



WILCO

Welfare innovations
at the local level
in favour of cohesion

WORK PACKAGE 4

URBAN POLICY INNOVATIONS IN LOCAL WELFARE IN AMSTERDAM, NETHERLANDS

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1. GENERAL VALUES

The image of Amsterdam, especially in an international context, is generally that of being an open-minded, tolerant, and progressive city. Within the Netherlands, it is often said how Amsterdam ‘always wants to do things differently’, and it is commonly referred to as ‘arrogant’. And indeed, Amsterdam cherishes its image and it is certainly proud - proud of its (social/scenic) structures, proud of its (multicultural/alternative) people, and proud of its (creative/avanguardist) reputation. As the most recent coalition agreement also states: “Amsterdam is innovative. Amsterdam is different and always surprises. Amsterdam is a city in which you can be free, in which you change, emancipate, and where belief in the future and in progress are the core of existence” (Program Agreement 2010-2014).

At the same time, Amsterdam is increasingly torn - between wanting to be a ‘social’ city on the one hand, and a ‘competitive’ city on the other. The fact that the Labor Party (*Partij van de Arbeid*, or PvdA) has been the largest party in the municipal council since the end of the Second World War (and the mayor of Amsterdam has been a member of the PvdA ever since) indicates that Amsterdam is, to this day, a city that treasures a secure safety net for the more vulnerable segments of society. Yet, the fact that during the last two decades the municipal coalition (currently composed of the PvdA, VVD and GL) has included representatives from the left to the right side of the political spectrum shows that the stronger leftist tendencies once there in the past have made way for a more ‘moderated’ ideology. Whilst ‘equality’ and ‘solidarity’ are undoubtedly still defining values in the social and political mentality of Amsterdam, the city has, ‘progressively’, become more and more open to the ideas of ‘differentiation’ and ‘efficiency’.

Table 1 - Results of municipal elections in Amsterdam, council seats per party 1998-2010

	1998	2002	2006	2010
PvdA	15	15	20	15
VVD	9	9	8	8
GL	7	6	7	7
SP	3	4	6	3
CDA	3	4	2	2
D66	4	3	2	7
Other parties	4	4	-	3
Total	45	45	45	45

PvdA - Labor Party (*Partij van de Arbeid*)
VVD - Liberal Party (*Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie*)
GL - Green Party (*GroenLinks*)
SP - Socialist Party (*Socialistische Partij*)
CDA - Christian-Democratic Party (*Christen-Democratisch Appèl*)
D66 - Social-Liberal Party (*Democraten '66*)

Nonetheless, due to the fact that the PvdA has long been the largest party, Amsterdam as a whole has generally retained a rather generous welfare system that sought to ‘protect’ and ‘support’ its citizens and community/welfare organizations. As a result, it is also the municipality with the largest proportionate number of civil servants in the Netherlands: a recent study (Berenschot, 2012) claims there are 19 civil servants per 1000 inhabitants in Amsterdam, while other large municipalities have an average of 11 civil servants per 1000

habitants - the cost of which is estimated to be 7900 euros per inhabitant in Amsterdam, against 6400 euros in Rotterdam, and 4400 euros in Utrecht and The Hague.¹

It must be noted, though, that Amsterdam is (at the moment at least still) subdivided in seven city districts (*stadsdelen*) all of which have their own Council, Aldermen, and budget.² In functional terms, city districts hold a position that is very similar to that of any other municipality and, especially, they carry similar responsibilities regarding the provision of local welfare services/facilities. Hence, depending on the coalitions within the district councils, city districts can - within a certain municipal framework - also set their own priorities and give their own twist to the way in which certain welfare services are provided. Although this constellation of smaller, fairly autonomous districts within a larger municipality allows these districts to focus more on the specific needs of a certain area, this also means that in every district there are different services, different ways of organizing these services, and different welfare organizations providing these services. Subsequently, to this day, there are a particularly large number of actors involved in the provision of welfare services and the organization of welfare within Amsterdam is rather compartmentalized.

Hence, an occurrence that matters for the way in which Amsterdam currently approaches (and perceives) the provision of local welfare services was the introduction of the national 'Neighborhood Development Program' (*wijkaanpak*) in 2007 - an integrated, more holistic approach toward neighborhood regeneration that, next to carrying out major physical renovations, also intended to enhance the 'livability' (*leefbaarheid*) in a selection of so-called 'problem areas', i.e. disadvantaged neighborhoods. In Amsterdam, besides the fact that the *wijkaanpak* pushed for a change in the modus operandi of (third sector) welfare organizations by encouraging new and collaborative alliances between the many actors that were operating at the local level, thus restating 'the neighborhood' as the focal point of welfare policies, as the municipal program manager of the *wijkaanpak* stressed, it also gave the municipality a (political) justification to apply a more differentiating approach:

We as government of course have the tendency to give everybody the same, our entire bureaucracy is centered around that: transparency, controllable, testable, not one thing more and the other less, fairness... all those kinds of ideals - which are a great good. But what the 'wijkaanpak' actually did, through the central government, is saying: 'No, there are areas that are substantially sadder than other areas. Why sadder? Because there are a lot of people living there who are weak, sick, and nauseous - I often use this kind of politically charged wording; I want to move away from the policy-jargon. [...] And often the houses and the provisions there are also not that great. So it's an area that has an accumulation of problems, and that's why it deserves a different kind of policy, that's why you can deviate. That's why you can treat different cases, areas, neighborhoods, target groups, differently. And you may wonder what is so innovative about that?

¹ <http://www.berenschot.nl/actueel/nieuws/nieuws/nieuws-2012/berenschot-verwacht/>

² The first city districts in Amsterdam were established in the beginning of the 1980s. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s more city districts were created and others were fused together again. From 2002 to 2010 there were fourteen city districts, and in 2010 these were reduced to seven. At present, there is a discussion about the elimination of city districts all together - politically (separate Councils, Aldermen, and budgets would be eliminated), rather than administratively (boundaries/tasks would remain).

But in a city like Amsterdam, that's pretty innovative (Municipal program manager 'Wijkaanpak').

