

Full papers of Day 2 - Practice

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1.1 Social Balance meets Common Good Balance

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Introduction

Before we delve into the presentation and mutual learnings from the „balance“ tools that we are developing (with a constant feedback and re-assessment) within our respective networks, representing two approaches to a common theme, we would like to put into perspective the historical and epistemological evolution of four concepts: measurement, evaluation, social impact and social utility. After recalling the etymological origins of the word "evaluate" ("to put a value on something"), F. Jany-Catrice¹ makes the following observation: while societies have always evaluated their activities, evaluation methods have evolved over time, towards an increasingly heteronomous, externalized and institutionalized approach. Standardized methods run the risk of shifting from an EVALUATION of effects to a MEASUREMENT of performance, with a concomitant risk of disqualifying SSE players who are characterized by non-quantifiable criteria (equivocality of purpose, social innovation, wellbeing and community involvement...). Moreover the notions of social utility (since 1973 in the French-speaking world) and social impact (since the 2000s, and dominant since the 2010s), demonstrating the porosity of these two notions by placing them on two axes: private/public and social economy/lucrative economy. Three transformations have led to the notion of social impact: control of effectiveness and causal link of impact (1980s, Theory of Change); logic of result-based financing (e.g. CSR); notion of social entrepreneurship and capitalist management methods (eg. ESG, especially since 2010).

Players in the SSE need to identify, value, measure and report on what makes them socially useful. Whether as part of a social utility evaluation process, a progress initiative or a way of promoting their best practices, these players seek to analyze and enhance the quality of the services and products they offer, the organizational and management methods they implement, and the relationships they develop with their environment, in line with the values and principles of the social solidarity economy.

In the last 3 years, RIPESS Europe has been working on comparing approaches, methodologies and tools within our existing network.

We can distinguish 3 approaches:

External evaluation: evaluators belong to a different group from those being evaluated (this type of evaluation can be found in certification or accreditation).

Joint evaluation: different players evaluate a development process together (PGS-Participatory Guarantee Systems, Démarche progres / Progress approach)



Self-evaluation: evaluators and evaluated belong to the same group, i.e. project staff and other players evaluate their own program or project. There can also be Assisted self-evaluation: self-evaluation with external support.

The Social Utility approach, unlike the evaluative approach in general, does not aim to express (measure or take into account...) all the economic value generated by a company or organization. Its objective is more limited, and at the same time more ambitious: the "social utility approach" aims to bring to light the hidden face of a company's economic value, which is not spontaneously taken into account (and evaluated in monetary units) by the price and market mechanism. The side of the economic value revealed by the market or price mechanism will normally appear in the accounting headings of the company's income statement. This, at least, is the view held by economists who, since Alfred Marshall, have introduced the analysis of "external effects" or "externalities"². In our grids, these positive external effects of an economic nature can be found under various headings (for example, those relating to the indirect or induced "economic spin-offs" of services or products of an SSE, on local development territories). However, the social utility approach is far more ambitious than that of the "externalities economists", as it not only focuses on the difficult task of identifying hidden forms of economic value; it also aims to express, promote and take into account (by means of social indicators, for example) the positive external economic effects of the actions and products of an SSE organization.

In short, the social utility approach aims to track down all those forms of value that do not spontaneously come to the fore in the productive activity of companies, because our accounting system was not designed to identify them and make the most of them. This is the very purpose of the social utility grids and guides that we are all trying to implement, with their battery of criteria, indicators and indices.

Progress approaches (Demarche progres / France)

The aim of the progress approach is to provide a structure with a working method and tools enabling it to improve its efficiency and practices (economic, social, environmental, etc.) and to clarify its goals on an ongoing basis, in a spirit of co-construction with all stakeholders. The aim of the progress approach is not to guarantee compliance with a standard or to obtain approval, but to build an ongoing assessment of the coherence between social goals and practices, enabling continuous improvement.

SSE Balance / Audit (Spain)

The Social Balance Sheets and Social Audits³ are accountability tools born within the Spanish Social solidarity economy with the initial objective of serving the member organizations of the various REAS Networks interested in making their practices and values visible.

From this perspective, different regional Spanish networks started working in parallel to define their accountability methodologies, and in 2014 the first common battery of indicators is established among all territories. Thus, the basic body of indicators is defined that unites all the networks in the State and thus unifies the criteria for defining SSE practices. Over and above these common indicators, each territory has its own Social Balance/Social Audit itinerary according to the reality of its territory.



As a culmination of this process of territorial confluence, since 2018, data is collected from the same technological platform, the tool developed by the Xarxa d'Economia Solidària named Enseña el Corazón. This advance makes it possible to have all the data in the same database and in the same format, so that it greatly streamlines the processes of data collection, aggregation and exploitation.

Equity, decent work, environmental sustainability, cooperation, commitment to the environment and fair distribution of wealth are the 6 SSE principles on which the Social Audit/Balance Sheet tool is based to evaluate business practices. With a total of 47 questions and 53 indicators, companies reflect on their practices to learn about the impact of their activities on people and the planet.

This participatory process also enables companies to diagnose their performance in order to define strategies for improvement in the social and environmental spheres arising from their economic activity, making visible the commitment of these organizations to sustainability and social justice.

This is a guarantee for conscious citizens, public administrations and social and business agents who can thus exercise economic democracy with their consumption.

Finally, one aspect we focused and think could be helpful for the further discussion, collaboration and development of common and shared tools is the work on the skills, competences and know-how needed to support social impact/utility assessment, which we developed through the DEVISUS project⁴ and would like to further deepen in the future.

Economy for the Common Good (ECG)

The ECG starts from the concept that the economy should be based not only on financial data but also on ethical values. In fact, the model proposed since 2010 by the Movement is to put at the center of economic action the values of human dignity, solidarity and justice, ecological sustainability, and transparency and sharing of decisions. The success of this new economic model therefore puts humanity and its relationship with the environment and the community at the center, and using this value-based vision as the lens on economic actions, oriented towards the common good.

The concept of the common good dates back to ancient times. Aristotle introduced it as man's purpose for building the "polis," the purpose of social life to enable the individual but especially the community to live harmoniously together since every state is a community that pursues the good for and of all. The concept is taken up by Thomas Aquinas who defines the common good as a specificity peculiar to mankind, and therefore since political society, including economic society, is not stand-alone but is embodied in all human beings by the fact that they act together.

In the Common Good economy, business is an organization that serves society and is called upon to meet basic human needs and respond to social and environmental challenges through its economic activity. Money and profit are no longer an end of economic activity but a means. An enterprise does not generate profit for its own sake but to serve the Common Good.

Through the lens of values, the company questions how it relates to the company's stakeholders (supply chain, customers, owners, employees, and social context). The tool that realizes a qualitative-quantitative report is also designed for citizens as the common good matrix can be used



not only for businesses but also for other organizations, including public entities, and even families.

Recently the Italian ECG and Solidarity Economy Network have worked together on the „family“ / citizen version of the Common Good Balance Sheet.

The Common Good Balance Sheet (CGBS) developed by the Economy for the Common Good (ECG) movement differs from the social balance/audit in several ways:

1. **Focus and Scope:** The CGBS specifically focuses on assessing the economic activities of organizations based on values such as human dignity, solidarity, justice, ecological sustainability, transparency and co-determination. It emphasizes the impact of business activities on the common good, placing stakeholders at the forefront of the evaluation process. On the other hand, the social balance/audit, such as those developed by RIPESS and other Social Solidarity Economy networks, places emphasis on social utility, evaluating the social and economic impact of organizations within the context of the social solidarity economy, including principles like equity, decent work, and environmental sustainability.
2. **Measurement and Reporting:** The CGBS employs a qualitative-quantitative reporting approach to evaluate the contribution of businesses to the common good. This means that it considers both qualitative aspects such as values and stakeholder relationships, along with quantitative indicators – from labour accidents to income inequality and CO2 emissions - to measure the organization's impact. On the other hand, the social balance/audit primarily focuses on assessing the social and economic impact of organizations within the social solidarity economy based on specific criteria and indicators related to social utility.
3. **Application:** The CGBS is designed to be used not only by businesses and start-ups, but also by universities, cities, public entities, and families, reflecting the broader scope of its application beyond just commercial entities. In contrast, the social balance/audit tools are primarily tailored to member organizations of Social Solidarity Economy networks to make their practices and values visible and serve as an accountability tool within this specific economic framework.
4. **Emphasis on Common Good:** The CGBS explicitly aligns with the principles of the Common Good Economy, where businesses are seen as organizations that serve society and are called upon to meet basic human needs and respond to social and environmental challenges. This means that the CGBS places a strong emphasis on the common good as the ultimate goal of economic activity. In contrast, while the social balance/audit within the Social Solidarity Economy also aims to assess the impact of business practices on people and the planet, it is rooted in the principles and practices specific to the social and solidarity economy.

Overall, while both tools share a common goal of evaluating the impact of economic activities beyond financial metrics, they differ in their specific focus, scope, measurement approach, and the broader application of the assessment framework.

A last distinctive feature of the CGBS is its quantitative score – from a minimum of minus 3.600 points to a maximum of 1.000 common good points. The idea of the concept is to reward companies with high scores through legal incentives: priority in public procurement and economic



promotion, lower taxes and better finance conditions, easier access to global markets. The global behind these positive incentives is that products and services from companies that increase the common good the most, but suffer a competitive disadvantage today – having higher costs and prices -, will face a competitive advantage tomorrow thanks to the multiple positive incentives. Contrarily, companies with low scores will meet a competitive disadvantage in the future, and will have to change their strategy, or vanish.

1 Florence Jany-Catrice, The New Indicators of Well-Being and Development, 2006

2 Alfred Marshall, Principles of Economics, Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1890

3 General info: <https://www.economiasolidaria.org/auditoria-balance-social>

The last report and results (2023): <https://reas.red/auditoria-social-2023>

4 General info: <https://ripess.eu/en/devisus-project>

More info in French: <https://www.le-mes.org/Projet-DEVISUS-Pour-evaluer-notre-utilite-sociale-ou-impact-social-de-quelles.html>



1.2 Common Good Leadership & Entrepreneurship for Future Regions. The TLS Model - Three Levels of Sustainability - Leadership for Sustainability - Real life stories and Action Research by Common Good entrepreneurs and Regional Development.

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Introduction

"Times of crisis, times of change: Science for accelerated transformations towards sustainable development": This is the title of the 2023 Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR). The GSDR finds that at this critical juncture, halfway to 2030, incremental and fragmented change is insufficient to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the remaining 7 years.

Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, issued a grave warning during the COP 27 climate summit: "We are on the highway to climate hell, with our foot still on the accelerator". Despite impressive efforts around the Sustainable Development Goals, the world is far off track."

Fortunately, there is hope. There is a growing collaboration of organizations, alliances, movements, and individuals, scientists and practitioners, working on new ways of thinking, living, working, and organizing. One of the initiatives is the WISE Horizons Europe Project of Rutger Hoekstra which advocates for a future based on Wellbeing, Inclusion, and Sustainability, rather than economic GDP growth.

Globally, and in the Netherlands, forces are increasingly being united, including in the Wellbeing Alliance (www.weall.org). The growing international movement for the Economy for the Common Good is a member of the WEALL organization and is working on sustainable transformation at the levels of science, policy, and practice.

The scientific ECG community has so far organized two conferences, in 2019 in Bremen (Germany) and in 2022 in Valencia (Spain). The third ECGIC24 will be held in the north of the Netherlands – the province of Fryslân | Leeuwarden on June 3, 4, and 5, 2024. The ECGIC24 weave three threads, the Sustainable Development Goals, Planetary boundaries (Rockström et al. 2009 and 2015), and future-proof economic models such as the Economy for the Common Good, the Doughnut Economy, Circular Economy, Care Economy, True Price, Degrowth, and Postgrowth and the growing movement of the Commons.

The ECGIC24 is not standalone. Its aim is to enhance the visibility of the ECG in the Netherlands and catalyze a fruitful 'outcome' and collaboration in the Penta helix at local, regional, national, and international levels. The ECGIC24 intends to unite forces worldwide and connect science with practical questions. Therefore, the initiators of the ECGIC24 (Elly Rijniere en Jacqueline Hofstede both Common Good Entrepreneurs) are organizing a pre-conference to explicitly articulate the questions from practice and subsequently present them to the scientists during the ECGIC24.



Concrete outcomes of the ECGIC24 are a manifesto, a transdisciplinary research agenda and a fruitful future regions approach with acceleration programs for various target groups. This is all part of our common Expedition Sustainable Future – a new story, a common discovery process for new ways of thinking, living, working, and organizing.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Global Sustainable Development Report 2023

‘Times of crisis, times of Change: Science for Acceleration Transformations to Sustainable Development’ this is the title of the 2023 Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR). The GSDR finds that at this critical juncture, midway to 2030, incremental and fragmented change is insufficient to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the remaining 7 years.

Antonio Guterres United Nations Secretary General issued a stark warning during the COP 27 Climate Change summit:

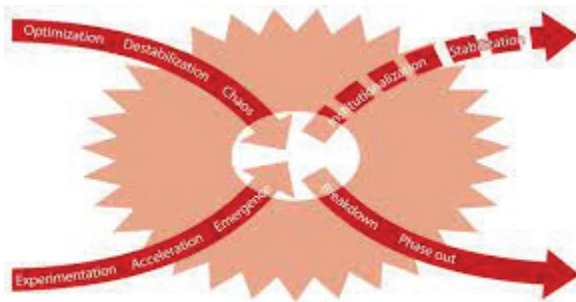
“We are in fight of our lives, and we are losing. Greenhouse gas emissions keep growing, global temperatures keep rising and our planet is fast approaching tipping points that will make climate chaos irreversible. We are on the highway to climate hell with our foot still on the accelerator. Despite impressive engagement around the Sustainable Development Goals, the world is far off track”

So, we must accelerate!

The big question is HOW to Transform?

2.2. Transition theory

The transition theory of Derk Loorbach is based on the concept of transition management, which is a strategic approach to guide complex system changes. This concept was developed at the Dutch Research Institute for Transitions (DRIFT) at Erasmus University Rotterdam. The essence of Loorbach's approach lies in understanding and influencing long-term transformations in societal systems, such as energy, mobility, or healthcare, with a focus on sustainability.



Loorbach, D., et al. 2007
Trans. Plan. Environ. Policy 42:599-629

Derk Loorbach describes the transition we are currently experiencing. We have long known that things are going wrong, but we continue to persevere in the systems and structures of the industrial era. At this moment, we are living in turbulent times, some even speak of an impending collapse.



The dynamic between these two—the regime and the niche—is central to understanding how transitions occur. Niches act as sources of new technologies, strategies, and ideas that challenge the regime. Over time, if these niche innovations prove successful and gain wider acceptance, they can shift the trajectory of the entire system, leading to a broader societal transition. The Economy for the Common Good and their leaders and entrepreneurs are part of the Niches.

2.3. Transition Entrepreneurship in SMEs

Referring to the GSDR 2023 and the statement of Antonio Guterres we have to accelerate the sustainable transformation! Unfortunately, most SME entrepreneurs are not yet involved in the Sustainable Transformation. This can be understood because of many legal and financial barriers.

