of professionals are particularly important: the ability to recognise talents in people and to collaborate with fellow leaders and members, an extensive (local) professional network, a motivation which is based on social rather than financial rewards; and the ability to tolerate financial uncertainty.

So far, the initiative faces three main challenges. First, the initiative has just started up and still needs to grow. The initiative is currently positioning itself in the community and local economy and attracting members. Due to its diverse range of work, a coordinator explains that it is sometimes difficult for the target group to label what the Neighbourhood Cooperation can offer them. Second, the initiative is currently run by professionals from the Freehouse foundation. But, it is the aim to transfer the tasks of the executive board and professionals to local residents and entrepreneurs. Therefore, the Cooperation aims to involve, guide, and train residents and entrepreneurs of Rotterdam South. Nevertheless, an interviewed professional explains that recruiting local residents and entrepreneurs who are able and willing to perform complex and specialised managerial tasks is challenging. Finally, in this phase of the project, attracting sufficient jobs is sometimes difficult. A professional explains that eminent local companies and organisations such as housing corporations and the district government should grant the Neighbourhood Cooperation jobs for the initiative to become more successful.

#### *Conclusions*

The Neighbourhood Cooperation is an innovative, private initiative for upgrading disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods. It recognises and uses the idea that residents and entrepreneurs of the Afrikaander neighbourhood have social, cultural and economic value, despite of their socio-economic disadvantages. The initiative offers local residents a way to commercialise their qualities. By joining forces, it can give local entrepreneurs better economic opportunities. The customised memberships can allow a wide variety of businesses and people to join. Diverse professional networks of members and partners can bring in more jobs. Since the initiative is still starting up, it is too early to formulate more stringent conclusions.

### **3 Synthesis and analysis of the results**

#### **Synthesis of the investigated governance arrangements**

The ten governance arrangements we have examined in this report all build on the diversity of local residents in the district of Feijenoord to increase social cohesion, social mobility and/or economic performance among them. They do so by enabling positive encounters between people with diverse backgrounds. Most of the examined arrangements focus at increasing social cohesion among and social mobility of local residents (see Table 1). In addition, most initiatives focus at more than one of these objectives.

The arrangements can have short, medium and long-term goals. Most arrangements originated in the district of Feijenoord, a few were initiated at the city level. Most are in an advanced stage, but some are in an early stage or have been completed. The initiatives are commercial, grassroots, non-profit, public-private and/or public in nature and include businesses, foundations, public organisations, projects and movements. Most arrangements target a specific group in (a neighbourhood of) Feijenoord (e.g. children or women without (paid or unpaid) work). Two aim at including all people in a certain neighbourhood (*Experimental Garden* and *Spectacle at the Cape*). The initiatives vary in terms of budget, number of employees and participants and social impact. We find that most initiatives, but not all, succeed to achieve their goals.

Table 1: Contribution of the governance arrangements towards the three main objectives

Governance arrangements	Social cohesion	Social mobility	Economic performance
Experimental Garden	***	**	
Spectacle at the Cape	***		
Do-it-yourself houses	*		
Another Chance		***	
B.R.I.G.H.T.N.E.S.S.	**	***	*
The Flywheel	*	***	
Primary School Bloemhof		***	
The Creative Factory		**	***
The Neighbourhood Kitchen	*	**	***
The Neighbourhood Cooperation	*	**	***

\* = low contribution; \*\* = medium contribution; \*\*\* = high contribution

### Conceptualisation of diversity

How do the examined governance arrangements perceive and use urban diversity? In their practices, the examined governance arrangements use a broad and sometimes complex understanding of diversity, as a function of various demographic features (e.g. age, education, gender and income), interests, needs, cultures, knowledge, skills and social networks. Yet, according to leaders of local initiatives ethnic diversity is still seen as one of the most important dimensions determining social differences in Feijenoord. The way in which the arrangements conceptualise diversity shows both elements of the concept of hyper-diversity as defined by Tasan-Kok et al. (2013) and Vertovec's (2007; 2010) concept of super-diversity. That is, the local initiatives address the intense diversity of the population of Feijenoord in terms of socio-economic, social and ethnic features and attitudes, three key elements of hyper-diversity according to Tasan-Kok et al. (2013). They are however not particularly focussed at lifestyles, activity patterns and the changes between and within categories that define diversity, which Tasan-Kok et al. identify as three other important features of the concept of hyper-diversity. Furthermore, like Vertovec's (2007; 2010) understanding of super-diversity, many leaders of local initiatives see ethnic diversity as one of the most important factors underlying social differences between residents of Feijenoord. It is thought to bring differences between residents with respect to behaviour, culture, socio-economic status, household features, religion, and hence interests and needs.