In fact, as several interviewees underlined, the value of equality has always played an important role within municipal politics in the sense that 'everybody is equal, and everybody shall be treated equally'. Welfare policies highlighting socio-economic or cultural differences between (groups of) people have, for a long time, been looked at with dismay. Instead, policies based on the notions of 'citizenship' and 'diversity' are meant to emphasize that everyone is, above all, a so-called 'Amsterdammer':

The fact that 50% of the population has, in one way or another, a relation with a country abroad, means that Amsterdam is compelled to say: that is the normal situation, and it is not a matter of needing an 'integration policy', because everybody has to undertake something, so let's call it a 'diversity policy'. So the thought that everybody has to do something, that's the most important in the ideology of Amsterdam. And then one of the main themes is that of social cohesion. [...] That's how Amsterdam looks at it. The idea that 'we need to have an integration policy for allochthones' - they are surly about that, because they think that everybody has to integrate into something new. Meaning it's not just the allochthones that have to do something to be part of it. They are against that kind of reasoning (Assistant Professor, Dept. of Pol. Science, UvA).

In practice, Amsterdam aspires to be an all-inclusive city, in every sense of the word. On the one hand, Amsterdam clearly wants all of its inhabitants, regardless of their socio-economic and cultural background, to have equal opportunities to succeed in life - and it encourages this by supporting an extensive welfare system and by subsidizing a wide range of welfare organizations that target all sorts of different groups/issues. On the other hand, it also wants to be a city that is attractive for everyone to live and to study in, but also to visit and to conduct business. Thus, at the moment, it seems Amsterdam is still looking to find the right balance between the 'social' and the 'competitive' sides of the city.

In 2004, the city launched the (ongoing) city-marketing campaign 'I Amsterdam'. Besides clearly marking Amsterdam's international ambitions, this campaign actually captures the

I amsterdam.

spirit of the city pretty well in that it implies that all individuals are part of Amsterdam, and Amsterdam is, in turn, made by all those individuals. What is more, that it utilizes the 'I' form fits well with the more individualized conception of society that has been gaining ground throughout the past couple of decades. In fact, increasingly so, in local welfare policies too, self-responsibility and self-reliance are explicitly stated/targeted 'ideals'. For example, Amsterdam introduced a 'new vision' of the Law of Societal Development (*Wet Maatschappelijke Ontwikkeling*, or WMO) - whose implementation is a shared responsibility between the municipality and the city districts and concerns the provision of welfare services for people 'with limitations', including (among others) the elderly, people with a handicap or psychological problems, as well as people with financial problems. This 'new vision' of the WMO - the 'New Style of Welfare' (*Welzijn Nieuwe Stijl*) - is specifically based on more self-responsibility and self-reliance: it expects 'Amsterdammers' to look more for possible solutions to their problems on their own, within their own networks.

The idea of 'active citizenship' is actually not new to the people of Amsterdam who, in the last couple of decades, have repeatedly shown - with a large squatting movement, for

instance - to comprise many actively engaged citizens. Nonetheless, as the excerpt of the municipal coalition agreement below also suggests, the way in which the local government seems to understand this notion of 'active citizenship' today is, in particular, as 'actively participating in the labor market'. Obviously, different parties in the municipal coalition may have different viewpoints on how to encourage participation (in the labor market), but, by and large, the political thought is now that economic development comes first, and social development shall follow (rather than the other way around).

We choose to grow economically, to strengthen socially, and to invest sustainably. We focus on the economic growth of Amsterdam and on work for all 'Amsterdammers', to be able to face the economic crisis together as best as we can and to make the city financially stronger. We strengthen the social structures of the city by engaging everyone and approaching everyone on the basis of their capacities. We invest in a sustainable city, physically and socially (Program Agreement 2010-2014).

2. SECTORIAL VALUES

2.1. Unemployment

That Amsterdam desires to be a social/supportive city and a competitive/efficient city at the same time is clearly visible in its approach towards unemployment. On one hand, the municipality wishes to uphold a secure safety net to support those citizens who cannot, independently, make ends meet. On the other hand, benefits are not to be handed out 'just like that', without any control and, especially, without asking something in return. An expression that was used by several of the interviewees was the Dutch expression: 'voor wat hoort wat', meaning: 'if you want to get something, you also have to do something'. This basically sums up the way in which Amsterdam has dealt with unemployment the last 10 years: the municipality supports the unemployed - with guidance, trainings, and/or social assistance benefits - but the unemployed are expected to contribute as well - by engaging in some sort of 'developmental' and/or 'productive' activity. Essentially, as the chairman of the social assistance association (*Bijstandsbond*) also explained, this has been the city's approach towards unemployment since the late 1980s. What has clearly changed, however, is the intensity with which the municipality is asking for something in return.

They actually started having reorientations talks with the unemployed in 1987. So actually the change happened in the late 1980s. Until that time people still looked at unemployment as a social problem that you as an individual...how shall I put it? It was a structural societal problem that there was a lack of jobs, and implemented policies had to create more jobs and there were projects where jobless people would be accommodated. People didn't consider it as an individual problem of the unemployed themselves. And in the late 1980s they started a policy with which, by molding the unemployed labor force and teaching them knowledge and skills, they tried to make people ready for the labor market. So unemployment became an individual problem of the unemployed. [...] And they started with that policy and those reorientations talks in 1987 here in Amsterdam. They started calling up all the unemployed. Before they didn't do that so much. [...] And they started summoning the unemployed to see what they could do and what they couldn't. And they would measure what

their limitations were and what not, and on the basis of that people were being pressured to accept all sorts of work. [...] And, well, that policy developed itself further and further (Chairman social assistance association).

In fact, during the last ten years, Amsterdam has sought (under pressure of the central government also) to reduce its large number of social assistance recipients. In 2001, ca. 50.000 people were receiving social assistance benefits from the municipal Work & Income Service. By 2010 this number had declined to less than 35.000. Focusing on people's capacities (rather than limitations), developing these, and finding a way to match these with the labor market is one of the courses that Amsterdam pursued. At the same time, though, the municipality also toughened the 'requirements' and tightened its control in an attempt to avoid/curb fraud. As the following excerpt of the current Program Agreement shows, Amsterdam intends to continue this 'supporting' yet 'controlling' approach:

In Amsterdam, work is the target, and participation is the norm. The coalition is keen on policies targeting work and re-integration. That means investing in the upper and lower segment of the labor market and in the development of 'Amsterdammers' on different levels. To counter the disintegration of measures for the lower segment of the labor market we support the plans to reach a single measure, implemented by the (large) municipalities. Conditions are fairness and affordability. In addition there is room for provisions to keep 'Amsterdammers' at work in times of crisis. Part of the system is good monitoring and tackling improper use of the facilities (Program Agreement 2010-2014).