According to Derk Loorbach, a professor of transition science, current business models are unsustainable. But investing in sustainability is not easy for SME entrepreneurs Loorbach states, "The simplest form of sustainability, such as more efficient company cars or working with a greener electricity contract, is already a challenge for many companies. Often, there is a lack of financial room. Entrepreneurs are too busy with other processes within their company. Covid-19 legacy, rising energy prices, and the tight labor market do not make it any easier. Adapting business processes requires an investment in new competencies, new partnerships, and new contracts. It calls for other greener supply chain partners and suppliers. It is an investment that does not pay off immediately, and a large part of the broad SME sector is reluctant to take this step. Continuously providing the same product or service but completely circularly, based on sustainable energy, is theoretically possible. However, a major transition like this requires a redesign of business plans and a different business philosophy. And for that, there is a lack of time, resources, and space."

2.4. The Three Levels of Sustainability

The Three Levels of Sustainability (Cavagnaro and Curiel 2012 and 2023) describe sustainability as a process of value creation on three levels and nine dimensions simultaneously. The three levels, each with its dimensions, are:

The level of society with the dimensions of economic, social, and environmental value.

The level of organizations, with the dimensions (borrowed from Elkington) of profit, people, and planet.

The level of individuals or the leadership for sustainability level, with the dimensions of care for me, care for me & you, and care for all.

The three dimensions of the inner level of the TLS mirror this insight. 'Care for me' relates to the value of the individual human life. 'Care for me and you' relates to the value of relationships. 'Care for all' relates to the value of all living creatures and the universe. Creating value on the three dimensions of care characterizes leadership for sustainability on the individual level. This makes each person a potential leader with a unique way to participate in the transition toward sustainability" (Cavagnaro and Curiel, 2023: 2).

Cavagnaro and Curiel (2012, 2023) maintain that it is thanks to the individual capacity to care not only for oneself but also for others, including both human and non-human entities, that sustainability can be reached at the two other levels.



This is the mindset of Common Good Leaders and Entrepreneurs, they care about the Common Good, a good life for all now and in the future.

2.5. Economy for the Common Good

The Economy for the Common Good is a growing international movement that strengthens the connection between ethical behavior and the economy. It has a mission: 'Transforming Economy' and a developed methodology: the 'Common Good Balance' with points, auditors, and certificates - recommended by the EESC – European Economic and Social Committee of the EU. The Common Good Balance provides a holistic management system and a method for enterprises, governments, societal organizations, and regions to work step by step, systematically, and transparently towards the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations.

2.6. Common Good Leadership and Entrepreneurship

In the preceding paragraphs we have seen that humanity is in danger, that scientists are finding answers on the 'how to questions' and that the involvement of SME entrepreneurs is crucial. On the other hand, we have seen that it is very difficult for SME entrepreneurs to transform. The major transition requires a redesign of business plans and a different business philosophy. And for that, there is a lack of time, resources, and space. Moreover, the returns are unclear. Therefore, it is logical that most of the SMEs do not opt for transformation to sustainability.

Fortunately, there are some Common Good Leaders and Entrepreneurs with a strong inner drive to be a good ancestor.

The role of Common Good Leadership and Entrepreneurship is crucial in the transition to an economy within planetary boundaries. Common Good Leadership and Entrepreneurship contribute at various levels to a holistic transformation focused on environmental and social sustainability and strengthening democracy. Common Good Leadership and entrepreneurship combine the principles of serving the common good with the dynamics and innovation of entrepreneurship. These approaches go beyond mere profit-making and aim to have a positive impact on society, the economy, and the environment.

3. Baril Coatings

Since 2020 Baril Coatings has been a Common Good Company. Baril develops and manufactures coatings that are as sustainable as possible.

Baril Coatings takes responsibility as a producer by:

Using fewer hazardous substances in the (paint) products.

Low-emission production process;

Extending the lifespan of materials through preservation.

Developing more products that extend the material's lifespan with less coating (thin-layer technology).

Reducing maintenance and maintenance costs.



The products must meet the highest quality standards (extensive internal and external research and testing).

Baril Coatings has deeply embedded the 'one-planet' philosophy in its mission and operations. The entire business process is continuously scrutinized to see if more sustainable solutions are possible without compromising quality. Baril Coatings is a true 'action' company, demonstrating sustainable commitment through deeds. The goal: to become the 'greenest' paint company in the Netherlands.'

Advantages and disadvantages of Common Good leadership and entrepreneurship:

Advantages according to Geert Duijghuisen:

“Common Good leadership and entrepreneurship is fun, it is like top sport, we enjoy it! With passion we work every day on our slogan ‘Green is Doing!’

The bar is high, everyone in the company is always challenged to make the most sustainable and ‘common good’ choice. We strive not only for minimal impact but even for positive impact. We win awards; we are among the top of the circular changemakers in the Netherlands and by that we gain free publicity. Baril Coatings is increasingly recognized and acknowledged, which is good for the company.

Our company Baril Coatings is a futureproof family business that we want to pass on to future generations. We have a sharp vision and mission. By creating the Common Good Balance, we have gained a holistic and realistic picture of where we stand and where we are heading. This is a big advantage; this is our license to operate for the long term. And our story attracts the best customers and employees.

We do something different; we don't need to compete with the big paint manufacturers.

We have a strong intrinsic motivation to do the best for future generations. Our paint is just as good as regular paint and not more expensive. We opt for lower returns, and we don't care, we don't need luxury and status. Of course we have a good sense of reality. We must make enough money to stay afloat and pay our employees and suppliers.

Disadvantages according to Geert Duijghuisen

Common Good Leadership and Entrepreneurship is not easy, it requires a high level of awareness, and you have to be patient.

Because our bar is set high, and we cannot afford to slacken.

It is frustrating that a lot of improvement and sustainability potential lies outside our influence. We are dependent on raw material suppliers.

Common Good entrepreneurship takes time and money. Our returns are lower than they could be this is a conscious choice.

We wanted to start a new regional sustainability initiative in our area – regionalization with organizations such as De Kleine Aarde and Herenboeren. Unfortunately, the local government did not cooperate. In this case Common Good entrepreneurship was painful. It is painful to see how



great the urgency to transform the world is and how low the political will is to truly invest in the Common Good for future generations.

Future Development of Baril Coatings

Our sustainable paint is now also sold at the construction market 'GAMMA'. As a result, we need to expand our production and want to build a new paint factory. A real showcase factory, a sustainable, circular, common good factory, a shining example for others. Unfortunately, this sustainable choice is about a million euros more expensive. We need to think this over carefully.

Analysis of the impact of Baril Coating in regional development.

Baril Coatings' attempt to set up a regional collaboration with Herenboeren and De Kleine Aarde in Boxtel could have had significant benefits for both the local economy and the sustainability of the region. Here are the advantages such a collaboration could have brought:

Strengthening of the local economy

Sustainable agriculture and production

Education and awareness

Circular economy

Innovation in products and services

Strengthening of the network

The failure of the Municipality of Boxtel to pick up this initiative can be seen as a missed opportunity to realize all these benefits. However, new opportunities may arise in the future if the involved parties continue to strive for collaboration and the municipality recognizes the potential benefits of such a partnership.

4) YNOVA Innovation

The company YNOVA was founded in 2002 and has been an 'Impact Enterprise' from the start. YNOVA has always focused on working conditions, co-determination, human, team, and organizational development, and Lean Transformations. In 2005, YNOVA founded the Lean Innovation Network: an innovation network for people in ambitious organizations who want to learn and innovate from each other's practical experiences regarding LEAN Transformation. They followed the inspiring examples of the Toyota and the Scania Production Systems: creating value for end users and eliminating waste.

But anno 2024 the question is: what is really value for end users in a world that is warming and highly polluted. The survival of future generations and humanity is at stake!

Over the years Jacqueline more and more wanted to connect the lean principles and methods to the circular economy and sustainability. Unfortunately, the customers, mostly large multinational corporations with lean programs, thought differently. They were interested in lean and smart technologies, but not in lean and sustainability, let alone in the Circular Economy and the Economy for the Common Good.



During the Corona Lockdown, all activities of the Lean Innovation Network came to a halt. At that time Jacqueline made the fundamental choice for Common Good entrepreneurship, risking losing the 'old customers'. Fortunately, new customers came, but turnover was a lot lower than before. This led to the decision to quit the cooperation with the office manager and an end to the Ynova Innovation Company BV (GmbH) because of the mandatory DGA salary and associated tax. Due to the low turnover, all this could no longer be paid.

Advantages and disadvantages of Common Good leadership and entrepreneurship:

Advantages according to Jacqueline Hofstede

“Working on the Common Good and the SDGs is meaningful work. We strive not only for positive impact but even for regeneration.

Working on the common good is the best thing I can do for my children and future generations. It makes me happy where I can fully utilize my talents as a pioneer, connector, and innovator. I meet wonderful people from all walks of life who, like me, have largely left the old system (regime). It is adventurous, exciting, and challenging. There is much room to learn and undertake new things. The Common Good Balance provides YNOVA a holistic management system and a clear perspective for action. It is an excellent tool for entrepreneurs with a strong inner drive for a better world”.

Disadvantages according to Jacqueline Hofstede

Currently the government is talking about SDGs, Circular Economy and ‘Broad Prosperity’ but they don’t know how to apply this in practice. There is a system failure. Governments and civil servants don’t know and don’t value Common Good leaders and entrepreneurs. They are often suspicious of entrepreneurs in general and do not see how much good cooperation could yield.

Unknown makes unloved. The Economy for the Common Good offers a beautiful ethical methodology. In the Netherlands, this is almost unknown. Many companies wanting to contribute to the Common Good choose B Corp. This is known and offers the company image benefits.

Working on the Common Good is very often unpaid or against a lower hourly rate. For a long time, I could not invest in paid training and a new software platform.

Future development of Ynova Innovation

Fortunately, the idea of Ynova Innovation a vehicle for societal change stands firm. Ynova plays an active role in the Area Cooperation Noord Nederland. We want to develop a Regenerative Future Regions Program in cooperation with ECG, WEALL, Weconomics Foundation and partners. Acceleration Programs for new ways of thinking, living, working and organizing.

Analysis of the impact of Ynova Innovation in regional development.

Ynova Innovation can contribute to regenerative regional development in various ways:

1. Knowledge Sharing, Valorization and Networking
2. Initiatives and innovation in Sustainable Practices
3. Collaboration with Local Governments, Businesses and Knowledge Institutes
4. Support for Circular Economy Initiatives



5. Promoting Social Innovation
6. Education and Awareness
7. Leadership in Sustainability

Through these activities, Ynova can play a vital role in fostering regenerative development in the region, leading to a more sustainable and resilient community.

5) Analysis and discussion

In the Netherlands, there is a national, provincial, and municipal pursuit of the Circular Economy and Broad Prosperity. However, there are challenges in implementing this concept, and there are not yet structural budgets available. This situation highlights the gap between the goals of enhancing societal well-being across multiple dimensions (including social, economic, and environmental aspects) and the practical resources and support mechanisms necessary to achieve these goals. The limited financial support for entrepreneurs who could drive innovations and transformations towards the Circular Economy and Broad Prosperity reflects broader systemic issues in transitioning from traditional economic models to more holistic and inclusive approaches.

A lot of citizens and local entrepreneurs experience so called 'system failure'. The governments want to keep control over the major transitions, but they cannot achieve this without the efforts of citizens and local SME entrepreneurs. Fortunately, citizens and local entrepreneurs increasingly find each other in area and energy cooperatives. Hopefully, this will prove to be an engine for the commons and other citizen initiatives.

Various regions and cities in Germany, Spain and Austria and worldwide have integrated ECG principles, resulting in positive societal and environmental outcomes.

In The Netherlands we experiment with area cooperations and the new environmental law. Hopefully, we can learn from (other) Common Good Regions in Europe during the ECGIC24 and continue collaboration afterwards.

Common Good entrepreneurs and initiatives are not fully recognized for their value by governments and funding bodies. However, Common Good companies like Baril Coatings, Ynova Innovation, CrossmarX, Afier, Herenboeren, and the Weconomics Foundation could significantly contribute to the development of Future Regions and the transformation towards the Circular Economy and Broad Prosperity. Here's what they could bring to the table:

1. Innovative practices and Business Models:
2. Local and Sustainable Development:
3. Education and Awareness:
4. Networking and Collaboration:
5. Policy Influence:
6. Technological and Social Innovation:

These contributions align with the concepts of Bioregions and the Circular and Doughnut Economy, which aims for an economy that meets everyone's needs without exceeding planetary boundaries. Together, these initiatives and companies could help pave the way towards a more sustainable and fair future.



6) Conclusions and recommendations

The Sustainable Transition is urgent

This underscores the necessity for a sustainability transition within SMEs, as advocated by Professor of Transition Science Derk Loorbach and Professor of Environmental Psychology Linda Steg.

The Economy for the Common Good provides clear pathways

Transition entrepreneurship requires that entrepreneurs adopt innovative and sustainable practices and business models that consider environmental sustainability and social prosperity. Common Good Leadership can stimulate this transformation by providing a vision and strategy focused on the common good.

Collaboration Between SMEs and Government:

As showed by Steg and Loorbach, a synergistic relationship between the government and SMEs is essential. Common Good Leaders can build bridges between different stakeholders to promote collaboration and encourage collective action.

Sustainability as a Core Value:

Entrepreneurs and leaders must integrate sustainability as a core value within their organizations. This means looking beyond the short term and investing in future-proof, circular, and green business practices.

Societal Needs and Desires:

As Loorbach emphasizes, it's crucial for entrepreneurs to align with societal needs and changes in consumer behavior. Entrepreneurs focused on creating societal value will be better positioned in an economy that increasingly values sustainability and social impact.

Role Models and Inspiration:

Leaders and entrepreneurs who have successfully transitioned to more sustainable practices can serve as role models and inspire others to make similar changes.

Common Good Leaders and Entrepreneurs deserve more respect and appreciation.

Common Good Leaders and Entrepreneurs are intrinsic motivated people who take often big risks. They deserve more respect and appreciation than they currently receive. Moreover, they could make a much greater contribution if they had more financial resources. For example, give them priority in tenders or let them pay less tax.

The transition to a more sustainable future is both a challenge and an opportunity for SMEs. By embracing transition entrepreneurship and Common Good Leadership, businesses can not only contribute to solving global sustainability issues but also create a competitive advantage in a rapidly changing economic and social environment. Hopefully, Common Good leaders, entrepreneurs and initiatives are soon fully recognized for their value by governments and funding bodies.



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2.1 The ECG Compact Balancing exercise of IDFS to create impact towards positive food supply chain. A case of start-up in POLAND.

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Introduction

In 2023 IDFS (IDentification and Food Security) company in Poland performed an exercise of developing Economy for Common Good compact balance. The company stepped in the project thanks to earlier personal contacts and inspiring stories by the author of this case description. IDFS is socially engaged and tries to operate sustainably and ECG seemed a suitable tool for assessing the company's efforts in that direction and guiding further strategic development.

The main motivation for participation in ECG balance exercise was explicating the values IDFS's owners implicitly shared and implemented in their daily operations but needed to explicate those to secure company's development. Furthermore, the goal was to establish explicit metrics to measure IDFS's operations. This metrics would contribute to the intended change at the customers, suppliers and cooperating parties.

The choice for specifically ECG, instead of any of the alternative frameworks like BCorps[1] was motivated by personal contacts with ECG consultant but also by the broad democratic value coverage as well as the non-profit and development-oriented character of the ECG. IDFS aims at developing IT tools to capture the importance of credibility, trust and social capital - which are closely related to the values carried by ECG. Building these values in the era of sharing real data of the highest quality may become easier based on ECG balance.