Nonetheless, like e.g. Tasan-Kok et al. (2013) and Vertovec (2007; 2010), most local initiatives see diversity both as an economic and social quality and opportunity. Nine out of ten initiatives (all except for *Another Chance*) use diversity as a means or a strategy to achieve their goals. Initiatives aim at increasing social cohesion by bringing together diverse people to teach them how to live, work, profit from and appreciate social differences within and outside of the project. Initiatives seek to foster social mobility by using the diversity of cultures and talents of participants to create a flywheel effect: initiatives provide education for participants and let them in turn educate one another. In this way, the initiatives can encourage social mobility at low cost and relatively fast. For the examined initiatives that aim at encouraging entrepreneurship diversity is seen as a strategy and a selling point.

By facilitating spaces for encounters between people with diverse backgrounds, the examined local initiatives contribute to new forms of local diversity as well. For instance, when residents

with diverse backgrounds start new initiatives or develop new products. Furthermore, according to a policy maker, for (new) residents in diverse neighbourhoods such as Feijenoord, taking part in the local initiatives can be a way to connect with people. The diverse social networks of participants of the initiatives give entry to e.g. local facilities, work and social support.

By offering a multidisciplinary and individualised activity programme for excluded social groups (e.g. criminal youths, unemployed women and children from disadvantaged families, often with multiple and complex problems), several local initiatives address a niche in urban policy in Rotterdam. Due to the current segmentation both in policy for and the practice of social services there are limited municipal services that provide proper support for these groups. This is reinforced by the abolition of target group and the introduction of mainstream policy by the City (Tersteeg et al., 2014). The latter ignores that people are subject to different circumstances. Several examined arrangements fill this gap.

### **Main factors influencing success or failure of the governance arrangements**

What factors contribute to the success or failure of the governance arrangements? In the description of the initiatives many of such factors have been mentioned. The main factors of success could be summarised as follows:

*Catering to the diverse interests and needs of participants:* A key factor that contributes to the successes of the governance arrangements is their ability to cater well to the diverse interests and needs of their target groups. In the context of Feijenoord, sensitivity to and knowledge of cultural, religious and ethnic differences is particularly important, leaders of the local initiatives argue. The initiatives attract a diverse group of participants by offering a multidisciplinary set of activities. In this way, the initiatives are accessible to many people and simultaneously offer participants a personalised programme. Indeed, most interviewees emphasise the importance of not using a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to achieve their goals. Initiatives that are run by local residents succeed to respond to diverse local demands particularly well.

*A shared objective:* Having a common interest, e.g. belonging to the same neighbourhood, jointly experiencing social exclusion, or working in a business towards the same goal, contributes to the success of local initiatives. The shared objective allows participants to connect, despite of their other diversities.

*A strong focus:* According to leaders of local governance arrangements, a strong focus (e.g. concerning the goals or target group of the initiative) allows initiatives to better promote themselves. Potential sponsors and other partners will then recognise them more easily.

*Generating a flywheel effect:* Local initiatives achieve to increase social mobility and/or entrepreneurship by building on the existing talents and interests of the target group, offering participants education and letting them educate one another. An interviewee calls this a 'flywheel effect'. Bringing together people with diverse interests and needs, letting them follow relevant courses and encouraging them to share their abilities with others, generates a low-cost, dynamic, inclusive and positive learning environment.

*Embedding the local initiatives in the neighbourhood:* To enable their goals, the governance arrangements participate in local social networks and in the economy of the neighbourhood. By collaborating with local partners, the initiatives ensure that existing financial, social and cultural capitals contribute to the neighbourhood. A strong local economy benefits both residents and entrepreneurs as it provides better services and more customers. Using and presenting existing capitals contributes to a shared feeling of belonging among residents and entrepreneurs as well.

*A diversity of financial and professional partnerships:* Working in diverse financial and professional partnerships is a crucial factor for the success of the governance arrangements. Many local initiatives are social enterprises or do not pursue profit, and focus on low-income groups. Consequently, most are dependent on external funding and support. Initiatives that depend on multiple funders and sponsors are more resilient to financial and organisational shortfalls. Involving external actors (e.g. multinationals, banks, universities) for material and immaterial support, allows the initiatives to be more successful. Several examined initiatives provide good examples of such public-private partnerships. Leaders of local governance arrangements argue their initiatives can support one another by opening their networks to one another as well.