One of the main changes that took place during the last decade in Amsterdam's approach towards unemployment is that during the first years the reintegration of the unemployed was privatized, and so-called reintegration companies were hired by the municipality to guide the unemployed back into the labor market, while during the more recent years, the reintegration programs have been organized by the municipality itself. Not only in Amsterdam but in the whole of the Netherlands a fierce discussion arose about the efficiency (and integrity) of private reintegration companies, and this eventually led Amsterdam to stop contracting private reintegration companies and take matters into their own hands again. Since then, the municipality has continuously tried to create more 'learn-work tracks'/'participation places' for the unemployed - either themselves or with (subsidized) social enterprises/welfare organizations - and to 'match' the unemployed with possible employers. Although the parties in the municipal council generally agree that reintegration of the unemployed into the labor market is crucial, there have been significant differences of opinion, between parties but also within, as to whom exactly this applies to, how to accomplish this, and the role that various actors should play in the process. Some would want a more rigorous approach (VVD), others a more lenient one (PvdA/GL). Some prefer to focus on improving the personalized guidance/mediation into the labor market (PvdA/SP), others prefer to invest in broadening educational/training programs (GL/D66). In the end, however, the PvdA - being the largest party to this date - often gets its way, albeit in a somewhat compromised version. Hence, the 'everybody shall be treated equally' rule generally still counts. Yet, following large budget cuts, the council eventually agreed to implement more targeted, and thus diversifying policies:

In the first phase [...] the task was to get everybody - regardless of their distance from the labor market - to be active in one way or another. And that was 'active' in the sense of taking steps towards finding a job or 'actively' participating in society. Participation was

a very broad concept. So that could be, so to say, going to a community center, if you hadn't been outside the house the past year, except maybe to do some groceries. So: mingle with the people, become socially active, participate. And there was a kind of mentality behind it that from drinking coffee you would move on to pouring coffee - becoming active in that community center. And from there that you maybe become active in a bit broader of a circle, in volunteering or something that looks more like a regular job, and then eventually you would end up in one of the re-integration programs. [...] The problem, though, was that our attention for that whole group was very splintered. We had a lot of money - we had 220 million euros to spend on re-integration programs - and that was divided over all those people and all those groups. And then in 2010 came the big central cutbacks, so that was actually the second turning point. [...] That's when we said: 'we are no longer going to invest in the activation of everybody, but we are going to make choices and we choose for the people with the shortest distance to the labor market. [...] I think 10 years ago we would not have been able to do that. But in 2010 yes, because the crisis and the fact that you have to choose, because there is much less money, well that's the deciding factor. And then the question is how can you, justly, make a distinction? Do you have valid arguments to say ok if we have to choose, we choose this? And we had those, especially the fact that there were more people going back to work like this, that everybody that has a chance in getting a job should be invested in. Because that is very important, both for those people and for society. And like that you save money, which you can maybe invest into other groups then. As long as you guarantee that you do not forget the people that really need assistance. In the end it is an in-between-group, one that does not harm themselves or their environment, but who does not have a lot of chances of getting a job either, who gets the least attention. And that hurts. But all in all it was the most acceptable way of distinguishing cases, so to say. [...] Those have been heavy discussions in the council and if the money hadn't become less, it probably would never have changed. But sometimes the external circumstances are such that you also have to make different considerations (Director municipal Work & Income Service).

Obviously, Amsterdam too is obliged to comply with certain national policies/regulations, especially as the funds that are available for the implementation of local unemployment policies depend on the central government. During the last ten years, Amsterdam has been granted a fairly large amount of governmental funding to support the reintegration of the relatively high share of jobless 'Amsterdammers'. In the past, the municipality's main measure against unemployment was to subsidize (social) enterprises and make it attractive for employers to hire somebody 'with limitations'. Although nationwide such subsidized forms of employment have largely been cancelled, Amsterdam, with its PvdA stronghold, is one of the few cities in the Netherlands that has not yet stopped supporting subsidized jobs. The number of subsidized positions have, however, greatly been reduced - not only on request of the local fraction of the VVD but also, and perhaps especially, as a result of the national course. Instead, during the last decade, unemployment policies in Amsterdam have primarily concentrated on structuring the labor force rather than the labor market. In fact, the struggle against unemployment nowadays is clearly centered on (re-)shaping, and increasingly 'disciplining', the unemployed who do not meet the demands of the labor

market, for one reason or another. Instead, the structure of the labor market itself is not questioned, and in this sense, neither is the competitive side of Amsterdam.

It is interesting to notice that 'regular' businesses are not much involved in the efforts to counter unemployment, nor are they really targeted by unemployment policies. While the VVD is eager to reduce the number of welfare recipients, it also remains a fierce opponent of interfering in the market and imposing conditions on private firms. Upon insistence of the PvdA, the municipality now has a 'social return' deal with its (sub)contractors, whereby these latter are compelled to provide learning programs and traineeships for the unemployed, but these tend to be confined to very specific sectors of the economy (e.g. construction). Also, PvdA and GL have launched several large campaigns (including anti-discrimination ones) to persuade businesses to offer more traineeships and engage in the fight against unemployment, but so far these have had rather limited results.

In practice, while the left parties would want the private sector to take on their share of responsibilities as well, it is the local government and (third sector) welfare organizations (though increasingly social enterprises too) that organize the reintegration programs and provide 'learn-work tracks'. Moreover, as unemployment has mainly affected people with a lower education, and often cases with an 'accumulation of problems' (debts, drug abuse, teen parenthood, etc.), the city developed what is called a chain-approach (*ketenaanpak*), in which different (welfare) organizations handle different aspects of a particular case. Such an approach has long been used in the struggle against youth unemployment, as that was (until recently at least) typically associated to a discussion about youngsters that had gone 'off track'. While this means there is an extensive network of organizations that offer 'customized' care to the (young) unemployed, it also shows how unemployment policies are oriented towards the vulnerable rather than the strong.

You know the saying right, that if you save one person, you save mankind. And that's... you can never never never deny that that is not true. But on the other hand, that you as a municipality, as the city of Amsterdam, invest 1 billion euros per year in social affairs... yea, then I would also like to invest some money - since we are wasting so much of it - in some more successful youngsters once. That you approach it differently. We have a lot of smart and creative people here. They are going to help. And they are going to become the entrepreneurs of the future. They will give the city an economic boost and then they will need somebody that does the security, or the catering, or a gardener...and they will bring an added value across that whole line. They are going to generate business. And the more work there is, the bigger the chances that the weaker brothers come into the picture again. Because when there is demand, then Henkie, and Sjakie, and Achmed will all get a job, because they'll be jumping for people (Advisor municipal Work & Income Service).