Any transformation of the business model may become reality with the increased role of the conscious and committed people. Engert and Rauter (2016) in their exhaustive literature review, on conclude that there is a need to foster empirical research, show practical cases in this field, i.e., the integration of corporate sustainability into business management. When starting the ECG balancing exercise, IDFS set the following (research) question: how ECG balancing and certification can contribute to strategic development of IDFS in terms credibility, trust, and social capital building?

Answering the above question will help bringing on strategic focus in their operations.

Theory

Erisman (2020) discussed the potential of a nature-oriented food system in relation to health and well-being. The hypothesis was that for a healthy diet, both nutritious food and food based on nature are essential. Current economic model, its supply chain structure and the price system hinder the development towards a more sustainable nature based model. Erisman refers to the Dutch situation (see Figure 2) where there are relatively many farmers (65.000) while moving along the food supply chain the number of chain participants is 6.500 food processors, further 5



purchasing procurement organizations and 25 supermarket formulas, while at the end of the chain we see 16,7 million consumers. This figure shows a clear evidence for an unbalanced chain structure.

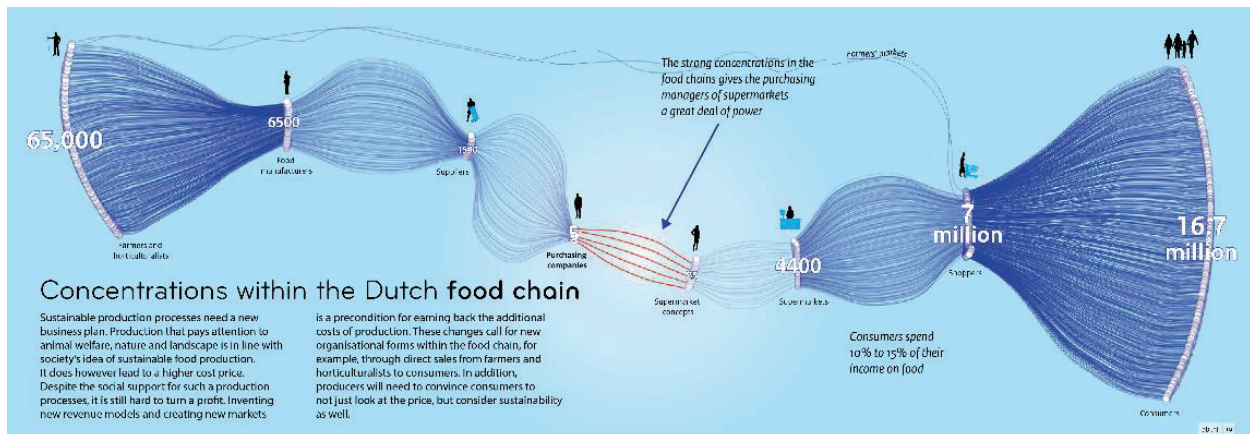


Figure 1 Dutch food supply chain concentration (source: <https://www.pbl.nl/en/publications/the-netherlands-in-21-infographics>)

The key to a solution which is more distributed power in the chain may be a decision-making process based on a broader information framework, taking into account all impacts and internalizing external effects in product/service price. The road to this transformation is long and starts with rising awareness among consumers and the other chain participants about the inequalities. Due to the concentration of the procurement and wholesale, the unsustainability of the food supply chain system is even more serious for small farm. Their declining share in profit and the cost-price squeeze of commodity production increase barriers to market access towards the inevitable effect of agricultural abandonment (Berti & Mulligan, 2016). The (re)construction of regional and local agri-food systems, aligning with Kramer and Porter's concept of shared value strategy is a way forward to respond to the existing conventional agri-food systems and to create a competitive survival strategy for small family farms (Berti & Mulligan, 2016).

While there are specific traditional local food networks in Poland with sustainability potential; these are more focused on the material core of practices, being geographically close, unified, and very specific on the actors engaged (Kopczynska, 2020). These alternative food networks based on the environmentally sustainable food self-provisioning in post-socialist Central and Eastern Europe represent so called 'quiet sustainability' rather than relate these practices to temporal signals of quality and sustainability in food ('slow' and 'fast') (Smith and Jehlicka, 2013). They have limited possibility to reach out to a larger geographical area and to inform a broader consumer base. However, potentially they would evolve to what Berti and Mulligan (2016) propose, regional and local food hubs. Regional and local hubs are innovative organizational arrangements capable of bridging or even overarching the squeezed chain in the agri-food markets between small producers and the consumers—individuals and families as well as big buyers. Hubs would facilitate the direct selling by farmers to end consumers – see the direct connection in Figure 2 from farmers to households. Food hubs respond to a supply chain (or supply network) organizational strategy aiming at re-territorializing the agri-food systems through the construction of what in the economic literature is defined as value-based food supply chains.



The literature demonstrates the high potential of short food supply chains to improve sustainability, as they have been renewed or created in relation to large expectations regarding “new indicators of wealth” (Chiffolleau and Dourian 2020). Further, it shows that for example IT (information technology) and SCM practices (logistics integration and supplier relationships) have a significant positive impact on the performance of an organization and they can facilitate the decision-makers in the agri-food supply chain field (Kumar et al. 2020).

This so far the literature and the theory. The theory and the literature-oriented papers present some theoretical suggestions, but the real world implementation is another story. The extant literature points to the proposed frameworks as not fitting micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSME) reality and, also, to a lack of empirical evidence in this field. Notwithstanding, earlier in the 2015 Final Report of the EIP-AGRI Focus Group “Innovative Short Food Supply Chain management” (EIP-AGRI Focus Group, 2015), food hubs were already suggested as the solution for the scaling of the short food supply chains. Until now, year 2024, we have little evidence on this happening from practice. This may stress the need for the development of a broader European research and application program on food hubs, short positive supply chains or IT integration solutions.

With research at the intersection of business and sustainability implementation (e.g. SDGs) still being scarce, the Economy for the Common Good (ECG) model allows for operationalizing sustainability i.e. the SDGs employing its novel measurement theory (Ejarque and Campos, 2020). It has a potential to support implementing sustainable food hubs in practice and potentially serve as a tool for gathering empirical evidence. The ECG model, as a sustainability management and control system, utilizes two interconnected tools the Common Good Matrix (CGM) and the Common Good Balance Sheet (CGBS) (Felber et al., 2019), being appealing and practical to apply. The ECG framework is offered in two versions: full Balance Sheet workbook and compact balance sheet. The compact version is suitable for micro and small enterprises. The audit process can be organized by the external auditor or by peer group of enterprises, therefore allowing for flexibility. This allows, not only for deepening their own knowledge but also provides a hands-on tool for improving and preparing strategy steps to take.

In that the Economy for the Common Good (ECG) model by Felber (2010, 2019) as a sustainability management and control framework is a useful pragmatic instrument to implement the strategy of shortening the supply chains and enabling the transformation to (more) sustainable. Transforming food supply chains from squeezed to distributed and sustainable should be then achievable.

The ECG is implemented in several European and worldwide businesses, originating in German-speaking countries. The current implementation illustration, as for May, 2024, IDFS is the first and only polish company audited with ECG.

The IDFS’s core activities focus on building short food supply chains and connecting actors, building social capital towards positive food chains. Still the exercise of conducting the ECG balancing was a challenge. Those steps to take will be presented in the empirical part.

Methods

IDFS provides services to connect farmers and manage networks of food producers into short positive supply chains. Its services include developing and operating IT platforms and data



management solutions to strengthen local farmers position to become production leaders in terms of sustainable food production.

Through 2022 and a part of 2023, the owners together with the ECG consultant worked on analyzing the company's activities and records based on the ECG compact implementation Compact Handbook 5.0. It was an intensive development process of multiple formal and informal meetings, interviews and shared analysis sessions.

At the same time, in 2023, IDFS's ran huge projects. As a micro company with three fte's, it participated in projects related to data management in food and agribusiness with almost 13 M euro value together in that year; examples are DATAMITE (Horizon), UPINFOOD (Erasmus), The Food Passports Certification project in Poland.

These core business activities ran along the first ECG compact balancing round created a huge challenge in terms of human capacities and time allocation. Below the workload for preparing the first CEG compact balance for the IDFS company is presented:

IDFS owner 1 Adam Patkowski - interviews - 5* 2 hours plus mail work, additional calls and review meetings, + 6 hrs audit day

IDFS owner 2 Roman Grzesiak - interviews - 5* 2 hours plus mail work, plus additional documentation preparations, + 6 hrs audit day

IDFS Owner 3 Firma X COMP Spółka z o.o. - Tomek Dynarski (Xcomp) - interview 1 hr

Report editing and graphic presentation - 4 hours

ECG consultant (total of 100 hours):

Joanna Guśc interviews including the transcribing: 26 hours,

report writing preparation 40 hours and additional information consultations - 6 hours,

mailing with ECG - 2 hours.

Jacqueline Hofstede owner Ynova company (ECG certified) Review of the first concept: 3 hours of report reviewing + 2 hours of discussion.

ECG audit

At the moment of submission of this full case description, the IDFS company has been audited and certified for the ECG.

Analysis

After conducting the ECG balancing project we reflected on the process and the outcome. We are aware that we may have spent too little time on it. Conducting the projects and running the exercise of the ECG balance alongside has revealed to IDFS the need to create a stronger focus after its start-up phase. It needs to be prepared for the growth in the future. So far, IDFS has engaged in many food production projects and focused on connecting the farmers and producers groups only. Now it may be a mature time to focus on cooperating with stakeholders i.e. consumers to create awareness of the information of food production and its origin to realize the impact. The Food



Passports project is the first step in that focus. The ECG balancing requires specific plans and its active implementation to show the results to be able to get valued in the ECG balance. The owners are committed to creating an action plan to enhance the impact, but this work will come on the existing tasks. The owners see the challenges in the quality of the data with which the technology is supported. The data comes from farmers and farmers producers groups, not all processes are digitalized or automated. At the same time IDFS needs to be able to show and communicate its impact. The time and human resource allocation to make it happen remained a challenge.

Although, one of the motives to step in the ECG balancing was its developmental character as a tool; the score produced by the external audit of 253 points came as a bit of a negative surprise. Once the score is visible, IDFS owners were confronted with the fact that may not be enough to sell sustainable service or a product, you need to show it and make internal organisation ECG ready. After the formal audit the score went even down a bit more and then there was serious question from the owners: What now? Are we good or not? They needed some time to digest it.

Discussion and Conclusion

A new era in economics ahead of us - the era of data sharing - we should be able to explain to all entities that something that may at first be considered a threat (data is perceived as an important resource and competitive advantage) is more of a huge opportunity and a new impulse for development.

What we have learned thanks to the ECG balancing process is that we are not unique in encountering the problems to get things done to make the world better. That may sound broad, but we are truly motivated to make a change. Sometimes we get really upset when others seem not to understand our really good idea – like to improve the profitability of the farmers while becoming more sustainable. Farmers sometimes do not trust us and are suspicious, “by definition to us as “outsiders”, potentially imposing something. Sometimes, a bit pessimistically, we think:- this is Poland, we are far behind “the West”. But we have also learned that our challenges are common with all organisations trying to move to responsible business, and we need to create focus in our operations and activity. We must not forget to generate economic income to be able to continue our activities in the future. Monetizing the time we invest in the future development made us first looked shocked, but later realized, OK this is fine, but what is the return? In the short run and in the long run? We do not need to measure the return in terms of money, but we need to articulate what is it worth to us.

We are impressed by the truly democratic set of values of ECG. With our balancing exercise, we learned, that we sell sustainable service but we may not that truly represent the values in what we reach out to our customers. The ECG balance and audit, was like a mirror or a sounding board. Other important issues were credibility, trust and social capital - closely related to the values carried by ECG, and building these values in the era of sharing real data of the highest quality must become much easier. The transformation of business model may become real thanks to the increased role of the conscious and engaged consumers (and the organizations they create), who will be able to have a stronger impact on their environment and will require the economy as a whole serves the Common Good. We are confident, that this is the core focus for our strategy. But we learned that we need follow the development of the consumer awareness much stronger. We are now a bit disconnected from the field.



For us the question remains: what are the best practices to connect to the field of the consumers?

In Poland this is a real challenge, after the years of communism, and following years of economic revolution, people are focused on surviving or building material wealth instead of developing their values. It is however needed here, as we receive signals during the conferences and network meetings where we participate, that there is a longing for the “optimistic positive”, the democratic longing for the sustainable order. We are looking forward to connect to the international ECG network and to learn and exchange ideas on how to make it happen. So, the questions for the audience are: What can IDFS do in this regard? Specific actions/activities/challenges: today, in 30 days and 100 days? We are looking forward to meeting you at the conference.

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Graphic source: <https://www.pbl.nl/en/publications/the-netherlands-in-21-infographics>

[1] As of February 2024, there are 8,254 certified B Corporations across 162 industries in 96 countries. ECG A growing movement for change, 4,590 Members, 1,085 Businesses, 171 Local Chapters, 44 Municipalities, 35 Countries



3.1 Humanistic transformation: Outer change needs inner growth - How the members of a German ECG consulting firm developed their psychological resources in order to change their sustainable behavior and to be more impactful change facilitators.

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Summary

This paper is about the importance of inner growth for outer change and is based on the inner growth program, which we as members of the consulting firm ‘humanistic transformations’ have gone through from January to May 2024. It shows, whether and how this self-experiment has influenced our common good-oriented behavior in order to become more impactful transformation facilitators.

The inner growth program developed for the test run builds on the findings of Marcel Hunecke’s psychology of sustainability (‘Psychologie der Nachhaltigkeit. Vom Nachhaltigkeitsmarketing zur sozial-ökologischen Transformation’, Marcel Hunecke, 2022 oekom verlag, München)1). Therefore, in the first part, we describe Hunecke’s concept of the six psychological resources that can be used to create or promote the individual prerequisites for socio-ecological change. We explore how those inner resources can increase life and work satisfaction beyond an increase in material prosperity and which roles positive physical sensations and joy play in this concept. In the second part, our case study, we describe the objectives, framework and process of our self-experiment. Its evaluation and results lead us to important findings for the design of an inner growth program for change agents (= our customers).

We round off the text with an outlook, in which we shape the future with our inner growth work.

Taking responsibility for inner growth

People are the key factor for real change in companies and communities. Their awareness and behavior are crucial for the success of change processes and their contribution to socio-ecological transformation. Today, around 20 percent of the German population have a future-proof life and work style2). How can at least some of the remaining 80 percent be brought on board? In addition to changes at the structural level – which, after all, are also shaped by people – inner change is required, a humanistic transformation, which leads to a change in awareness and thus to a change in behavior of one's own life and work style.

Where are the places where this inner change is initiated and accompanied? The responsibility for this must not lie at a private level. It must be perceived as a central leadership task in companies and communities – as a contribution to a good life for all within the planetary boundaries.

We at ‘humanistic transformations’ are also taking over responsibility for this issue. As transformation facilitators, we show leaders how they can engage, together with the people in their



systems, in inner change processes. We empower and enable them to be 'change agents' for socio-ecological transformation. This support requires a scientifically sound and tried-and-tested personal development and coaching program, which we describe in this article.

Psychology of sustainability – six psychological resources for common good-oriented behavior

We had been looking for a suitable approach to inner growth work for some time and had investigated the 'Inner Development Goals' and other sustainable personal development methods. We were then recommended the book 'Psychology of sustainability. From sustainability marketing to socio-ecological transformation.' (oekom, Munich 2022) by Marcel Hunecke. The content and practice-oriented questions convinced us a lot. Here is a summary:

In his book Marcel Hunecke develops the concept of six psychological resources that can be used to create or promote the individual prerequisites for socio-ecological change (p. 7ff). His concept is based on findings from environmental, health and positive psychology as well as transdisciplinary sustainability science.