*Good leadership:* The leaders of local initiatives play a crucial role in the successes of the initiatives. According to interviewed project leaders, the following competences of project leaders contribute to an initiative's success: the ability to communicate and collaborate with diverse participants and partners; an open-minded attitude towards differences; a welcoming, outreaching approach towards the target group; engagement with the initiative and its participants; an intrinsic motivation which is not based on increasing financial profits; extensive knowledge of local needs, qualities and ethnic and cultural differences; extensive social and professional networks; the capacity to allow other people and organisations to have successes; the ability to be open to changes; and confidence in oneself and the project. The skills and behaviours of project leaders were found to set a good example for participants. Participants trust the leaders most when they are not part of the arrangement's target groups. When perceived as a neutral party, the leaders can encourage participants to interact and to communicate with one another as equals and with respect. They can also make sure that the arrangement remains inclusive for diverse people.

*An enabling city:* Local leaders argue that the attitude of the City of Rotterdam towards local governance arrangements is the most important factor determining the success of the arrangements. The City can support the arrangements by acknowledging their importance for the community, by recognising the significance of and collaborating with 'best persons', the people who initiate and lead successful local social initiatives (Van den Brink et al., 2012) and by giving initiatives more responsibilities. In addition, project leaders argue that in the allocation of money, it helps the initiatives when the City and district government can 'think out of the box': in terms of local qualities and needs rather than in terms of regulations. Many local initiatives do not meet all criteria of municipal subsidy schemes, for instance when they focus at a specific group, when they provide a broad range of activities, or when they are innovative in other ways. The City could better support the initiatives by not strictly applying the criteria for the allocation of subsidy, or by developing criteria that better allow local initiatives to apply.

The main factors of failure are as follows:

*Insufficient funding and support:* Local initiatives that solely depend on the state for their existence are in a vulnerable position. The national and City governments in the Netherlands are carrying out large budget cuts on funding of local initiatives, particularly those that primarily aim at social cohesion or that target a specific social group (Tersteeg et al., 2014). Partly because of this, most local initiatives experience budget shortages. Some examined initiatives are unwilling to look for alternative support structures, such as private funders. Nevertheless, more often the nature of local initiatives (as facilities for low-income groups and for communities), makes it hard for them to attract these funders. An interviewee argues about Another Chance, an institution for criminal youths in Rotterdam with multiple problems: "*what private parties would have an interest in helping 'the drain' of Rotterdam?*" [Research Director of The Far Mountains Foundation]. In addition, social enterprises often do not want to depend on (municipal) subsidies because the requirements of sponsors are not in line with their social and/or commercial goals. As several examined initiatives

were found to fill important niches in urban policy for vulnerable groups in Rotterdam, the low budgets of district governments for such initiatives together with the policy discourse that community facilities should be self-reliant, even when the community is poor, could be seen as failure factors.

*Competition for resources and short-term subsidy schemes:* at present, local initiatives compete with one another for short-term municipal subsidy schemes as municipal budgets for local initiatives are increasingly limited. According to interviewed project leaders, this competition and the absence of structural funding cause a loss of social and financial capital. In the last decade, Feijenoord was home to numerous local initiatives that have only existed shortly. Project leaders argue that the City does not grant local initiatives time to learn. When a subsidy scheme ends, unsuccessful initiatives are withheld new subsidies, causing a waste of invested costs and discontinuity in the community. The City could encourage local initiatives to join forces when applying for funding, and they could provide more continuity in subsidies for local initiatives.

*A lack of skilled volunteers:* Another challenge for local initiatives in low-income communities in the district of Feijenoord is a lack of volunteers who can perform complex and responsible (managerial) tasks. Such tasks are often carried out by external volunteers and/or professionals. As the area has few high-skilled residents, those who volunteer at local governance arrangements are charged with high workloads, interviewees explain. The initiatives would be more successful if more local residents with high social-economic statuses would participate. However, involving these residents can be a challenge.

### **New ideas for innovative policies and governance concepts**

From the analysis of the governance arrangements a few innovative approaches have emerged. Such approaches could be used when setting up new initiatives. The most important ones are:

*A personalised approach:* A one-size-fits all approach does not fit in a hyper-diverse society. When taking hyper-diversity seriously, participants in initiatives will always be different from each other and will always require differential approaches within the initiative. This takes energy, knowledge and personal interest in the individual and his or her capabilities, interests and preferences. Important lessons can be learnt from the personalised approaches of the examined local initiatives, which allow them to respond well to local needs. A clear example of this approach is *Another Chance*, an initiative that supports a group of marginalised young people, whom regular social services fail to reach. They do this e.g. by looking very well at the personal needs and personal circumstances of each participant, thereby avoiding a general approach (see pages 11-14).