In the meanwhile, during the last decade, and in particular since Marcouch (PvdA) and Baâdoud (PvdA) became important political figures in the city districts/municipal council - both of which are firm opponents of any sort of differential treatment for 'allochthonen' - the role of (third sector) welfare organizations has been somewhat more contested. Whilst many welfare organizations are praised for the work that they do in recruiting unemployed youngsters and redirecting them to school or to the labor market, the debate is growing about the extent to which these organizations are actually 'babying' youngsters rather than 'activating' them. More and more, even within the PvdA, the view appears to be that

welfare organizations are there to help the unemployed and to stimulate them, but they should not necessarily be ‘pampering’ everyone.

I would like to be stricter for some. Also youngsters that live at home and get the full load (of social assistance benefits) - you ruin people like that. Because you buy luxurious things, you go out...all that is useless. There are a lot of youngsters who are unrightfully getting benefits, because they all have their own little businesses too. In my opinion, [...] in a group of 10, there are always 3 that do not belong there. That's my idea. They just fuck the system. And that goes at the expense of solidarity. So I think, in such cases we have to be stricter, and think: 'too bad'. And the people that really can't, they could get a little more as far as I'm concerned. So they are able to live a bit more decent of a life. It's already bad enough if you cannot find a job anywhere. So then give those people a bit more so they can rise above the poverty line. And then invent something that they can do, which they enjoy (Advisor municipal Work & Income Service).

In fact, especially in more recent years, the idea of ‘efficiency’ has also infiltrated the municipality itself. Whilst the PvdA has long endorsed a large public administration and upheld an intricate system of local welfare provision, at present decreasing budgets and the general economic climate in the Netherlands force Amsterdam too to reconsider the way in which its municipality is functioning - other than ‘social’, a priority now is to ‘be efficient’. Whilst all parties are aware of the fact that the municipality is going to have to achieve more with less, there are, once again, considerable differences regarding the way in which the municipality could effectively economize. Yet, the continuing dominance of the PvdA makes altering long established traditions a slow process:

There was an article in the newspaper the other day, about the top 25 employers here in Amsterdam - so the 25 largest employers in Amsterdam. And I'm not lying: there were 23 or 24 governmental or semi-governmental institutions in that top 25 of employers. We, of course, as Sovietsky Amsterdamsky on numero uno. [...] And that's why we have problems on the labor market - because the government has to save money now. So they are going to get rid of people. And I wonder if we should even be doing this. I hope it becomes a real good crisis now, so that we have to do things more efficiently. Because otherwise it will stay like this. In my opinion, something first has to happen. We first have to have absolutely no money anymore before we start doing things more efficiently (Advisor municipal Work & Income Service).

Overall, the discourse concerning unemployment in Amsterdam has accepted the fact that the city is based on a competitive economy and that “the market is always right, whatever you may think of that”. Hence, it is the unemployed that should adapt themselves to the demands of that economy. To make it in city like Amsterdam where much of the economy is based on highly specialized sectors, the unemployed are expected to invest more time and effort into their education and training. ‘Supporting’ these developments and ‘steering’ the unemployed back into the labor market is still viewed as a primary task of the municipality. However, the previously undisputed value of ‘solidarity’ is presently confronted with that of ‘control’ - to be able to maintain a secure safety net for those who cannot participate, it is not to be taken advantage of by those who can.

2.2. Childcare

As was also mentioned in the country report (WP2), in the Netherlands, there are different kinds of pre-school childcare provisions: private daycare centers (*kinderdagverblijven*) for 0 to 4 year olds, municipally funded toddler playrooms (*peuterspeelzalen*) for 2 to 4 year olds, and state funded preschools (*voorscholen*) for 2,5 to 4 year olds. Daycare centers were, since the beginning, meant to be a kind of service that would simply ‘care’ for young children during the day so as to enable parents (and then in particular women) to join the labor market. Instead, toddler playrooms have always had a more educational function - they were meant to enable children to socialize with other children of their age and ‘learn by playing’. Preschools started making an appearance about ten years ago, when the Ministry of Education introduced (and financed) ‘early educational programs’ (*voor- en vroegschoolse educatie*, or VVE) for children (with a foreign background mainly, though not exclusively) that had underdeveloped language skills. There were thus different rationales behind the emergence of these different types of services: daycare centers were primarily driven by an economic rationale, while toddler playrooms and preschools were driven by a more social/developmental rationale.

In Amsterdam, during the last decade, there have been two somewhat separate debates concerning the various types of childcare services for 0-4 year olds. On the one hand, there is a debate about private daycare centers, which, at first was more about ‘quantity’, and currently is all about ‘quality’. On the other hand, there is a discussion about public toddler playrooms and pre-schools, which has focused more on their ‘purpose’ and their ‘reach’. Remarkably, whilst the public discourse still seems to uphold (and experience) a fairly stark distinction between the different types of childcare services, in the political discourse, these have, slowly but surely, been coming closer together. Both of these debates, however, are clearly influenced by national trends/regulations.

Ten years ago, when daycare centers were still subsidized by the municipality and partially paid for by private companies/employers, there was not much debate about the provision of daycare services in Amsterdam. Yes, there was talk of long waiting lists for parents that wanted to place their children in a daycare facility, but there did not seem to be much discussion about the way in which daycare services were organized and/or regulated. Likewise, the nationally decided privatization of daycare centers in 2005 did not meet much resistance in Amsterdam. Although some (left/opposition) parties in the municipal council expressed concern about the way in which these daycare centers were going to be controlled, the idea that privatization would produce more daycare facilities (and thus more chances for parents to join the labor market) was, if not applauded, at least accepted by the parties of the municipal coalition. In fact, at the time, the municipal coalition (PvdA, VVD, and CDA) was already promoting active participation in the labor market. Hence, the fact that there were long waiting lists for parents to place their children in a daycare center in Amsterdam pushed even the more skeptical parties to ‘look at the bright side’ - a new market-driven approach to daycare was going to meet the (high) demand for daycare services faster than the old approach. And indeed, as the city report (WP3) also mentioned, daycare facilities were a booming business in Amsterdam in the years that followed the new Act on Childcare and waiting lists have basically vanished.