Next to the efficiency and consistency strategy, Hunecke emphasizes the importance of the sufficiency strategy as part of the socio-ecological transformation (p. 14f). In his view, the latter is essential as it goes hand in hand with a change in behavior at an individual and collective level. The central question is how as many people as possible can be motivated to adopt a sufficient way of living and working in the long term. The answer lies in opening up new sources for increasing life satisfaction beyond material prosperity.

The six psychological resources, namely capacity of pleasure, self-acceptance, self-efficacy, mindfulness, construction of meaning and solidarity, are such sources and act as catalysts for change towards a sustainable lifestyle (p. 137ff). By initiating reflective processes on one's own goals and values, they increase motivation for sustainable behavior. In addition, they promote the experience of positive emotions and thus subjective well-being.

They are like an internal resource network. The more resources in this network are activated and work together, the more likely a change towards a sustainable lifestyle is (p. 134ff). It is irrelevant in which order they are activated, because each resource can serve as a starting point for activating further resources.

While Hunecke speaks of a change towards a sustainable lifestyle, we have applied his concept to the orientation towards the common good and thus assume a broader and deeper understanding of sustainability. In the following paragraphs, we briefly present the six psychological resources and their respective potential for common good-oriented behavior.

Resource 1: Capacity of pleasure

The capacity of pleasure (p. 87 ff) is the first resource and refers to the ability to increase the positive quality, intensity and duration of experiences, thoughts, and actions. The potential for common goods-orientated behavior lies in an increased quality of experience, which enables the realization of 'less is more' while simultaneously experiencing positive feelings. In addition, the capacity of pleasure can contribute to the perception of one's own body as a source of positive



sensory experiences and thus make one less dependent on body-related ideals of performance and beauty, and therefore increases self-acceptance.

Resource 2: Self-acceptance

Self-acceptance (p. 92 ff) is the second psychological resource and involves accepting oneself with all of one's positive and negative characteristics. In a society in which the pressure to perform and compete against each other encourages social comparisons, a high level of self-acceptance promotes independence from these processes. The potential of self-acceptance for common good-oriented behavior therefore lies in greater resilience and greater inner satisfaction, which reduces compensatory consumption of status goods with high carbon footprint.

Resource 3: Self-efficacy

The third resource, self-efficacy (p. 97 ff), refers to the conviction that one can set goals for oneself and achieve them based on one's own abilities and actions. By promoting the conviction that one can make a difference through one's own actions, self-efficacy has the potential to overcome learned helplessness and promote behavior that is oriented towards the common good.

Resource 4: Mindfulness

Mindfulness (p. 104 ff) as the fourth psychological resource comprises five dimensions: Observing internal and external stimuli (e.g. bodily sensations, thoughts and feelings), not reacting to these stimuli, acting with awareness (i.e. overcoming autopilot), not judging one's own feelings and thoughts, and the ability to describe these internal processes. The promotion of mindfulness has several impacts on common good-oriented behavior, as it leads to a de-automation of behavior, an increase in compassion, pro-social behavior and closeness to nature, a reduction in materialistic values and an increase in self-acceptance.

Resource 5: Construction of meaning

The fifth psychological resource is the construction of meaning (p. 119 ff). The process of individual meaning construction includes, on the one hand, the search for meaning or the pursuit of meaning in life, whereby connections between things, events and relationships must be actively established, and on the other hand, the fulfillment of meaning through the perception of meaningful connections. In terms of orientation towards the common good, the greatest potential here lies in initiating processes of reflection on one's own goals and values. These processes increase the likelihood that prosocial and transcendental values (e.g. generativity and biocentric values) will gain in importance.

Resource 6: Solidarity

Solidarity (p. 126 ff) as the sixth psychological resource is characterized by the belief in social justice as a desirable goal and the conviction that certain goals can only be achieved through collective action. With regard to the orientation towards the common good, solidarity promotes taking of responsibility for present and future generations, which is linked to positive emotions, and provides a substantive direction for individual and collective behavior.



Case study: Inner growth program for us employees of the consulting firm ‘humanistic transformations’

The company ‘humanistic transformations’

Our young consulting firm was founded in 2021 by experienced Economy for the Common Good (ECG) consultants, auditors, strategy experts and organizational developers. Our vision is a society in which economic activity is aligned with a good life for all. To make this vision come true, we support medium-sized and large companies in their socio-ecological transformation. We see the European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS) as an opportunity and chance for real change and support companies in implementing the reporting directive and beyond. We are convinced that outer changes always require inner changes. As we want to be effective transformation facilitators, organizational and personal development play a central role in our work. We focus on the participation of all employees and managers and their personal transformation on the way to a greater focus on the common good. ‘Change with pleasure’: that is our motivation and aspiration in the inner growth approach.

Objectives, framework and process of our inner growth program

Inspired by Marcel Hunecke's book and the findings from psychology of sustainability, we developed an initial version of our inner growth program in autumn 2023 and decided to test it on ourselves.

We formulated the following objectives for our test run:

- Personal development: stimuli for our own transformation processes
- Team and organizational development: getting to know our colleagues better, strengthening the team kit and further developing a nourishing corporate DNA
- Product development: evaluation of the test run and development of an inner growth program for change agents (= our potential customers)

We designed the framework as follows:

- Period: January to May 2024
- Number of participants: all eight employees; it was important to us that all colleagues took part, and not just the personal and organizational developers among us, who already have a high affinity for the topic
- Kick-off: face-to-face workshop in January with the development of a personal professional vision and the shared values/vision for our company in 2024
- Modules: six online workshops of two hours each (one meeting per psychological resource)
- Rhythm: usually every two weeks on Monday mornings and in between implementation of the planned measure(s) for the respective resource
- Evaluation (see next section ‘Evaluation and most important results’)
- Conclusion: face-to-face workshop in May with final evaluation of the test run and derivation of final findings for our coaching program

As we wanted to increase the participants' engagement through a familiar process, we had the following recurring structure and workshop elements at the meetings:



- Arrival meditation
- Exchange of experiences from the previous two weeks: ‘How did I succeed in implementing my planned step?’
- Intuitive writing on the respective psychological resource
- Theoretical input on the respective psychological resource
- Personal assessment of current state in regard to the resource (individual work, exchange in pairs and in the group): ‘What am I already doing? What effect does this have on my common good-oriented behavior?’
- Meditation to anchor the resource in the personal vision and goal system and its effect on the orientation towards the common good (individual work, exchange in pairs and in the group)
- Exercise to develop a concrete implementation measure in relation to the respective resource until the next meeting in two weeks' time: ‘What action do I want to take within the next two weeks?’
- Closing circle

Evaluation and most important results

As we write this article (mid-March), we are two-thirds of the way through our self-experiment. To evaluate our test run, we drew up a questionnaire and carried out a written survey. All eight employees who completed the program took part in the survey³).

We collected quantitative and qualitative data regarding the four topics listed on the following page. The quantitative evaluation was carried out on a scale from 1 (‘I strongly agree.’) to 4 (‘I strongly disagree.’). All values quoted in the results section below are mean values. In addition to this quantitative response, there was the opportunity for a qualitative response in the form of comments for each topic. As the results are very consistent, we assume that there will be no major deviations in the final evaluation in May 2024.

Results topic 1: Benefits of the inner growth program – personal/team/organization/as transformation facilitators

Regarding the four levels tested (personal, team, organization and as transformation facilitators) the program brought the greatest benefit at the team level (1.17), closely followed by the personal level (1.33). The organizational and facilitator levels both had an average score of 1.5. The hypothesis that the latter two levels performed better among colleagues involved in organizational and personal development was confirmed. The average score there was 1.

Results topic 2: Development/learning effects related to the individual psychological resources – concrete change in common good-oriented behavior – connection with positive physical feeling

The two most helpful psychological resources were capacity of pleasure (1.5) and mindfulness (1.67). In third place was self-acceptance (1.83) followed by self-efficacy and meaning construction, each with an average score of 2.0.

Based on the self-ratings of the participants the development of psychological resources led to changes in common good-oriented behavior in half of the participants after only a short time. This



change in behavior was often successful if it was associated with a positive physical feeling (1.83). For the others, the eight-week period was too short, so that they did not yet notice any concrete change in behavior but did notice a change in awareness regarding important life and work issues. An important step towards subsequently changing behavior (2.16).

Results topic 3: Effect of the different workshop elements

Intuitive writing and reflecting on the theoretical inputs in individual work stimulated our learning the most (1.17 each), followed by the meditations and group reflection (1.33 each). Reflection with our buddy and the change of buddies provided inspiration and new perspective (1.67 each). The development of a nurturing inner companion was a helpful support for half of us (2.0).

The final survey topic (topic 4: Insights for the design of an inner growth program for our clients) was already aimed at developing our coaching program for change agents. We therefore describe the results in the following section.

Derived insights for an inner growth program for our clients

For us, to be effective transformation facilitators, we need to continuously work on our own attitudes, values, and vision as well as our common good-oriented behavior. In the spirit of ‘walking the talk’, we further developed this important basis for our transformation work by going through the inner growth program.

What we also need for being impactful transformation facilitators is a program that encourages and supports our clients to strengthen their ability to transform on a personal, team and organizational level.

In our survey, we received a wide range of feedback on how we can expand and deepen our program to tailor it to the needs of our customers.

One colleague wondered: Is the clogged economy even ready for such a program? How do we get people without meditation experience on board? How do we prevent our program from being misused for manipulative purposes? These are legitimate questions that we need to take a good look at.

In terms of the general design of the program, we had the following insights:

- Next to clarifying the assignment with the decision-makers of our client, we should also clarify the assignment with all participants in order to recognize in advance where people stand, what expectations and what previous experience they have and how willing they are to engage in this process openly and trustingly.
- Ideally, the program should start with leaders so that they set a good example and act as role models for their employees.
- Not only offer two-hour online workshops, but longer workshops, as internal processes often take longer, e.g. a longer workshop every month, with small team sessions or individual sessions in between. In addition to individual measures for a greater focus on the common good also reflect on team measures and their implementation.
- Start with a pilot group of volunteers in a company who, after completing the program, will work with us to further develop the offer in-house.



- Train internal inner growth ambassadors who will support us in ensuring that the program is rolled out quickly within the company and that as many employees as possible are involved.
- Clarify in advance whether people will participate in homogeneous or heterogeneous groups. One argument in favor of homogeneous groups is that there are different requirements in terms of the development of the six psychological resources, e.g. due to life phases.

The following suggestions were made for the actual implementation:

- Enrich the program with further input (e.g. work on beliefs) to have a deep impact and lasting effect.
- Do not rigidly define the resource terms because people sometimes understand terms such as self-efficacy or construction of meaning differently than they are meant. You need to let people explain these terms and concepts in their own words to clarify they understood what they really mean.
- With non-academics, have a lot of sensitivity and pay attention to the right choice of words.
- Make room for frustration and acknowledge what is.
- Provide information on existing support services for mental health or offer individual coaching sessions alongside the program.

These findings and suggestions are our basis for designing the inner growth program for change agents. There will be a variety of building blocks (coachings, trainings, interactive workshops, etc.) that we will use in a needs-oriented and customized way. Our reference space will always be our own inner change and the ongoing development of our own psychological resources.

Outlook: Shaping a future with inner growth

We look to the future and see companies and communities in which people bring to life a way of doing business and working that is oriented towards the common good. Their inner transformation encourages them to give more and more space to their purpose and values and to go their own way with mindfulness and pleasure. While they reduce their external consumption of resources, even making it climate-positive, they strengthen their inner resources. Their life satisfaction and joy are no longer dependent on material consumption. They have a healthy self-acceptance and experience their self-efficacy. In this way, they act in solidarity with people and nature. We want to help shape this future with our inner growth program.

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3.2 Inspiring sustainable attitudes: the unseen transition role of the life view sector in The Netherlands

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Abstract

This case is about the life view sector in the Netherlands, comprising Christian churches, Islamic mosques, Buddhist centres, Humanist branches and many more spiritual or philosophical communities. Research in the Netherlands shows that, despite secularisation, still around half of the population find their most fundamental beliefs in this sector.

The urgent need for sustainability transitions puts the life view sector in an unprecedented and crucial position. The sector is able to provide large numbers of people with the narratives and value systems that they need to counter overconsumption and raise the next generation with sustainability in mind.

In the city of Assen, the Solidair Groningen & Drenthe foundation and the Noorden Duurzaam association started a project to explore this new position. All 35 life view communities in the municipality were invited to a series of meetings. An action fields model was developed to structure sustainability efforts into sector generic topics, and to provide life view communities with an action perspective. In January 2024, the participating communities organised a one-day sustainability festival, hosting many local sustainability initiatives. The festival received positive evaluations, which led to higher ambitions for next events.

1. Introduction

In this paper we explore the collective role of organised and active religious and philosophical communities in the societal response to the sustainability crisis. The collective is referred to as the 'life view sector'. We present a framework for developing sector wide sustainability action. Furthermore, we present a case project of local life view communities in the city of Assen, The Netherlands.

Humanity is facing the worst sustainability crisis ever. Half a century after the first public warnings, many limits to growth are being reached and exceeded. It has resulted in multiple environmental and social crises. While these crises develop slowly, they may amplify each other, may be irreversible when trigger points are passed, and may become existential to civilisation (Homer-Dixon et al., 2021). If humanity is to develop sustainably, as the UN expressed in the Sustainable Development Goals, drastic measures are needed (IPCC, 2023). The unprecedented urgency has led to a large-scale world-wide response. This response, however, is far from sufficient, as the Earth Overshoot Day shows. In 2023 in the Netherlands this was on April 1, globally on August 2 (Global Footprint Network, 2024).



In exploring options to accelerate, the regional Dutch thinktank Noorden Duurzaam (ND) argues that the medieval governance system of the Dutch water authorities can provide inspiration. This system builds on task division between mutually dependent societal sectors and has been successful in mitigating slow-but-existential water management crises, from the 13th century onwards. ND has presented a modernised version of this system for use in 21st century transition management (Faber et al., 2022).

One sector with a potential to help accelerate sustainability transitions is the life view sector, as its religious and philosophical communities may promote pro-environmental behaviour (e.g. Zemo & Nigus, 2021; Orellano et al., 2020). Then, how large is this sector and what is its reach? In 2022, around 43% of citizens in The Netherlands were counting themselves as belonging to a religious or philosophical movement. Some 18% are Catholic, 13% Protestant, 6% Islamic and 6% other, including Humanist (CBS, 2023; CBS, 2020). Around 12% visits services on a regular basis while another 12% regularly follows a service through TV, radio or internet. It adds up to some 10% of the total population.

Assen, our case municipality, is home to around 70.000 inhabitants. Based on the above statistics, we count 7.000 as members, and 23.000 more as involved audience, sensitive in some degree to what happens in their life view community. A brief survey by Solidair Groningen & Drenthe (SGD) in 2021 showed Assen counts 35 active life view communities.

What are current role perceptions in the life view sector regarding sustainable development? We take a brief look at two influential lines of thought.

Firstly, according to Pope Francis in his 2015 encyclical *Laudato Si'* and the 2023 update *Laudate Deum*, the climate crisis is caused by mankind and needs to be solved by us as well (Pope Francis, 2023). Apart from a forceful message to upcoming climate conferences, the documents stress the importance of 'changing personal, family and community habits', as a contribution to sustainability in itself and to bringing about 'large processes of transformation rising from deep within society'. *Laudato Si'* has received strong support in Catholic communities.