*A sharing approach:* Facilitating meaningful exchanges between a diverse group of participants provides opportunities for generating social mobility, relatively fast and at low-cost. By organising activities in which participants share knowledge and skills, participants develop themselves and educate one another. A diverse group of participants can be attracted by offering activities in which the target group share an objective. This allows them to connect, despite of their other differences. The *Flywheel*, a woman's centre that aims at increasing social mobility of local women through courses, provides excellent examples of such a sharing approach. It for instance stimulates local women to share cooking practices with and give language courses to one another through which the participants improve their knowledge on these matters and learn about teaching (see pages 16-18).

*An outreaching approach:* By actively approaching the target groups and welcoming them to participate, initiatives can reach and cater well to a diverse audience, particularly to people whom

regular policy find hard to reach. The target groups can be reached by visiting them in their own spaces and places and by making use of the social networks of participants. The culture, music and arts festival *Spectacle at the Cape* provides a good example of this strategy. The festival has successfully attracted new and existing resident groups by regularly visiting activities of local initiatives and institutions of both groups, promoting the festival at people's homes, and by using the networks of (diverse) participants to create a balanced group of participants (see pages 7-9).

*An unconventional approach:* Unconventional approaches can help to address groups of people who regular social services find hard to reach, to cater well to temporary local needs and to utilise existing local qualities. This is clearly demonstrated in the young people's movement *B.R.I.G.H.T.N.E.S.S.* It was founded, when the mother of a deceased local rapper observed a need of her sons' followers for a safe and caring environment to come together. Therefore, she enabled a meeting place, started to cook and care for them and encouraged them to develop their (e.g. music, business and organisational) talents. Regular social services often cannot reach, let alone support the participants, who often experience complex social problems. The mother's unconventional approach allows her to reach and support this group (see pages 14-16).

*Using (ethnic) diversity as a selling point:* Ethnically and socially diverse neighbourhoods can provide good business opportunities. Indeed, several local governance arrangements in Feijenoord illustrate that diversity can be a selling point. The social enterprise *The Neighbourhood Kitchen of South*, where women with diverse ethnicities and cooking talents prepare caterings, provides a good example of how local ethnic and cultural diversity can be turned into an economic value and a learning school for participants (see pages 23-25).

## 4. Conclusions

This report has examined local governance arrangements in the district of Feijenoord, Rotterdam that aim at increasing social cohesion, social mobility and/or economic performance. We have examined how urban diversity is perceived and used in local governance arrangements in Rotterdam. We have not sought to determine the extent to which these initiatives really work, or if participants are satisfied or not. The main focus was on identifying key factors contributing to the success or failure of the initiatives and to find new ideas for innovative policies and governance concepts regarding urban diversity.

In a previous study we have identified dominant policy discourses regarding diversity in Dutch national policy and Rotterdam's urban policy (see Tersteeg et al., 2014). On several matters, the perceptions and uses of urban diversity in local initiatives in Rotterdam contrast sharply with those in urban and national policy:

- Urban policy in Rotterdam pays relatively little attention to diversity, while many examined local initiatives deliberately build upon diversity to achieve their goals: the arrangements aim at fostering social cohesion by enabling positive exchanges between diverse people; they aim at increasing social mobility by generating a flywheel effect: participants educate one another; to stimulate entrepreneurship, the initiatives use diversity as a selling-point or a strategy to raise social capital.
- While national and urban policy promote a mainstream approach, in which policy is meant to target all citizens in the City rather than specific groups, local initiatives acknowledge and anticipate to the diverse characteristics of participants.
- In urban policy diversity is mostly conceptualised narrowly, as a matter of ethnicity and ethnic diversity is presented as a problem rather than an asset (Tersteeg et al., 2014). In contrast, local initiatives use a broad definition of diversity and most see diversity as a



social and economic quality or opportunity. An integrationalist and assimilationist discourse respectively underlie Dutch national policy and urban policy in Rotterdam, on the matter of diversity. Instead, without ignoring the difficulties that particularly ethnic and cultural diversity can bring, a welcoming, pluralist discourse underlies the approaches of the local initiatives.

- Another important matter in which governance arrangements at the local and city level differ is their objective: for many local initiatives fostering social cohesion is a key goal, while for current urban policy in Rotterdam it is not (Tersteeg et al., 2014).