On the whole, until recently at least, daycare services have not been that important of a topic within municipal politics. Especially from the moment that daycare services were privatized and parents were compensated via the central government/tax offices, the only form of control that the municipality had over daycare facilities was through supervision. Of course, there were certain conditions daycare providers had to comply with, but, by and large, since 2005, daycare services have been treated as any other regular business: following pure market dynamics rather than any form of governmental intervention.

An event that had a huge impact on the way in which the municipality of Amsterdam (and the whole of the Netherlands for that matter) dealt with daycare services, though, was the discovery in 2010 that an employee of one of Amsterdam's daycare centers had been abusing a large number of toddlers in the daycare center as well as in their own homes. At that point, everyone demanded tighter regulations and stricter controls. And at that point, the organization and especially the supervision of daycare facilities became an immediate priority for the municipality. Since then, Amsterdam has tightened supervision procedures (even more so than they were bound by national law) and the municipality has sought to (re)gain more control over the organization of daycare services.

With the new Act on Childcare in 2005 there was a fundamental change in the municipal policy. [...] That's when they said: 'ok, it is now a private sector, so we are not going to do anything with that, they have to stimulate themselves and take care of themselves now'. And they cut it off quite rigorously then. But about that [...] the Mayor and the Alderman, Asscher (PvdA) was the Alderman at that time, they said 'well, that was actually very undesirable. And we don't want this. We are going to change this, and we are never going to let go. Because it concerns very young and vulnerable children. Those are our children in Amsterdam and we feel responsible, even though we aren't, we feel responsible for the welfare and the wellbeing of those children'. And the development of children too. Because as a municipality we are trying very hard to make sure that children, young children, go to school without any arrears. If you leave that up to daycare then you won't get that, it's not beneficial for the further progress of the children. So for several reasons the municipality then said: 'well, we are going to turn it back into a municipal policy-field (Municipal program manager 'Quality and Safety Childcare').

In fact, while day-'care' has perhaps not been a focal point of municipal policies during the last ten years, pre-'schooling' received more attention. Besides subsidizing numerous toddler playrooms since the 1970s, Amsterdam was among the first cities to offer 'early educational programs' (VVE) to young children, and it has constantly been expanding the reach of such programs. To this day, this is an important target of the municipal coalition:

The chances to succeed in school start with mastering the language. Before children get to primary school, it is important that they master the Dutch language sufficiently. The pre-school gives children the opportunity to learn the language better. It is important that as many children as possible with language arrears profit from this. We want pre-schools to reach children as best as they can. To prevent segregation through pre-schooling it is desirable that every primary school in Amsterdam collaborates with a pre-school. 'Integrated schools' ('brede scholen') where childcare facilities are intelligently combined can help with that (Program Agreement 2010-2014).

In theory, VVE programs/pre-schools could be offered both by private daycare centers and public toddler playrooms, provided they meet certain requirements. In practice, at the moment at least, in Amsterdam they are mainly offered in toddler playrooms, over which the municipality has always had a greater influence, since - as a basic welfare provision - they are also funded by the municipality.

In reality, in the Netherlands, private daycare centers have always been distinguished from public playrooms, and, in the public discourse, these two have generally been addressed with very different tones (see country report). In Amsterdam too, toddler playrooms are usually placed in a better light - when playrooms are discussed in the news, for instance, the emphasis is typically on their positive features; almost all articles in local media that report on toddler playrooms mention how they are an indispensable welfare provision for the development of children (especially 'allochthonen'), suggesting that they are a kind of facility that the municipality should treasure. Instead, all throughout the past decade, daycare centers have been approached with much more suspicion - even before the tragic incident, when daycare centers made it to the news it was more often for the things they did wrong than for the things they did right. Moreover, local media generally highlight the idea that daycare centers should do more than 'just caring' for children, but should also be stimulating their development. Overall, it seems the public discourse in Amsterdam has long been hinting at the fact that the municipality should have more control over what happens in daycare centers, just like it does in toddler playrooms/preschools.

At the moment, due to national regulations/legislations that separate the various kinds of services, Amsterdam too is compelled to apply different (legal/financial) frameworks to different kinds of pre-school facilities. It should be noted, however, that the field of pre-school childcare is relatively 'new' in the Netherlands, and it is one that has gone through many and rapid changes during the past ten years. Amsterdam, like all other big cities, is still trying to define its own approach towards pre-school services within certain (some say quite rigid) national frameworks. In any case, the social/developmental rationale is more and more outspoken than the economic rationale. In fact, the municipality is increasingly applying developmental 'standards' in its assessment of regular day'care' facilities too.

Furthermore,

what the municipality wants now - and Alderman Hilhorst (PvdA) wrote a letter about that together with the G4 (i.e. Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht, The Hague), he's not alone in that - [...] he wants to get rid of the difference between toddler playrooms, day care centers, and pre-schools. It should be more of an integrated, basic provision for everyone that also collaborates with primary schools. Because our Alderman is not only the Alderman of day care and youth, but also of education. Because what you see in Amsterdam is that about half of the children, young children, are coping with arrears when they go to school by the age of 4. Because of the language alone already, because they do not speak Dutch at home. And if you have arrears in school, if you start like that, then it is difficult to catch up. So the whole idea of Amsterdam is to focus as much as possible on the prevention of that, to make sure that a young child is well developed in all fields. And that also means that you have to get rid of all those different categories, because that also encourages segregation a lot. Then you get that in toddler playrooms, or pre-schools for children of so-called 'target groups', children that are lagging behind in some way, that they are placed there. And those are in specific neighborhoods; so then they all get together in a little club. And then you have day care centers that are more for the highly educated, working parents. And that's how you get very different groups, and that's not very practical. Not practical for several reasons, also because children learn a lot from each other. So if you have more mixed groups, in which you have children that speak the language well and who are used it, then, by playing, they will pull the rest of the

children with them. So there are a lot of goals involved in this kind of policy (Municipal program manager 'Quality and Safety Childcare').

Hence, it seems that Amsterdam's principle of equality is, once again, pushing through - everybody should have an equal start/chance to succeed in school. It is following this (social/developmental) rationale that Amsterdam is now, together with other cities also, seeking to change the way in which pre-school services are organized/provided.

What you see is that schools are responsible for children from 4 to 12 years old. And actually you want to make that from 2,5 to 12. But if you let all sorts of different parties steer that...we think that's risky. So actually you would want the school to be responsible for that entire learning trajectory [...] And then the school can decide 3 things basically - it can say: we are going to do it ourselves, or we are going to hire a (private) day care service, or we are going to hire a toddler playroom or a welfare organization. We are not that far yet, but that is the direction that we would like to go now. [...] And we share that thought with the other large municipalities (Municipal team leader VVE program).