Secondly, Trees van Montfoort states that current theology is unable to answer to the ecological crisis, since it is stuck in the modern, anthropocentric and mechanistic world view that caused the crisis in the first place. A theology that wants to be understandable for modern people, risks to adapt so much to the zeitgeist, that it has nothing left to say. If theology can deconstruct the worldview of the modernity, it can contribute to the wellbeing of the earth and its inhabitants by, 'asking fundamental questions, by sharpening existing questions and by offering insights from its rich tradition' (Montfoort, 2019). This line of thought received a warm welcome as well.

In sum, life view communities are not unaware of their potential contribution to sustainability transitions. This can also be seen in many initiatives across the sector, for sustainable facilities, activities and life style. However, this awareness is manifest mostly within communities and denominations. Sectoral collaboration for sustainability is still in its infancy.

The main question of this paper therefore is what role the life view sector as a whole may develop in sustainability transitions. We also want to know how the sector can experiment with these roles on a local level, how members respond, how society responds, and what impact can be expected.



In section 2 we present a theoretical framework used in the case project. Section 3 describes the case project itself. Section 4 is a discussion, leading to conclusions in section 5.

2. Framework

The life view sector has no shortage of inspiration sources and values, but has little tradition in sustainability transition management. The required knowledge, methods and institutes are to be developed yet. If the sector is to take steps, a functional model is needed, explaining what roles the sector can fulfil. We look at two models.

Firstly, Koehrsen discerns between three potential sustainability functions of religion: “(1) campaigning and intermediation in the public sphere; (2) ‘materialization’ of transitions in the form of participation in projects related to sustainable transitions; (3) dissemination of values and worldviews that empower environmental attitudes and action” (Koehrsen, 2015).

Secondly, Groene Kerken is a joint project initiated by protestant churches in The Netherlands. The project issues a toolkit for religious communities, containing tools for six themes: energy and climate; community finance; faith and inspiration; nature around the church building; sustainable purchasing; policy formulation. The project is popular and growing.

In 2017, in collaboration with a national advisory group, SGD and ND developed an action fields model for life view communities (Table 1), based on the Laudato Si’ encyclical and functional models as above. Its purpose is to structure sustainability tasks into functional areas, providing all life view communities with an action perspective. The model is intended to be sector generic and builds up from internal functions to inspiring society. Each action field may require a sector wide knowledge hub of some kind, on local or larger levels, making it easier for communities to get started and to share experiences.



Table 1: Sustainability action fields model for life view communities

Action field	Transition task at a local community level
Inspiration	(Re-)interpreting and sharing inspiration sources and traditions that call for sustainability. Reflecting on sustainability issues from these (re-)interpretations.
Policy	In annual plans, writing sustainability ambitions that stretch beyond the community.
Finance	Sustainable financial policy, including sustainable banking and investments, and reviewing agricultural land lease contracts.
Building	Transform the community facilities into a showcase of sustainable building.
Facilities	Sustainable purchasing and sustainable internal organisation.
Lifestyle	Calling on community members to choose and grow in a more sustainable life style.
Society	Contributing to transition acceleration in the surrounding society, e.g. by involvement in projects and by promoting intrinsic motivation.

Knowledge hubs may take the shape of small volunteer committees with members from multiple communities. The hubs may gather knowledge, for instance by inviting outside experts. The hub may also build a collection of successful examples or best practices that their communities may adopt. Another task could be organising sector wide meetings for their topic, stand alone or as part of larger events. Yet another role would be to represent the sector in (local) politics and plead for more sustainability action.

The local life view sector will thus gain new knowledge centres and representatives for sustainable development that may impact transition progress within and outside the sector, because the sector has a credible and institutional engagement. A side effect is that this approach provides professional specialists among community members with opportunities for engagement, with more reach than just one community. Another benefit is that the action field model may be scaled up to national and even international levels, creating influential knowledge networks.

3. Case

In 2016, the SGD and ND decided to explore options for collaboration. Focus was on the role of catholic life view communities in sustainability transitions. This case description highlights main steps since then.

Later in 2016 SGD and others wrote a national scale pilot project plan focusing on Roman Catholic communities. As no funding could be found, SGD and ND decided to scale down, eventually to a local project. A new project plan was written in 2019, now explicitly sector wide. Again, multiple



attempts to find funding had no result and caused long delays. In review, SGD and ND assume the repeated funding problem may have had multiple causes, including the proposal being non trivial and abstract, as no evidence from existing examples could be presented. Finally, SGD and ND decided to continue on a no budget basis with limited time investments.

In 2021, a survey resulted in a list of 35 life view communities in Assen. All were invited for a first meeting, which had to be online due to pandemic restrictions. The objective was to get acquainted and explore options for improving sustainability of community buildings. The meeting took place but attracted only few building representatives and was not followed up.

Gradually, an organising team was formed. The team currently has six members, representing seven life view communities (one Baptist, one Apostolic, three PKN - the largest Protestant denomination in The Netherlands, one Roman Catholic, one Humanist), and is facilitated by SGD and ND.

In 2022, two researchers from the Hanze University for Applied Science conducted a shared value survey among Assen life view communities. The team concluded that the communities “are often on the same page when it comes to awareness and activities for sustainability, and use the same words. In addition to being an urgent topic, sustainability can also be a bridge to discuss a (sustainable) future and what this means for us.”

Based on these findings, a plan for a local sustainability festival came up, along with the option of a student team to help organise this. This led to a sustainability festival in January 2024 (Figure 1), for the purpose of awareness, education, inspiration, action and collaboration for sustainability. The festival was titled ‘Geloof in groen leven’ (Believe in Green Living), and was targeted at residents, communities, schools and organisations in the municipality of Assen. The festival offered a rich program of exhibits (information tables), workshops, a children’s program, music, a volunteer taxi project and more.





Figure 1: Announcement

More than 250 individuals participated. 10% of all visitors participated in a survey by researchers from the Hanze University of Applied Science, in interviews or by filling in a questionnaire. According to many the event was pleasantly busy. The survey further showed that less than half of the visitors lived in the Assen municipality. The visitors were diverse in age and mainly came in duos or families. Most were attracted by the topic. Some were interested because the event was in their own church. Some seemed to have come just to meet others. The visitor feedback was mainly positive. People valued the many different activities (including for children). The atmosphere was friendly, and the festival was described as accessible, varied, useful, educational. Some visitors indicated they found inspiration to take a next step towards sustainability. More in general they assessed events like this as helpful for building awareness. From short interviews it appeared that many visitors were not used to expressing thoughts and feelings about the topic. Two visitors denounced the presence of multiple life view groups. A wish tree, built by an artist during the



festival, collected 34 green hopes for the future. In conclusion, the event was considered a positive experience in itself, which contributed to positive impact in terms of awareness and intrinsic motivation.

The 20 exhibitors, mostly specialised in energy or nature, were satisfied as well. They evaluated the event as pleasant, positive and valuable, with ample interest from people ‘with a passion for nature and/or sustainability’. The exhibitors were also positive about meeting other exhibitors and about talking with the politician who is responsible for local sustainability in Assen and who officially opened the event. Critical notes were about absence of circular economy exhibits. Also, they mentioned lack of interest for workshops, which seemed to be largely due to practical problems. Many exhibitors want to participate in a follow up event.

In an evaluation meeting, the organising team concluded that on the one hand, the festival had been a positive experience for all involved, and as such is worth repeating. On the other hand, the organising effort had been over the top for several team members, so in a follow up event more human and financial resources are needed. The team decided to prepare for a new and more ambitious event, in a phased project with multiple go/no-go decision points, to reduce overload risks and to generate more executive buy-in. In a first phase, a summary is to be written and to be negotiated with the executive boards of the municipality and all interested life view communities in Assen.

Reaching out to executive levels rather than sustainability representatives is considered a necessary step in order to mobilise leadership (“Sustainability is Chefsache”). The team expect that once chairpersons support and prioritise the plan, more life view communities and more volunteers in these communities will participate. In the plan they want to state this purpose: a strong contribution of the life view sector to the intrinsic motivation of all Assen residents for sustainability transitions. The team consider this sector level purpose an essential linkage between local government sustainability ambitions and the missions of life view communities.

In a subsequent phase, the team want to write a more detailed plan, drawing on the experiences of 2024. In collaboration with the Hanze University of Applied Science, a new group of students from the minor Event Management will be given the assignment to help organising the next event according to this plan, while at the same time adding what they learn-by-doing to the plan itself, in preparation for a event the year after. This approach seeks to align with the student culture in nearby universities, where complex annual events like freshman weeks are organised by relatively unexperienced student committees, working from standardised scripts and therefore needing only little support or mentoring.

The content of the next event will be chosen in a next phase as well, and may include an information market, a local conference with keynotes and parallel workshops, action field hub presentations, neighbourhood actions, involvement of schools, etc.

4. Discussion

Reviewing the case history, it appears that many steps, like funding and inviting building experts, were unsuccessful. Multiple factors may be in play here. First, the sector is very diverse and has little tradition in sector wide inter-denominational projects. Second, while many life view communities integrate sustainability in their mission and activities, little or no thought is given to



the societal role of their sector as a whole. Thirdly, participants in various meetings in this case often experienced a negative energy balance: meetings take time and bring no new resources on short term. Fourthly, the group may have been too small to create 'fear of missing out'. Fifth, there was no strong support or prioritisation from senior leadership in the local communities.

The festival, however, was a relative success. Here too, a number of factors can be seen. Firstly, in Assen there is both supply and demand of practical information about sustainability. Secondly, organising events is routine for life view organisations. Thirdly, a suitable church building was available for free. Fourth, a volunteer and a student team were available to prepare and manage the event. Fifth, SGD received some funding for student mentoring and coordination. Finally, the event generated sufficient mass and diversity to be an attractor by numbers alone, as could be seen in the visitor profiles and interviews.

The organising team, well aware of the above failure and success factors, formulated the role of the life view sector as a strong contribution to intrinsic citizen motivation for sustainability transitions. This is a potentially impactful viewpoint, as it proposes a common mission to a pluriform sector, which may provide new ground for dialogue and cooperation, and for board level buy-in. Furthermore, even a lightweight inter-denominational sustainability committee or hub creates a sector level actor, able to contribute to municipal sustainability policy. While municipalities cannot support the mission of individual life view communities, they do facilitate sectors in their common sustainability mission.

While in previous years board level executives in local life view communities and government showed little interest in helping the sector to self-organise for sustainability, this may change as urgency awareness accumulates. The action perspective for the team is to seize the current opportunity, present a development pathway that enables the sector to fulfil its role and to find resources to facilitate this process.

Practically, there may be two tracks. First is to build a tradition of annual or bi-annual festivals, either central in Assen or distributed in city districts. Second is setting up knowledge hubs for each field of the action fields model. The intended result is that each community has access to sufficient expertise in each field to be trustworthy in motivating their members for sustainability and to influence their neighbourhood.

The two tracks may join in the festivals, where not only local sustainability organisations inform visitors, but where life view knowledge hubs present their best practices, actions and public appeal as well.

One could argue that life view communities have different views on sustainability. Not all will see a need for life style change, depending for instance on their views on eschatology, or how 'blessings' are defined. While this may be true, many life view communities display a strong sense of urgency and responsibility. Furthermore, life view communities as well as their members continuously reinterpret their original inspiration sources to understand current circumstances (Montfoort, 2019). Facing existential threats, they may be expected to gradually converge on what is needed for next generations to survive and thrive. Disqualifying slow adopters may be less effective than stimulating them to join a growing movement.



5. Conclusion

While there may be compelling reasons for the life view sector to put collective effort in guiding society to life style changes, it appears difficult to even get the sector at the table to discuss the topic. As such, this is no surprise since this sector is very divided and has no strong tradition in inter-denominational projects. This case study shows no exception to this pattern, although some progress has been made in exploring pathways.

This case study started from the question what role the life view sector (defined as organised and active religious and philosophical communities) can take in sustainability transitions. A focus on societal sectors in general follows from the observation that global transition progress is insufficient, and from evidence about successful sectoral task division in countering slow but existential crises. The life view sector in particular is considered of crucial importance because on the one hand transitions ask for large scale unpopular changes in life style, while on the other hand the sector has an influence on intrinsic motivation of around half of the population. In this case study, the organising team therefore formulated the role of the life view sector as a strong contribution to intrinsic citizen motivation for sustainability transitions.

SGD and ND experienced hardship in finding budget for a sector wide experiment, on both national and local level. This seemed partly due to the plan being novel and abstract, as no evidence from existing projects could be presented. In a no-budget attempt with a small organising team representing seven life view communities, however, it appeared feasible to organise a joint event, a one-day small-scale sustainability festival where 20 local sustainability organisations staffed information stands and presented workshops.

Around 250 individuals participated in the festival. They appreciated the event as a positive experience in itself, which seems to have contributed to positive impact in terms of awareness and intrinsic motivation.

The life view communities organising the event experienced the event itself and their collaboration for sustainability as positive and useful, and worth repeating. Next steps may include board level involvement of communities and local government, and a two-track approach, consisting of expertise building and annual events. The team are hopeful that a follow-up event will generate more impact in terms of awareness and intrinsic motivation. A third track is a wider exchange of experiences on the research question at hand, to which this paper may contribute.

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Research data is available on request to peter.bootsma@noordenduurzaam.nl

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

There are no potential conflicts of interest relevant to this article.

ETHICS STATEMENT



The authors declare human ethics approval was not needed for this study.



3.3 Empowering Youth Innovation: Unleashing Potential Through the Quintuple Helix for Inclusive Community Development

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1. Introduction

The pursuit of sustainable innovation is vital in addressing global ‘wicked problems’ such as climate change and systemic inequalities, which Levin et al. (2012) describe as ‘super wicked’ due to their urgent nature, the paradox of contributors also seeking solutions, the absence of a central authority, and the tendency to prioritize short-term benefits. This highlights the necessity for moving beyond traditional linear approaches, advocating for more integrated and proactive strategies to manage the complexities and urgencies inherent in these challenges.

The untapped potential of youth in solving ‘super wicked problems’ highlights a significant gap in our educational systems, which currently prioritize traditional learning methods – focusing on passive absorption, specialization, and memorization – over skills like critical thinking, creativity, and interdisciplinary problem-solving. This approach not only sidelines young individuals, who are inherently equipped with dynamic energy, technological fluency, and environmental awareness but also perpetuates a self-reinforcing cycle of educational conservatism that resists the integration of more dynamic, relevant learning methods. Consequently, this inertia within educational policy and practice limits young people’s capacity to contribute effectively to societal development and environmental stewardship, underscoring an urgent need for educational reforms that empower youth as active, innovative participants in tackling complex global challenges.

Acknowledging limitations in current educational frameworks, there’s an urgent need for a shift from traditional path dependency, as described by Levin et al., to a focus on proactive, adaptable education. This requires embracing reforms that promote active learning, interdisciplinary methods, and practical experiences for addressing complex problems. Essential are ‘sticky interventions’ – durable and adaptable strategies that engage and empower youth in sustainable innovation. Within the Quintuple Helix model, while considering socioecological dynamics, young people should be integral contributors, not just as learners but as active participants across academia, industry, government, civil society, and environmental sectors. This enhances their ability to lead systemic changes, empowering them to tackle super wicked problems and drive sustainable development across various societal dimensions.