The study generates four insights for policy-making in Rotterdam. First, it is important that policy makers at the city level recognise the value and become more supportive of local governance arrangements, particularly in disadvantaged areas. The initiatives in Feijenoord are important for the City because they support marginalised groups, contribute to social cohesion, social mobility and entrepreneurship and teach policy makers about innovative, positive and context-sensitive approaches to diversity. Although it would be better for local initiatives to have a variety of parties supporting and subsidising their existence, many of such initiatives in a low-income area such as Feijenoord do depend solely on public funding. This is because the local and social nature of the initiatives makes it difficult for them to attract private funds, the initiatives lack extensive professional support networks and there is a lack of local residents who are able to contribute financially or willing to carry out complex managerial tasks. The City could support local initiatives financially (e.g. by employing local leaders) or by helping them to develop alternative financial support structures. Also, the City could focus more on local needs, or develop criteria that better allow the local initiatives to apply. In Rotterdam, local initiatives often do not fit the criteria of municipal subsidy schemes, for instance because they operate in multiple policy fields. In addition, policy makers could provide more continuity in funding and encourage local initiatives to collaborate. We find that the present competition among local initiatives for short-term resources causes a loss of social capital for the neighbourhood.

Second, a multidisciplinary and tailored approach is needed to cater well to the complex and dynamic local needs of communities. The mainstream and standardised nature of current social services appears particularly inadequate for people who face multiple (social) problems. The inclusive, flexible and individualised approaches of local governance arrangements successfully fill this policy gap.

Third, local project leaders appear key for the success of local governance arrangements, but their importance is often not acknowledged by policy makers. They have extensive (local) social networks through which they provide local residents with useful connections. Furthermore, their profound understanding of local (ethnic and cultural) interests and needs can provide policy makers with crucial information when developing and implementing new policies. Therefore, policy makers, communities, local initiatives and their leaders, would all benefit when policy makers listen more to, support and collaborate more with project leaders to profit from their contextual knowledge, social networks and experience.

Finally, ethnically diverse, low-income communities possess many qualities that policy makers often do not acknowledge nor use: knowledge and skills in e.g. arts and culture, domestic care, business, catering, languages, management and organisation, music, raising children, sewing and sports. In Feijenoord, local initiatives see and profit from these qualities to encourage social cohesion, social mobility and economic performance among local residents. They do this by providing a platform for people to develop their talents and to achieve new skills. Policy makers can learn from this enabling, positive approach of the local initiatives to better support residents in disadvantaged areas.

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## 6. Appendix

### List of the interviewed persons

- A coordinator and manager at the Experimental Garden
- A coordinator at Monteiro Gym at the Experimental Garden
- A leader of the Knitting Club at the Experimental Garden
- A coordinator at the Community Shop at the Experimental Garden
- An executive at the Community Fathers at the Experimental Garden
- A director of Spectacle at the Cape (Cultuur Energie Katendrecht)
- An executive at Community Centre De Steiger at Katendrecht
- A resident and promoter of the Do-it-yourself Houses Project
- A resident and promoter of the Do-it-yourself Houses Project
- The director of Another Chance
- The founder and leader of B.R.I.G.H.T.N.E.S.S.
- A manager at The Flywheel
- The director of the Primary School the Bloemhof
- The founder of Pact op Zuid
- The community manager of the Creative Factory
- An owner and founder of the Neighbourhood Kitchen of South
- The manager of the Neighbourhood Kitchen of South
- A coordinator at the Neighbourhood Cooperation Afrikaander neighbourhood
- A professional at the Neighbourhood Cooperation Afrikaander neighbourhood
- The research director of the Far Mountains Foundation

### List of the participants of the round-table talk

**Date:** June 27, 2014.

**Place:** The Neighbourhood Kitchen of South, Rotterdam.

**Participants:**

#### *Policy Platform members*

- A senior advisor at the Rotterdam Knowledge Centre on Diversity
- A senior policy advisor at the Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations
- A policy advisor at the Societal Development department of the City of Rotterdam
- The director of the Rotterdam Knowledge Centre on Emancipation (Dona Daria)
- A senior policy advisor at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment
- A senior policy advisor at the Research and Business Intelligence department of the City of Rotterdam

*Leaders of local initiatives*

- The director of Another Chance
- An architect at We Love the City (for the Experimental Garden)
- The founder and leader of B.R.I.G.H.T.N.E.S.S
- A founder of the Neighbourhood Kitchen and advisor at the Neighbourhood Cooperation
- The director of I am Based in South
- A manager at the Flywheel

*Other*

- The founder of Pedagogisch Engagement (local informant)
- A master student in Urban Geography from Utrecht University

*Facilitators*

- The *three* authors of the report