2.3. Housing and Urban Planning

In Amsterdam, housing and more broadly urban development is a fiercely debated policy-field. There is a basically not one municipal council meeting that does not address the issue of housing/real estate/urban development, and not a week goes by without the housing market reaching the headlines in the local media, for one reason or another. In fact, providing sufficient and adequate housing is, and has been all throughout the past ten years, one of the most challenging issues for Amsterdam. And in this case too, the tension between the 'social' and the 'competitive' side of Amsterdam is apparent. The chief editor of 'Nul20' - a magazine that is entirely dedicated to housing policies and urban development in the Amsterdam region (!) - nicely recaps the debate of the last ten years:

The main theme in Amsterdam has always been the housing shortage. [...] That's what it's all about really. [...] How do we get the production going? [...] And an important theme has been: whom are we building for? Because there is a new group of people coming to the city...or that wanted to settle there. There is a kind of tendency that families do not automatically move out of the city anymore, so we have to facilitate that. Besides, the average 'Amsterdammer' is becoming richer, so it is ridiculous to have a surplus of social housing. More houses have to be built for other groups as well, with a bit higher of an income, and with a bit more demands. So the gross of the newly built houses is actually, since the end of the 90s, and in any case since 2000, mainly focused on private ownership. [...] So that's one theme. But, [...] new social houses should also be built. That has always been an important theme in the city, that's really a traditional topic of the PvdA (Labor Party). And that shifted in the sense that they now say: 'yes, there are plenty of houses, but for certain target groups there is still a big shortage'. And that's for larger families, and later students and young people were defined target groups, next to all sorts of other target groups, like medical urgencies and urban renewal urgencies. At some point, what was happening is that for

every problem, they created a new target group. At some point, the city became too expensive for the middle class, so then there were all sorts of priority regulations for teachers, and nurses, and policemen. So that's a main theme - the distribution of housing - and that's has always stayed, only that the priorities have been changed over the years: who is the saddest? And who has the least chances of succeeding? At this moment, the housing market completely collapsed, and the leading thread there - everyone agrees on that - is that more middle-income rentals need to be built. There is a social housing sector, which is still very large, but there is no movement in that - the waiting lists are huge. And in the sector above that there is nothing. So all the starters on the housing market cannot or do not want to buy anymore. And there is nothing for them in the city. So that is the leading theme now. [...] Those are the big themes actually - the shifting of the target group. And that happened fairly quickly. Because it was obvious - and that was also the political input of the VVD (Liberal Party): 'the buyers, the buyers!' And everybody agrees on that actually, there has to be more home ownership, because that is historically low in Amsterdam (Chief editor 'Nul20').

In fact, until the late 1990s, in some of the areas in Amsterdam that the *wijkaanpak* defined as 'attention areas', up to 90% of the total housing stock was designated social housing. To ensure that everybody had 'equal' access to 'decent living conditions', the municipality of Amsterdam has long supported a large social housing sector. Following the change in the national housing policy, though, housing corporations in Amsterdam too have been selling off part of their properties and during the last ten years the share of social housing in the city has gradually been shrinking (see WP3). While the Labor Party (PvdA) tries - as much as it possibly can - to slow down this process, at the moment, the national housing policy is much in favor of the preferences of the Liberal Party (VVD) - a proponent of private ownership. Hence, the current municipal coalition supports increasing shares of homeownership, albeit with some restraint:

The College shall take measures to raise homeownership to 35% in 2014. Splitting the private sector into a new share of social housing, in addition to other measures, is not excluded. The coming period a plan shall be drafted with the aim of stimulating and expanding the production of houses for the middle segment: social buys and starters loans are part of the instruments. The 'undivided city' is a fundamental principle and the effect of the measures combined shall not exceed the 35% of homeownership (Program Agreement 2010-2014).

Following the logic that 'everybody is entitled to the same thing', houses that were built in the past are typically small and standardized dwellings. In the meanwhile, though, during the last ten years, the demographics of Amsterdam have changed (see WP3) - there is still a large share of single households but families are less likely to move out of the city, and, at the same time, the average incomes are rising. Subsequently, the housing preferences of the population of Amsterdam have also changed. Different parties in the municipal council have therefore sought to influence the kind of houses that housing corporations needed to build in the city. By and large, the various parties have tended to focus on their own constituencies and have been pushing for certain types of housing more than others - the PvdA wanted large social dwellings to accommodate (lower-income) families, GL called for cheap student housing, and the VVD asked for 'freedom of choice'. Hoping to stimulate

movement in the social housing sector and to meet the demands for a more diversified offer, housing corporations in Amsterdam - where rules and regulations make construction particularly expensive - mainly focused on the construction of large social dwellings and 'high-class' private rentals/dwellings. As a result of these very divergent priorities of the left and the right parties in the municipal coalition, as the local media have also been highlighting all throughout the last ten years, (lower-)middle income households were and still are the least likely to succeed on the housing market. There might be more houses for sale now, but buying a house in Amsterdam is more expensive than in the rest of the country and although prices have dropped quite drastically in the last 5 years, the chances that (lower-)middle income households are granted a mortgage have diminished too. Hence, while a large social housing sector meant that Amsterdam's neighborhoods were fairly mixed in terms of income-levels, a concern of especially the PvdA and GL is that the focus on ownership is jeopardizing the 'undivided city'.

What you see is that, on the whole, the socio-economic mix is lessening. Before we used to have a totally unmixed city, because there were a lot of social houses everywhere. And you see that, because of the national policy there is huge pressure, and the city is very popular, and the rental norms, the regulations are changing. So there are more private dwellings and more expensive rentals now in the city center. And people that live in a social dwelling, they never move. So you see that in the center of the city the average income level is growing more than in the neighborhoods outside the ring road. So in socio-economic terms, inequality is increasing. And that's partly linked to ethnic divisions. [...] But the idea is that we have to try to set up a kind of mix in those neighborhoods as well. Not that it's necessarily rich and white that should live there, but that especially the people that live there - that their situation is improved. So they don't have to move to Purmerend or Zaandam if they want to buy a house, but that they can just buy a house in the vicinity of their parents. And that's a process that is of course...you see that in some areas they managed to do that pretty well. But the money is finished now, so it's all going a bit slow. But that process of mixing, they've tried of course to lift that beyond the ring road and to make it happen there too. And then it's especially mixing in socio-economic terms. And whoever goes and lives there...that's not up to the government. Officially it has never been a policy to mix colors. But in practice of course that's how it works - if you introduce private dwellings and more expensive rentals then you get these kinds of processes. But of course, that has never been an official policy. [...] 'Because we don't mix on the basis of color' is what the housing corporations always say (Chief editor 'Nul20').