The Peelpioniers initiative in the Brabantse Peel region exemplifies the power of integration, applying forward reasoning to anticipate future societal and environmental needs. By actively involving youth in environmental sustainability projects and positioning them as leaders, the initiative not only addresses current challenges but also anticipates future ones, aligning with the broader Quintuple Helix framework. This strategic approach ensures that interventions become path-dependent and ‘sticky’, embedding youth in the environmental helix for sustained



engagement and reshaping the dynamics of sustainable innovation and development holistically and inclusively.

2. Literature Review

In the evolving discourse on sustainable development and innovation, the roles of youth and educational paradigms have garnered significant attention. This literature review explores these domains, culminating in the Quintuple Helix model's integrative framework, which promises a holistic approach to innovation by intertwining academia, industry, government, civil society, and the environment. Despite widespread acknowledgment of youth's potential and the model's merits, a gap persists in actively engaging young individuals within this framework, particularly in leveraging their environmental stewardship – a gap this study aims to address through the Peelpioniers initiative.

Youth and Innovation

The critical role of youth in spearheading sustainable development and innovation is increasingly recognized, particularly in addressing 'super wicked' problems. According to the United Nations 'Our Common Agenda' policy brief (2023), young people are crucial in finding novel solutions to pressing global challenges, including climate change, systemic inequalities, and environmental crises. Positioned as future guardians of the planet, their active engagement in climate action, social justice, and technological advancements marks them as pivotal agents of societal change.

However, despite their significant contributions, the brief highlights a notable gap in youth representation within public policy and decision-making arenas, suggesting a missed opportunity to leverage their innovative potential. This disparity accentuates the need for reforms in education and policy that not only recognize but also incorporate the ideas and voices of the youth. Integrating young individuals into the environmental helix of the Quintuple Helix model could unleash their creative energy and ecological insights, fostering their involvement in developing comprehensive solutions to today's most daunting challenges.

Educational Paradigms

GreenComp, the European sustainability competence framework, serves as a pivotal reference in advancing sustainability competencies within educational paradigms. It offers a comprehensive foundation for learners and educators alike, promoting a unified understanding of sustainability as a core competence. This framework responds to the critical need for individuals to cultivate the knowledge, skills, and attitudes essential for living, working, and acting sustainably, supporting lifelong learning across all ages and educational levels in various learning settings.

Against this backdrop, the imperative for educational reform extends beyond the mere addition of sustainability topics to the curriculum, advocating for a fundamental transformation of educational systems towards transformative learning processes. This shift, underscored by the literature review of the GreenComp framework, moves away from traditional transmissive teaching methods to embrace participatory, action-oriented, and learner-centered pedagogies. Such an approach is in harmony with UNESCO's Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), which emphasizes the need to mainstream ESD across all educational sectors to dynamically address local sustainability challenges.



In this evolving educational environment, The Climate Academy emerges as a good example of innovation by weaving the principles of system thinking and sustainability into its curriculum. This not only aligns with the transformative learning processes advocated by scholars but also exemplifies the participatory and action-oriented learning environment essential for grappling with the complexities of climate change.

Quintuple Helix Model

The Quintuple Helix model, weaving together academia, industry, government, civil society, and the environment, emphasizes the ecological dynamics inherent in society's interaction with nature, as framed by the principles of social ecology according to Carayannis and Campbell (2010). This framework underscores the coevolution of society and nature, enhancing its approach to the 'super wicked problems' that defy simple solutions by crossing ecological, social, and economic boundaries. By embedding this socioecological perspective, the model adeptly navigates the complexities of these challenges, advocating for an interdisciplinary, sustainability-focused approach to innovation. This necessitates educational and policy reforms that are both inclusive and attuned to the intricate relationship between societal structures and ecological systems, ensuring a holistic strategy for sustainable progress.

Gap Identification

Despite the crucial role of youth in innovation and the Quintuple Helix framework's potential for sustainable development, there's a notable disconnect, particularly within academia and government. These sectors often treat education as a static entity, lacking the dynamism required to instill critical thinking, creativity, and systemic insight needed to tackle 'super wicked problems'. Such issues, characterized by their intricate social, environmental, and economic interdependencies, necessitate moving beyond traditional path-dependent approaches. The inertia in academia and government restricts the evolution of educational content and policy, failing to adequately incorporate youth perspectives and respond to societal shifts, thereby diminishing young individuals' engagement in sustainability and innovation.

The Quintuple Helix Framework has the potential for vibrant collaboration among academia, government, and youth, pushing these established institutions towards embracing forward-thinking and applied reasoning. This shift is crucial for rejuvenating all helices, enhancing their adaptability to the innovative solutions that youth bring to the table, especially in the realm of environmental sustainability. This transformation is not just about innovation; it's about fostering a socioecological transition that aligns human systems with ecological sustainability. Projects like the Peelpioniers in the Brabantse Peel serve as prime examples of this approach in action, where youth participation within the framework revitalizes traditional models and broadens their scope. By actively involving young individuals, these initiatives not only introduce fresh perspectives but also drive the socioecological transitions necessary for the application of the Quintuple Helix model, ensuring a sustainable future that harmonizes societal development with ecological integrity.

3. Methodology

This study employs an action research approach, which is particularly suited to exploring the dynamic interaction between youth and the Quintuple Helix model within the context of



sustainable community development. Action research is characterized by its cyclical process of planning, action, observation, and reflection, allowing for a participatory and iterative investigation that aligns with the collaborative ethos of the Quintuple Helix framework. This methodology facilitates not only the generation of practical knowledge but also the empowerment of participants, making it an ideal choice for a study focused on the active engagement of youth in innovation processes.

Data collection was conducted through a multi-faceted approach to capture the complexities of the Peelpioniers initiative. Participatory observations were made during project meetings, workshops, and community events, allowing for an immersive understanding of the interactions and processes within the initiative. In-depth interviews were conducted with a range of participants, including young innovators, project coordinators, and local stakeholders, to gather diverse perspectives on the role and impact of youth within the initiative. Additionally, document analysis was performed on project reports, planning documents, and public communications, and video reporting was utilized to enhance the richness of the data collected through observations and interviews. This combination of methods helped to triangulate the data and provided a comprehensive view of the initiative.

The Peelpioniers initiative, chosen for this study, exemplifies the Quintuple Helix model's principles, especially in its focus on ecological sustainability and youth engagement. The selection of participants – comprising youth involved, project leaders, and community members – was designed to ensure a comprehensive view of the initiative's impact. The author's involvement as the founder of Peelpioniers provides a unique insider perspective, enriching the study with in-depth understanding and facilitating a nuanced analysis of the project's alignment with sustainable development goals and the empowerment of youth within this framework.

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis, a method well-suited to action research due to its flexibility and focus on identifying patterns and themes within qualitative data. This approach facilitated the extraction of key insights related to the engagement of youth within the Quintuple Helix framework, their contributions to innovation and community development, and the challenges and opportunities encountered within the Peelpioniers initiative.

Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all interview participants, with particular attention paid to the consent process for youth participants, ensuring it was age-appropriate and comprehensible. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained in the presentation of the findings to protect the identity of participants. Ethical approval was ensured, adhering to the highest standards of research ethics, especially important when working with young participants and within community-based projects.

4. Findings

Youth Leadership and Innovation

In this section, we explore the Peelpioniers initiative, a youth-led 'systems' enterprise that underscores the pivotal role of youth innovation in community development. Central to our insights is FlowSpace, an innovative 'space' initiated by students within educational institutions, serving as a youth-centric environment that promotes collaboration, creativity, and leadership. Situated physically and systemically within the academic helix, FlowSpace amplifies the voices and



perspectives of young individuals, particularly from an integrated environmental helix, by providing a platform where their talents and interests can directly contribute to sustainable initiatives without being limited by the confines of the academic helix. This alignment with the Quintuple Helix model highlights the significant impact of youth-led approaches like Peelpioniers and FlowSpace on both personal development and broader societal progress, demonstrating the powerful synergy between the educational and ecological dimensions in fostering youth empowerment and sustainable community development.

Empowerment and Roles

In FlowSpace, the empowerment and emergence of roles are facilitated through a presence approach as defined by Andries Baart (2001), allowing youth to naturally assume roles that resonate with their interests and strengths, leading to an organic hierarchy within the initiative. This method mirrors the essence of sticky interventions, as described by Levin et al. (2012), characterized by their enduring influence and depth of engagement. The natural evolution of leadership roles within FlowSpace not only ensures the effectiveness of these interventions but also imbues them with a profound sense of relevance and personal investment among participants. This fosters a sense of ownership and dedication essential for lasting change. Crucially, this environment also nurtures applied forward reasoning, enabling young individuals to challenge and transcend the traditional path dependencies that often constrain institutional innovation, thereby laying the groundwork for breaking cyclical limitations and fostering sustainable transformation.

Innovative Contributions

The Peelpioniers initiative's engagement with the World Food Forum (WFF) showcases the symbiotic relationship between innovative contributions and the personal growth of its youth participants. This endeavor, fueled by a commitment to amplifying young voices, provided students not just a platform to showcase their ambitions but also a transformative journey that extended their influence to the national chapter of the WFF. Beyond mere participation, this experience enriched the region's profile, creating new opportunities for involvement and showcasing the far-reaching impact of youth-led innovation. The forum served as a crucible for skill enhancement, where students honed critical thinking, project management, and teamwork abilities. Engaging in global dialogues on food sustainability, these young leaders broadened their competencies, nurtured their confidence, and reinforced their capacity for impactful leadership. This narrative underscores the Peelpioniers' pivotal role in nurturing a generation capable of driving significant change, both locally and internationally, through innovative endeavors and personal development.

Quintuple Helix in Action

FlowSpace is a pivotal element of the Peelpioniers initiative, showcasing how the integration of young people's perspectives and their inner nature within their broader natural environments transcends traditional academic and governmental boundaries. This innovative space is intentionally designed to resonate with the youths' inner motivations and their ecological consciousness, establishing a harmonious balance between internal growth and external environmental engagement. FlowSpace acts as a nurturing ground for collaboration, creativity, and leadership, rooted in a profound understanding of the interconnectedness of personal development and ecological sustainability. By aligning with the youths' innate rhythms and



fostering a deep connection with the natural world, FlowSpace exemplifies a holistic educational approach, reinforcing the Quintuple Helix model's vision of sustainable and inclusive community innovation.

Model Integration

The Peelpioniers initiative, embodying a 'systems' enterprise, reshapes the Quintuple Helix model with FlowSpace at its nucleus, emphasizing the crucial role of youth and their environments. This innovative approach fosters projects under the Peelpioniers umbrella that resonate with the intrinsic motivations and ecological consciousness of young people. The autonomy granted to these projects ensures they transcend traditional academic and governmental confines, allowing them to operate independently of these lenses. This independence is key to fostering sustained engagement across various sectors and creating pathways that align with the natural interests and rhythms of youth. By facilitating such autonomy, Peelpioniers not only challenges conventional models but also nurtures impactful, enduring initiatives, echoing the insights of Levin et al. (2012) and embodying a holistic vision of sustainable, inclusive community innovation.

Environmental Focus

The Peelpioniers initiative, with its environmental ethos at the forefront, emphasizes the alignment with the fifth helix by anchoring young people's projects within their natural surroundings. This approach highlights the autonomy of these initiatives, allowing them to develop independently from traditional academic and governmental frameworks. By rooting projects in the ecological and personal passions of the youth, Peelpioniers ensures that each endeavor is a genuine reflection of the participants' intrinsic motivations and concerns for sustainability. This commitment not only advocates for environmental consciousness but also champions projects that resonate deeply with the values and aspirations of young individuals, illustrating the initiative's dedication to ecological stewardship and personal relevance.

Cross-sectoral Collaboration

Within the autonomous structure of the Peelpioniers initiative, cross-sectoral collaboration naturally unfolds, guided by the unique interests and journeys of the youth. A notable example is the initiative to create wooden toys, where a student's vision met the support of a local business in the circular economy, highlighting the initiative's capacity to seamlessly connect diverse sectors. This collaboration, sparked by genuine youth interest and not constrained by the predefined boundaries of academia or government, showcases the fluid nature of partnerships within Peelpioniers. Such engagements not only advance the specific projects at hand but also enrich the wider community by integrating young individuals as pivotal contributors to cross-sectoral dialogues and actions. Through these organic collaborations, Peelpioniers demonstrates a dynamic application of the Quintuple Helix model, fostering sustainable innovation and inclusive community development that truly reflect the autonomous and interconnected spirit of youth-led initiatives.

Community Impact

The Peelpioniers initiative has redefined youth's role in community development, positioning them as leaders in sustainability and innovation through platforms like 'FlowSpace' and the World Food Forum. Their active participation has fostered community engagement, leading to collaborative



projects and partnerships that emphasize sustainable practices. These efforts are evident in initiatives ranging from eco-friendly projects in ‘FlowSpace’ to global discussions at the WFF, making youth pivotal in integrating sustainability into the community. The long-term impact includes a shift in community attitudes towards sustainability and innovation, with the youth driving systemic solutions and fostering a culture of cooperation and resilience. Through Peelpioniers, young individuals are vital in steering their community towards a sustainable and inclusive future.

Challenges and Adaptations

Challenges faced by the Peelpioniers initiative included institutional resistance to youth-centric approaches, resource limitations leading to program cuts like the discontinuation of FlowSpace, and difficulties in engaging external partners, such as companies’ lack of response to collaboration opportunities with youth projects. These obstacles threatened to sideline youth contributions and dampen their enthusiasm for innovation.

To navigate these challenges, Peelpioniers emphasized maintaining youth motivation by prioritizing their perspectives, even when external collaborations did not materialize. The initiative adapted its strategies to realign with youth interests, ensuring their continued engagement and leadership in the project. Key lessons learned encompassed the importance of flexibility in project design, persistent advocacy for youth perspectives within institutional frameworks, and the need to build resilience into youth-led initiatives to sustain their focus on youth empowerment and innovation amidst external pressures.

5. Discussion

The Peelpioniers initiative, with its innovative ‘FlowSpace’ and focus on youth-led systemic solutions, presents a compelling case study that both aligns with and challenges existing academic discourse on youth empowerment and community development. Literature on the Quintuple Helix model emphasizes the interdependence of academia, industry, government, civil society, and the environment for sustainable innovation (Carayannis & Campbell, 2012). However, the Peelpioniers’ approach, which places youth at the core of this model, suggests a significant paradigm shift. This resonates with Levin et al.’s (2012) discussion on progressive incremental trajectories, emphasizing the importance of centering interventions around the intrinsic motivations and perspectives of young people. Unlike traditional models that often position youth as peripheral contributors, the Peelpioniers initiative illustrates the transformative potential of youth as primary drivers of innovation and sustainability, challenging the pathway dependencies that typically constrain institutional paradigms.

Implications for Education and Policy

The findings from the Peelpioniers initiative, particularly the emphasis on centering youth perspectives from the environmental helix to implement the GreenComp framework in a systems-informed manner in order to prevent path dependency from the governmental or academic helices, have significant implications for educational reform and policy-making. The demonstrated success of ‘FlowSpace’ in fostering youth autonomy and leadership highlights the necessity for educational environments to move beyond conventional learning models. This requires policies that promote the creation of spaces and programs within schools that allow for student-led governance and



project-based learning, reflecting the essence of a presence approach. Additionally, the initiative's challenges, such as the institutional resistance to embracing youth-centered perspectives, underscore the critical need for policy measures that ensure mandatory youth participation in decision-making processes across all helices, with a special focus on incorporating systems thinking as advocated by the GreenComp Framework. These policies must also tackle the necessity for sustainable funding and supportive infrastructures to safeguard innovative educational models like FlowSpace against financial limitations, ensuring the enduring impact of such transformative approaches.

Challenges and Adaptations

The adaptability of the Peelpioniers initiative in the face of institutional barriers and resource constraints offers valuable lessons for similar youth-led projects. The initiative's proactive strategies to maintain youth engagement and motivation, even when external support was lacking, underscore the importance of resilience and flexibility in project design. These adaptations, driven by a commitment to youth perspectives, highlight a potential area for further research and development in the methodology of youth engagement and systemic innovation.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The Peelpioniers initiative offers a groundbreaking exploration into the role of youth in sustainable community development through the lens of the Quintuple Helix model. By centering youth perspectives within their intrinsic motivations and fostering environments like 'FlowSpace', the initiative has illuminated the profound impact of empowering young individuals to lead and innovate. The findings underscore the necessity of integrating youth at the core of sustainable development efforts, demonstrating their capacity to drive systemic solutions and challenge entrenched institutional paradigms.

Future research should focus on unraveling the intricacies of youth empowerment within the Quintuple Helix framework, examining its applicability and impact across various cultural and contextual landscapes to further substantiate and broaden the insights gained from the Peelpioniers initiative. It is imperative for educational practices to evolve, embracing methodologies like 'FlowSpace' that champion student autonomy, creativity, and leadership. Moreover, policy development should aim at institutionalizing youth engagement at all decision-making echelons, ensuring their insights are not only heard but actively integrated, especially in sustainability endeavors. An important area for further exploration involves the incorporation of Deep Democracy principles, which could enhance the depth and inclusivity of youth participation in decision-making processes. This approach would ensure that the diverse voices and perspectives of young people are meaningfully included and valued, fostering a more democratic and equitable framework for youth empowerment and decision-making within the context of sustainable development.

This study contributes significantly to the discourse on sustainable development and the practical application of the Quintuple Helix model by showcasing the transformative potential of youth-led innovation. It challenges conventional approaches to education and community development, advocating for a model where young people are not mere participants but the driving force behind sustainable innovation. The Peelpioniers initiative serves as a compelling case study for the global



community, offering valuable insights and strategies for engaging youth in shaping a sustainable future.

In conclusion, the insights gleaned from the Peelpioniers initiative call for a reimagined approach to sustainable community development, one that places youth at its heart. As we look towards the future, it is imperative that we embrace the creative potential, leadership, and innovative spirit of young people, integrating their perspectives into the very fabric of our societal structures. This study not only contributes to academic discourse but also offers a practical roadmap for communities worldwide to harness the power of youth in driving sustainable development.

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3.4 Establishing a Wellbeing Economy Coalition in The Netherlands

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Abstract

In the Netherlands, several organisations are actively working on changing the purpose of the economy, from striving for an end to the pursuit of GDP-growth to ensuring a good life for all (worldwide) within the limits of the Earth. Examples are the Economy for the Common Good, Ontgroeï (the Dutch degrowth branch), the Commons Network and Platform Duurzame en Solidaire Economie (Fair and Green Economy, Platform DSE), while a Dutch hub of the Wellbeing Economy Alliance has been established. There are also many NGOs for whom the way the economy is functioning is important, but whose main activities are on a more specific topic, like the environment, North-South relations, peace, or the financial system. A few examples are Milieudefensie (Friends of the Earth NL), Natuur en Milieu, Oxfam Novib, Action Aid, PAX, Sustainable Finance Lab and TNI. Here, we propose to establish an informal coalition consisting of organisations working on changing the purpose of the economy and of organisations for whom this is important, but that mainly focus on a more specific topic. The EU Wellbeing Economy Coalition[1] that was founded in 2021 to steer EU policy beyond economic growth towards a wellbeing economy could serve as an example.

Introduction

‘Today’s extreme inequalities, environmental destruction and vulnerability to crisis are not a flaw in the system, but a feature of it. Only large-scale systemic change can resolve this dire situation.’ This is one of the key messages of the UNRISD report Crises of Inequality[2]. The rise of extreme inequalities is illustrated in Oxfam’s yearly report on inequality, which reveals that the wealth of the world’s five richest billionaires has more than doubled since the beginning of this decade, while 60% of humanity has grown poorer[3]. The environmental destruction is described daily in the newspapers, with causes ranging from climate change, deforestation, industrial agriculture and pollution to legal and illegal mining. And the ones who are most vulnerable to the crisis are the world’s poorest[4].

Many Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are working to solve, or alleviate, these problems. They are fighting poverty, either at home or in the Global South, attempting to establish fair trade relations between the Global North and the Global South, or attempting to get odious debts cancelled. In the environmental sphere, they are fighting climate change, promoting the use of renewable energy, protecting nature and attempting to prevent pollution, working to create healthy food systems or to improve public transport, and holding companies to account. This is of course only a brief summary, and the work they are doing is very important, as a few examples will illustrate. Urgenda won a climate case and forced the Dutch government to take more action to prevent climate change, which led to many similar cases in other countries. Solidaridad played a crucial role in establishing the concept and the practice of fair trade, although much room for improvement remains. And it took the pressure of Extinction Rebellion for the Dutch government to admit that fossil fuel subsidies amount to € 46 billion each year.



The cause of the problems these organisations are fighting is clearly related to our economic system, and they are fully aware of that. A manifesto, drafted by Platform DSE in 2023 and presented to the Dutch Parliament, was signed by 107 Dutch organisations[5]. The manifesto asked that the government cease the pursuit of GDP growth, orient its policies on well-being and reducing inequality, and cut the Dutch global ecological footprint by 50% in 2030. Although the NGOs have their focus elsewhere, as described above, they apparently recognise that abolishing the goal of GDP growth and reducing the Dutch ecological footprint will contribute to their success. This is logical because, despite the promises of ‘green growth’, GDP growth leads to a higher material footprint[6] and prevents carbon emissions from falling fast enough to reach the Paris goals[7], while its fruits are mostly captured by the rich[8]. The quality of Dutch nature is deteriorating[9], and worldwide there are only five countries whose actions have more negative effects on other countries’ abilities to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals than the Netherlands[10].

Despite the problems caused by our economic system, it is often difficult for NGOs to work directly on these underlying causes. Many of them were founded with a specific purpose in mind, like fighting climate change or pollution, preserving nature, alleviating poverty at home or abroad or promoting fair trade relations. It is logical that their activities are mainly focused on their specific goals. This is what they receive funding for, where they are working on in projects and where they have to report on. A number of them are already cooperating in coalitions like Handel Anders (‘Trade Differently’), Voedsel Anders (‘Food Differently’) or Tax Justice Netherlands on topics that are directly in line with their mission. But a coalition of organisations that is thinking about and working on changing the underlying economic system is missing.

There are a number of organisations in the Netherlands for whom working on the economic system is their main activity. Examples are the Economy for the Common Good, Ontgroei (the Dutch degrowth branch), the Commons Network and Platform Duurzame en Solidaire Economie (Fair and Green Economy, Platform DSE), while a Dutch hub of the Wellbeing Economy Alliance has been established. Most of them are relatively small, with a limited budget, and often run by volunteers. Still they can have a considerable impact. Platform DSE, of which the author is a member, criticised the pursuit of GDP growth since its founding in 2006, provided information to the Parliamentary Committee that investigated the use of GDP as a proxy for welfare, organised an expert meeting for Statistics Netherlands about the indicators it used in the category ‘elsewhere’[2] in the Monitor Brede Welvaart that was the outcome of this parliamentary process, and initiated a few petitions to Parliament, which were signed by more than 100 organisations.

Building a coalition

Cooperation between organisations related to our economic system is now only occasional, and has to be reestablished with every new initiative. In my view, it would be beneficial to establish a more permanent but rather informal coalition of both organisations that work on changing the purpose and the structure of the economy, and of organisations for whom this is important, but that work mainly on a more specific topic. An important consideration would be that such a coalition should not be experienced as ‘another burden’ by the NGOs whose main focus is elsewhere. The actual work should therefore be carried out mainly by members of the organisations that do focus on changing the economic system. The EU Wellbeing Economy



Coalition, founded in 2021, could serve as an example. It brings together various EU civil society organisations, think tanks as well as trade unions active in the fields of wellbeing, around a common mission: to strengthen the narrative, policies, and indicators on human and planetary wellbeing in EU decision-making processes. They do so by sharing knowledge, intelligence and expertise, amplifying the individual impacts of its members, and advocating together towards EU decision makers. In a Dutch Wellbeing Economy Coalition that could also be called *Economie Anders* (‘Economy Differently’), analogous to the coalitions mentioned above, members could cooperate in a similar way.

Cooperating within a coalition

There are many ways in which the members of such a coalition could work together. A few examples:

1. The coalition could share information on publications from members with partners and with the public on a common website, with a short description and a link to the full information on the website of the organisation itself. This could function like the site that the Dutch Advisory Councils set up together[11]. The site could also have a common agenda.
2. The coalition could organise a few expert meetings each year. Members that work for instance on North-South relations or on environmental problems could indicate how their work is being thwarted by the way the economic system functions, and in an expert meeting the problems they encounter could be investigated and discussed with specialists from other member organisations, or researchers from universities or think tanks. Also topics like our dependency on economic growth could be a subject of these expert meetings.
3. A ‘light version’ of this expert meeting already exists, and could be integrated in this new initiative. *Duurzame Doorbraak* (‘Sustainable Breakthrough’) is a small volunteer organisation that organises virtual dialogues on Friday afternoons on topics that are brought forward by one of the more than 100 organisations that support it[12]. Examples of topics that were covered are citizens’ assemblies, the energy transition, the Dutch ‘Climate Law 1.5C’ and tipping points.
4. These expert meetings or virtual dialogues could lead to temporary coalitions between some of the participants, to do further research or to try to influence policy on the topic that was discussed.
5. Protests or petitions organised by one member could be supported by other members if the information is spread within the coalition. If this is done in the planning phase, members might be interested in co-organising the event.
6. Approaching Parliament or other institutions, like scientific councils, might be more effective if this is done on behalf of many organisations with various backgrounds.
7. After the ‘Beyond Growth’ conference that took place in the European Parliament in 2023, in several countries a national ‘Beyond Growth’ conference is organised this year. Conferences have been confirmed in Italy, Austria, Denmark, Ireland and France[13]. The coalition could take the initiative to organise such an event in the Netherlands and be involved in its coordination, but of course substantial support would be needed from members of the coalition.



8. Reaching out to the public could be done by social media, a newsletter, articles in newspapers and on websites, webinars, presentations et cetera.

Organising the coalition

A core group to start working on trying to establish the coalition will probably have to be formed by members of organisations that focus on changing the economic system. This core group could contact potential members of the coalition, and organise a (virtual) meeting with contact persons of organisations willing to join to discuss the functioning and the first priorities of the coalition. Potential members can be found in the list of organisations that signed the manifesto that was presented to Parliament in February 2023 and among the members of Duurzame Doorbraak. Hopefully, also labour unions would be willing to join, or at least to participate in expert meetings.

It is important to note that a coalition as proposed would not act or speak on behalf of member organisations, unless all organisations agree. With each activity, members can choose to be involved or not. Members would commit themselves to appoint a contact person for the coalition who handles requests from the coalition, and discusses them with colleagues within the organisation if the topic is relevant for that specific organisation.

Initially, the coalition would be run by volunteers, but if the cooperation is successful, over time a paid part-time coordinator could be appointed.

Conclusion

‘System change, not climate change’ is a phrase that can often be heard or read at climate demonstrations. But it is not just protestors who demand system change. In its comment on the draught of the Climate Plan of the Dutch government, the Council of State wrote in 2019: The ultimate goal is a 95% greenhouse gas reduction by 2050. This requires a reordering of production and consumption in all sectors of society and the economy, rather than a multitude of isolated measures[14]. It is imperative, not just for small organisations consisting of volunteers, to think about how a good life for everyone within planetary boundaries can be realised. We cannot just try to repair the consequences of our unsustainable and unjust way of life. We have to discuss the problems of our current economic system and the ways the system has to be reorganised, we have to involve the public, and we have to put pressure on politicians, companies and institutions to work on the transition to a just and sustainable economy. We need more power for that than is now available, and I hope a coalition like the one described here will help us to build that power.

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[1] Member of Platform DSE and of Ontgroei, mail address gerrit.stegehuis@platformdse.org

[2] This category describes what the consequences are of the Dutch pursuit of welfare for people living in other countries, especially in low-income countries.

[1] See <https://ieep.eu/eu-wellbeing-economy-coalition/> (accessed March 21, 2024)

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4.1 The ECONGOOD Business Canvas - an agile tool from the Economy for the Common Good for start-ups, and a quick introduction to value-oriented business practices.

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Summary

The ECONGOOD Business Canvas (EBC) is a new tool developed by the Economy for the Common Good (ECG) designed to help start-ups align their economic business model with efforts to solve social and/or ecological challenges. It aims to generate value propositions for stakeholders from all contact groups - not just the market. The EBC serves as a key component in developing business models that aim for regenerative economic activity, consequently fostering the establishment of a business ecosystem oriented towards the common good.

The canvas was first published in 2022 and is becoming increasingly popular. From among the numerous documented use cases we present three typical constellations here that illustrate the various ways of working with the canvas - even for organisations beyond the start-up phase.

In order to establish the EBC as a standard, our initial strategy involves a two-year campaign in German-speaking countries. We are looking for partners from the world of science and funding bodies for this campaign. This will be followed by an international rollout.

Economy for the Common Good

The ECG is an alternative economic system. With the ECG, the economy should serve the harmonious coexistence of people on a healthy, sustainable planet. The ECG encourages companies to align their economic activities with the four value pillars: human dignity, solidarity and social justice, environmental sustainability, and transparency and co-determination. The objective is for such companies to receive better framework conditions and to meet with a stronger market response.

Since Christian Felber's initial publication¹ on the ECG in 2011, a global movement has emerged, spreading the concept to over 35 countries. Recently, Japan was added to the list. In February 2024, the rebranding to the "ECONGOOD" brand documented the increasing internationalisation of the model.^{2/3}

At the core of the ECG is a matrix that provides an evaluation grid comprising 20 fields derived from the aforementioned value pillars and the generic stakeholders of companies: Suppliers, owners

¹ Link: <https://christian-felber.at/buecher/die-gemeinwohl-oekonomie/>

² Source: https://www.haufe.de/sustainability/strategie/gemeinwohl-oekonomie/gemeinwohl-oekonomie-definition_575772_593048.html

³ Source: https://www.haufe.de/sustainability/debatte/econgood-label-nachhaltigkeitssiegel-von-gwoe_575768_616476.html



and financial partners, employees, customers and other companies, and the social environment. Companies document the maturity level of their organization in these 20 fields through a comprehensive report, identifying areas for potential future development. Following an external audit, companies receive a certificate showing the number of points achieved. The published report serves the purpose of transparency.