In reality, housing corporations have carried out major renovation projects during the last ten years that have greatly improved the physical layout and general living conditions in many of the areas of the city that had been defined 'attention areas'. However, while construction has basically come to a halt in the most recent years, in particular for the 'attention areas' that are located outside the ring road (i.e. areas where the concentration of ethnic minorities has been rising during the last decade, see WP3), part of the regeneration strategy was supposed to be the construction of more modern yet affordable houses so as to draw new (middle-income) residents to those neighborhoods too.

We are very much for mixed neighborhoods and we try to do this everywhere, but it's just more difficult to accomplish outside the ring road than inside. Inside the ring road [...] you can offer houses for sale much easier out of your existing housing stock. Whereby you draw new residents into those neighborhoods. And that's possible outside the ring road too, but there it requires newly built houses. And that's the problem right now - if we are talking finances, there is just not much room for building new houses. So yea, we are not abandoning our philosophy of mixed neighborhoods. Not that we think that as long as you mix a neighborhood it will all be alright, but we do think that it is a very pleasant factor, just because you are bringing different forces into the neighborhood. But that is not always so easy to do. [...] It's more difficult now that we cannot build that much anymore as a corporation (Program manager 'Wijkaanpak' housing corporation).

Nevertheless, both housing corporations and the municipality are still trying to create mixed neighborhoods, perhaps not by building and bringing in new residents, but rather by trying to change the socio-economic position of the old residents themselves. Part of the whole 'wijkaanpak' in fact is to engage residents and to support resident initiatives - something which, in particular concerning resident initiatives 'in favor of social cohesion', housing corporations in Amsterdam have managed to do fairly well according to Tonkens (Professor Active Citizenship at UvA). Considering there are less means available, though, it also means that housing corporations are more selective in the residents/neighborhoods that they focus on. In other words, to be/remain an attractive and thereby competitive city, Amsterdam chose to 'allow' more targeted, and thus differentiating policies.

You see that it always has to be a good combination of what we call physical and socio-economic. Only doing things within a socio-economic framework, without really investing in the physical layout of such a neighborhood is less convincing, in its results. That is really something we are convinced of. There are places where we still do - because it is only temporary that the demolition has been postponed, or because there will be no renovation after all - that we do very consciously invest in the socio-economic activities. So we also did things in Nieuw-West with empty plots, where we deliberately invested in the social contacts between people - organizing vegetable gardens or whatever. So you invest in it, but the real change is a combination of socio-economic and physical. That's something that you have to always realize during the 'wijkaanpak'. [...] And if socio-economic investments are not supported by larger interventions, then often it doesn't work. And then it is not useless - it's still very useful, because you are trying to fulfill your societal task with very specific target groups. [...] So if it is about homework assistance by students in one of those neighborhoods or whatever, then I am convinced that you see the results of that in those neighborhoods and how important they are. That has an effect on the lives of those children, because they are getting homework assistance. Well, those kinds of things are always useful. [...] And that's often a very deliberate choice that we make. You choose to give extra attention to a certain neighborhood where there are empty plots, or fenced off plots, because they are going to be closed, or because new residents still have to come. So you deliberately choose to give those neighborhoods extra attention

and offer also the residents there a livable and good living environment (Program manager 'Wijkaanpak' housing corporation).

CONCLUSION

General values in relation to social innovation

'Local', 'welfare', and 'innovation' are three fundamental concepts in the public/political discourse of Amsterdam and, in a way, these three words are also fairly representative of the city: it has long maintained a generous welfare system; the focal point of this welfare system has long been the local level; and the city has long been known for its innovative spirit. What is more, the concept of 'social cohesion' has been a recurrent concept in the public discourse all throughout the last ten years. As a matter of fact, the 'local welfare innovations in favor of cohesion' that are presented in WP5 are merely a tiny selection of numerous innovative projects that have recently been developed in the city, as promoting 'local welfare innovations in favor of cohesion' has been an explicit focal point of the municipality all throughout the last ten years, and continues to be so today.

There were already a lot of programs in the city, or, in Amsterdam we already have a long tradition of urban renewal, social renewal, the Large City Policy (Grotestedenbeleid, or GSB)...in any case, Amsterdam was not really waiting for another program, stubborn as Amsterdam is. And we said well: if there is going to be another program, then it's like a heading on top, and we actually call it 'everything more and better' - more resident participation, better implementation. [...] We couldn't make a new policy, because we already had that. There was GSB and, for the rest, all that urban renewal - we had already been through that. So we really had to look for a new story. And that's how the 'wijkaanpak' became a kind of story about community work. Besides the fact that an enormous amount of money was invested, also in neighborhoods and residents themselves, we've built up a lot of new collaborations with the businesses, universities, the BOOTs for example is one of the results of that. And it was also always a program that had to be very experimental [...] that could fail also. There was this experimental aspect to it, starting new innovative collaborations, different alliances, and to try also - and that's what I think is the nicest of the 'wijkaanpak' - to place new ownership in a completely different way with the residents. It's only words, but if we are talking about innovations, the gain of the 'wijkaanpak' is that you sort of institutionalize the learning-to-innovate (Municipal program manager 'Wijkaanpak').

Due to its particular (political) history and (administrative) structure, Amsterdam has an extensive and intricate system of separate and rather compartmentalized actors involved in the provision of local welfare services. Every city district has its own (welfare) program and organizations, and, due to the availability of sufficient funding/subsidies, all of these actors have long had the possibility of working fairly independently from one another. However, during the last ten years, the implementation of the 'Neighborhood Development Program' (*wijkaanpak*) and the more recent budget cuts have encouraged various actors to join forces and tackle societal problems in a more coordinated and more efficient manner. In fact, the political discourse in Amsterdam clearly favors social innovations that target

'social cohesion' at the 'local level' in an 'efficient' manner. In particular, it seems that the innovations that enjoy most (political/financial) support at the moment are those that seek to combine both the 'social' and the 'competitive' side of the city and try to bridge the gap between those two (so far rather disconnected) worlds.

We have the ambition to use the difficult years to come as an opportunity to renew and strengthen. This broad coalition guarantees the support that is needed politically, administratively, and socially to be efficient and decisive. We want to make new coalitions with residents, companies, and social organizations: to engage and reach a lot of 'Amsterdammers' (Program Agreement 2010-2014).

In reality, there are two sides to Amsterdam and it is rather striking how, for a long time at least, these two 'worlds' have managed to live side by side within one same city without actually intermingling much. On the one side, there is the Amsterdam with a large financial and creative sector that draws many highly educated citizens to the city, who live either on the canals in the center or in the suburbs. And on the other side, there is the Amsterdam with a large share of people receiving social assistance benefits, many of whom have a lower education, and typically live in a so-called 'problem area'. Whilst the more prosperous parts of Amsterdam have always shown solidarity with the more deprived parts of the city, there was fairly limited immediate contact between these two sides - one could say that it was mainly the municipality (either directly or through subsidized welfare organizations) that kept the city together as a whole by making sure that all citizens, regardless of what 'side' of the city they belonged to, would have access to the same services/facilities and thereby enjoy equal opportunities. However, what appears to be happening now is that the municipality is increasingly seeking to position itself a bit more 'behind the scenes' so to say - still coordinating the provision of welfare services in the entire city, but especially encouraging both new and existing actors to move to the main stage and set up stronger as well as more integrated (i.e. less overlapping) collaborative networks. Moreover, particularly in view of the continuing budget cuts, Amsterdam is gradually trying to introduce what seems to be a more 'business-minded' approach towards local welfare - not only in the sense that it needs to be less costly and more efficient, but also in the sense that welfare policies should be more 'customer-oriented' and offer more tailor-made solutions. Accordingly, all of these developments are paving the way for the emergence of a more targeted and more differentiating yet, at the same time, to some extent, also less paternalistic welfare system.

In politics the principle of equality has indeed always been very strong. The 'wijkenpak' is not founded on the principle of equality, because the 'wijkenpak' is based on custom work ('maatwerk'). Custom work, and depending on the situation that there is. [...] That has been a change of attitude. Because especially with the PvdA (Labor Party) stronghold that we have here in Amsterdam - they have of course been thinking in terms of equality a lot. And here you are focusing on the opportunities that are there. So you are not working on the basis of the principle of equality anymore. [...] You try to find very targeted solutions to problems. Working with specific target groups has always been part of the 'wijkenpak' - the 'wijkenpak' is per definition non-equal, but custom work. [...] And that's why I think the 'wijkenpak' has been important [...] it has brought change in the collaboration between governments and corporations. Before that, that was less. I am not going to say that it is now because of the introduction of

that national policy - it has a bit longer of a history than that - but that whole idea of working in the neighborhood, with a network, that did bring a new culture, how you collaborate and how you find a solution in custom work, which is not always compatible with that principle of equality. [...] And because you have less means yourself, you are also looking carefully at how you can invest those more limited means well, to provide support to those groups that need us the most (Program manager 'Wijkaanpak' housing corporation).

That switch is partly because of that movement that was already going in the direction of self-reliance, but also of course because of the cutbacks. It forces you as a municipality to be smarter and more efficient with your means. And as I said before, I really think that is an opportunity. I think we had way too much money, and that that can now be invested in a good way - that's something I am a little bit worried about - but it's an opportunity to focus more on those people for whom you really need to do something, to leave others alone, or to support and facilitate their own initiatives. I think those are the new categories. There are always groups for whom you have to do something as government. There are groups for whom you can do something, if asked for. And there are groups that you can let go completely (Municipal project leader 'Tenable Neighborhoods').

Room for social innovations

Overall, the political discourse in Amsterdam appears to be in favor of social innovations that promote closer collaboration between the many (disjointed) actors that are involved in the provision of welfare services at the local level, and that encourage new actors - including for example universities (e.g. BOOTs), (social) enterprises (e.g. Neighborhood Management Companies), and individual citizens (e.g. Neighborhood Mothers Catering) - to 'step up to the plate'. Moreover, the political discourse concentrates on 'activating' citizens and on bolstering citizens' self-responsibility and self-reliance. In a context where the local government has long 'taken care' of its residents, this is a shift that requires a rather radical readjustment of both (welfare) organizations and (individual) citizens:

I notice on the one side that the cutbacks force that collaboration. That it forces me too as a director to look with my employees whether we can also do things cheaper. [...] So the fact that those cutbacks are coming does help to work with a bit different of a focus, to be a bit more commercial, more market-oriented, to see where you can get money from. [...] And yes, when you are talking about cutbacks what also helps is to stimulate people to do things on their own more. [...] Citizens should first try to organize things themselves before they come knocking at the government's door. Well, I think there is a good ideological movement in all that too. So that's the positive side, that you make sure that people first try to solve their own problems and do not immediately come knocking at the government's door, I think that is in principle a good thing. [...] On the other hand, I also see that those cutbacks are now used as an excuse to just cut a lot of facilities. And I do notice that there is a part of the people that is actually really troubled by

that. [...] So for a part you can say that that communal responsibility and self-reliance is good, but if you take hard measures on that, that could also have a very negative effect (Director youth association).

Finally, though, to realize the social innovations that the political discourse desires, the local government and its (vast and intricate) administrative apparatus too needs to adjust itself. In practice, bringing about change in the traditional welfare system that has been functioning in a particular way for several decades turns out to be a slow and strenuous process, as both administrative entities and civil servants are often holding on to certain modes of thinking and ways of doing. As the quotes below also indicate, whilst the political discourse dictates a certain course, there are still significant roadblocks to overcome.

I do see a difference between politics, policy, and wishes. And giving enough room in practice to let things develop themselves. [Politically they are in favor] yes, and policy-wise too. But then when it comes down to implementation, yea, then you often see that that is all organized very tightly (Director youth association).

I think, and other people feel the same at the moment, that if you want to get people to be active and if you want to support initiatives that you think have an added value for society, but that do not match with the rules, then as a civil servant you have to be able to put those rules to the side to some extent. And that movement is happening now - of the 'naughty' civil servant that does it anyway, for the sake of...for societal interest. [...] And then you have to make sure that you have yourself covered as a civil servant. [...] Because you risk losing your job. So that's difficult. [...] But what you see in any case is that rules often hamper civil servants from doing that which they think is right. That they think: 'this would have added value, but shit...'. Because of our own rules, our own subsidy-requirements and other rules. So that's one thing we really need to think about. And we do think about. How can we organize this differently? [...] We've made everything so difficult. That we made it impossible for ourselves sometimes to do those things that are important (Municipal project leader 'Tenable Neighborhoods').