COMMON GOOD MATRIX 5.0

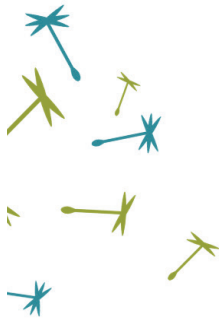
VALUE	HUMAN DIGNITY	SOLIDARITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE	ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY	TRANSPARENCY AND CO-DETERMINATION
STAKEHOLDER				
A: SUPPLIERS	A1 Human dignity in the supply chain	A2 Solidarity and social justice in the supply chain	A3 Environmental sustainability in the supply chain	A4 Transparency and co-determination in the supply chain
B: OWNERS, EQUITY, AND FINANCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS	B1 Ethical position in relation to financial resources	B2 Social position in relation to financial resources	B3 Use of funds in relation to social and environmental impacts	B4 Ownership and co-determination
C: EMPLOYEES, INCLUDING CO-WORKING EMPLOYERS	C1 Human dignity in the workplace and working environment	C2 Self-determined working arrangements	C3 Environmentally-friendly behaviour of staff	C4 Co-determination and transparency within the organisation
D: CUSTOMERS AND OTHER COMPANIES	D1 Ethical customer relations	D2 Cooperation and solidarity with other companies	D3 Impact on the environment of the use and disposal of products and services	D4 Customer participation and product transparency
E: SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT	E1 Purpose of products and services and their effects on society	E2 Contribution to the community	E3 Reduction of environmental impact	E4 Social co-determination and transparency

Picture: Common good matrix 5.0

To date, over 1,000 companies and organisations have been certified according to the criteria of the ECG. These include Sparda Bank München, WEtell, Sonnentor and Voelkel, as well as municipalities and cities, schools and universities. In December 2023, Hamburg's FC St. Pauli became the first major soccer club to publish a common good balance sheet.

For example the mobile communications provider WEtell wants to radically transform the sector and prove that climate-neutral mobile communications work. Founded in 2019, this start-up focused on the common good balance sheet early on, and is working on a network of stakeholders from various backgrounds to jointly achieve this vision.





„ Thanks to the
Economy for the
Common Good, as
a founder I know
that everything has
been thought of.“

... says Alma Spribille,
co-founder of WEtell
Freiburg, June 2023

A value-oriented company has to think about many aspects during the startup phase. The Common Good matrix helps you to position yourself fairly and sustainably.

Picture source:
WEtell



Picture: Importance of the ECG for the WEtell start-up⁴

As a result, such start-ups not only offer products and/or services that are geared towards the challenges of our world and make sense, but they also build a business ecosystem of players who work together, complement each other and generate impact.

Need for regenerative start-ups

There is a growing number of companies that focus their corporate purpose on solving social challenges - especially in the start-up scene. According to the latest monitor conducted by the German Start-up Association, 46% of start-ups now classify themselves as part of the "green economy" and 42% as "social entrepreneurship"⁵. In July 2023, the German government adopted a framework for the transformation towards a socio-ecological market economy, with the "National Strategy for Social Innovation and Companies for the Common Good"⁶. Similar developments can be observed in other European countries.

According to a study⁷ by the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK), six out of nine planetary boundaries have already been exceeded by our current business practices . In order to ensure a healthy planet and a sustainable world for future generations, continuing with business as usual is no longer a viable option. Even a rapid switch to 100 percent sustainability will only slow

⁴ Link: <https://www.wetell.de/vision/klimaschutz/>

⁵ Source: https://startupverband.de/fileadmin/startupverband/mediaarchiv/research/dsm/DSM_2022.pdf

⁶ Source: https://www.bmwk.de/Redaktion/DE/Publikationen/Wirtschaft/nationale-strategie-soziale-innovationen-gemeinwohlorientierte-unternehmen.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=24

⁷ Source: <https://www.pik-potsdam.de/de/aktuelles/nachrichten/schwindende-widerstandskraft-unseres-planeten-planetare-belastungsgrenzen-erstmals-vollstaendig-beschrieben-sechs-von-neun-bereits-ueberschritten-1>



down the rate at which these limits are exceeded. Because net zero means that no further damage is done just at present, but does not reverse the existing harm done.

In order to preserve the earth as a basis for life in the long term, we therefore need an economic system that restores (i.e. also repairs damage from the past) and is ideally regenerative. Bill Reed⁸ and Daniel Christian Wahl⁹ describe this as a system in which people see themselves as part of nature and make the "design of living systems" their task, with an eye for the whole and for quality. In other words, a move away from the endless quantitative increase in human artifacts, towards fostering a "good life" and the fulfilment of the fundamental needs of humans and nature.

Why are we saying all this?

Because, in our view, company founders should not only focus on building an economically viable company from the outset, but should also align the purpose of the company with a regenerative state across multiple dimensions. By this we mean not only ecological sustainability, but also social and economic areas. As a consequence, this means that not only will some products and services no longer be offered, but that there will be products and services aimed at repairing the damage caused by past innovations. For example, new technologies and processes for collecting waste in the oceans, permaculture methods that build up humus formation and bind CO₂ (e.g. carbon farming or agroforestry), or business models that promote circular construction practices or foster communal living in urban areas.

This is confirmed by Professor Stephan Hankammer from the Chair of Sustainable Management, Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Alanus University in Bonn: "It starts with the value proposition. I advise every company to examine what value it actually creates for whom. Where might there be an opportunity not only to create value for customers or solve a customer problem, but also to solve an environmental or social problem at the same time?"¹⁰

Therefore it becomes necessary to review the paradigm of business models, namely that a value proposition is solely directed at the market.

The EConGOOD Business Canvas

Knowing that founders today are moving away from business models with a business plan, but instead adopting a pre-structured canvas for iterative collaborative work, five members of the ECG set out in 2021 to combine this modern, efficient way of working with the principles of the alternative economic model. This led to the development of the EBC.

The starting point is the successful business model canvas, published in 2006 by Alexander Osterwalder, which has been used millions of times. It is designed to facilitate rapid, process-based, iterative, and collaborative development of the business model in nine predefined fields.

⁸ Source: Bill Reed, Regenerative Development and Design, 2nd edition, 2020

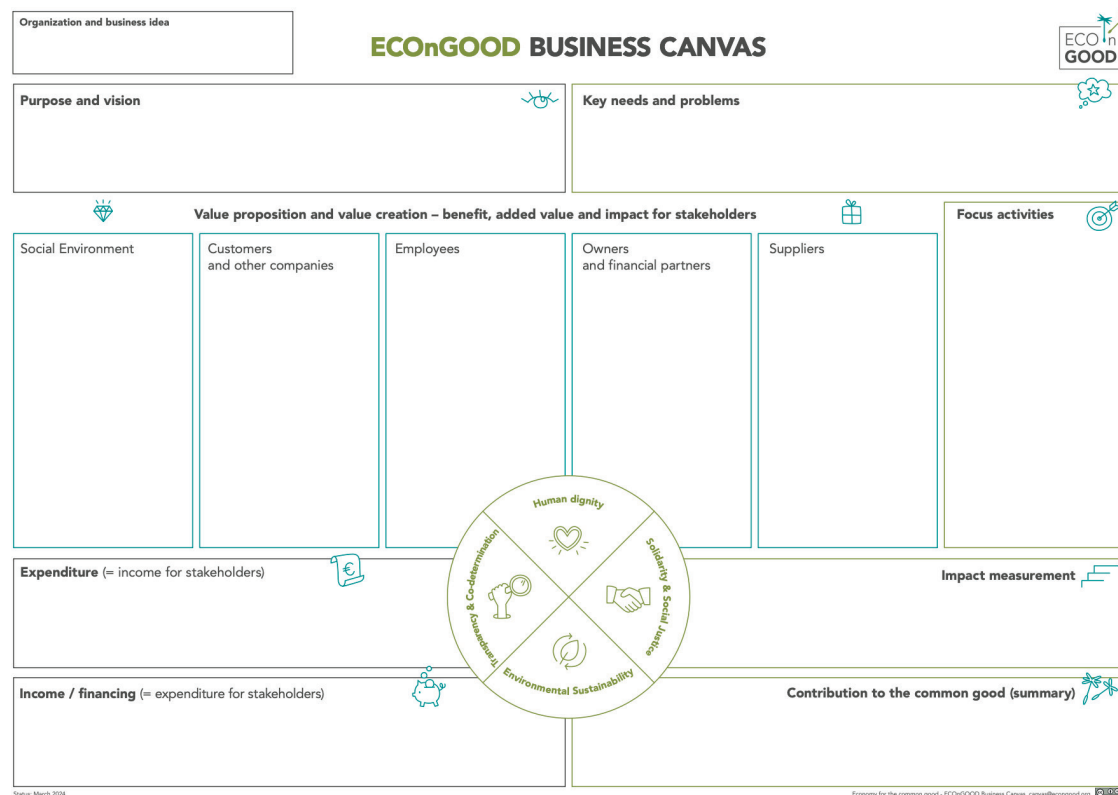
⁹ Source: Daniel C. Wahl, Sustainability is not enough: we need regenerative cultures, Medium, 2017

¹⁰ Source: HAUFÉ, Interview with Prof. Stephan Hankammer, November 2022, Regeneratives Wirtschaften: Zwei Schritte weiter als nachhaltig



Easy access to the model is facilitated by the distribution and permission for use - including commercial use - under the Creative Commons license¹¹.

Previously, there was no consistent focus on purpose, values, and stakeholder groups in existing models such as the Social Business Model Canvas and Sustainable Business Model Canvas. The EBC aims to address this gap by providing a framework that emphasizes these elements.



Picture: The EOnGOOD Business Canvas

Working with the EBC

The EBC has been extensively tested by ECG consultants. The model, published in March 2022, is freely available online as a template with guidelines for individual use (under an open source Creative Commons license)¹². It is used by ECG consultants in various situations. These range from one-day workshops with start-ups to peer groups who develop their very own canvas online in a few sessions, under expert guidance. The canvas is currently available in German, English and Spanish. Thanks to the iterative approach, insights gained from working with this or other tools (such as the value proposition canvas or a stakeholder matrix) can be easily integrated and combined.

The way we work with the EBC is similar to the Business Model Canvas. We progress from top left to bottom right - in iterative, playful and agile steps. A text template serves not only to record the

¹¹ Source: <https://www.strategyzer.com/library/the-business-model-canvas>

¹² Source: <https://www.ecogood.org/start-ups/>



results in the canvas or whiteboard, but also to generate fully formulated text, often ready for immediate use in creating the first website or project proposal.

In contrast to other well-known tools, the EBC explicitly begins with purpose and vision, thus sharpening the focus for a start-up oriented towards the common good. The needs and problems of all possible stakeholders are queried and integrated - utilising resources such as the 17 Sustainable Development Goals outlined by the United Nations for guidance.

Following this, the value creation and value propositions are developed for the five stakeholder groups: social environment, customers and other companies, employees, owners and financial partners, and suppliers. Start-ups are encouraged to see the various stakeholders as part of a business ecosystem and to cultivate offers and a robust relationship - not only with customers. The change in perspective increases the start-ups' understanding of their role within the ecosystem. Even with small teams, it is exciting to see the creative solutions that become possible. These relate not only to core activities, but also to aspects such as building stable relationships, financing and logistics.

This step also shows that the value proposition to the customer is not the only driving force for many start-ups oriented towards the common good. There are also examples where a value proposition to employees (e.g. Dark Horse, Berlin¹³), suppliers (e.g. TEIKEI Kaffee, Hamburg¹⁴) or the environment (e.g. Greenlyte Carbon Technologies, Essen¹⁵) is at the forefront.

In our work with the EBC, we use Phineo's impact logic¹⁶ and distinguish between benefit, added value, and impact of the start-up's portfolio with regard to the various stakeholders. And since, in practice, every start-up is at a different point in its life cycle, we have created a field in the canvas for the current focus activities. This allows start-ups to update their activities as they continue to work with the canvas or review their progress over time. The field also offers the option of connecting a Kanban board or developing OKRs (objectives and key results).

Just like the Business Model Canvas, the EBC also balances the expenses and income that arise from or are necessary for the business. In doing so, the common good-oriented company always considers income as expenditure from stakeholders in other contact groups (and vice versa) with whom it strives for good cooperation. Attention is not only directed towards monetary value flows. This approach also lays the foundations for meaningful collaborations.

In addition to these considerations, there is a designated field for the desired impact measurement: What impact should be achieved, how do we define and measure it and when should it occur?

Finally, the process with the EBC culminates in a conclusion detailing the contribution to the common good and a global good life. This summarises what insights have been gained in the

¹³ Link: <https://www.thedarkhorse.de/about/team>

¹⁴ Link: <https://www.teikeicoffee.org/projekt/>

¹⁵ Link: <https://www.greenlyte.tech>

¹⁶ Source: Phineo, Kursbuch Wirkung, <https://www.phineo.org/kursbuch-wirkung>



process. It is not uncommon for the work with the EBC to uncover blind spots or question the business model that has been formulated up to that point. One of the final key questions for the founders is therefore: What activities should we discontinue or refrain from doing in the interests of the common good?

Use cases

The EBC is designed for both start-ups and existing organisations seeking to evaluate their commitment to sustainability and the common good. It also serves as an accessible entry point into the ECG world for organizations seeking collaborative engagement, or for companies aiming to initiate large-scale projects with socio-ecological impacts.

Below we present three examples drawn from previous practice:

Start-ups in the pre-foundation phase: RAUM.WERTinstitut, Salzburg

Initial situation:

Many buildings hinder their users instead of meeting their needs. As a result, costly and time-consuming adjustments are frequently required afterwards. To solve this problem, Salzburg architect and mediator Ursula Spannberger developed the RAUM.WERTmethod¹⁷ in 2010. This method has been proven effective and was published in the book "Raum wirkt." in 2021. The open and universally applicable method defines the planning requirements in the preliminary stages. The functions of buildings and spaces are developed together with the users. With the foundation of the RAUM.WERTinstitut, the method shall gain international recognition, and shall be taught, applied, and established as a standard for phase 0 (prior to the planning of buildings/spaces).

Usage and effect of working with the EBC:

Ursula Spannberger had previously drawn up a common good balance sheet for her architecture firm. It was therefore clear that she wanted to establish the RAUM.WERTinstitut in a way that was oriented towards the common good. The EBC was the ideal tool for her to check the holistic sustainability of her business concept and reveal any blind spots. This check took place as part of a collegial consultation.

The biggest insight they gained from using the EBC was not to start up alone, but to involve their partners (branches in Germany and abroad) right from the start.

The kick-off workshop took place in March 2024 – attended by the employees at the Salzburg site as well as the future partners and members of the sounding board – twelve people in total. Once everyone had a clear picture of purpose, vision and key needs, an important decision had to be made: What is the right legal form in the start-up phase? The participants decided by consensus in favour of an association.

Working groups were formed on other focus topics such as the rights and obligations of the branches, or the curriculum for teaching the RAUM.WERTmethod. These groups are now helping to shape the further process together.

¹⁷ Link: <https://www.raumwert.cc>



It became apparent that four stakeholder groups were represented: suppliers, co-owners, employees, and co-entrepreneurs. "If we hadn't developed a common good-oriented business model, there wouldn't have been this participatory workshop at all. Then Ursula would be driving the start-up forward on her own," said one member of the sounding board, summing up the positive impact. And a future partner added: "The transparent communication at eye-level and the discussion of conflict issues satisfied my need for clarity and orientation. Now I am sure that I want to be part of this institute."

Findings/specialties:

The EBC is also very useful for ECG insiders. They can use the canvas to check their start-up idea for the common good. The greater the number of stakeholder groups involved in the start-up phase, the better benefit, added value and impact can be developed: with the stakeholder groups and for the stakeholder groups.



„The elaboration of our business model with the EConGOOD Business Canvas has reinforced my belief that participation plays a central role right from the start.“

... says Ursula Spannberger, initiator of the RAUMWERTinstitut, with representatives of the future partners and members of the sounding board, Salzburg/March 2024

The one-day start-up workshop focused on the partners' need for co-decision and cooperation on an eye-level basis. Among other things, it was decided by consensus that an association is the most suitable legal form for the start-up phase and is oriented towards the common good.

Picture source:
RAUMWERTinstitut

RAUMWERT.cc
gemeinsam Visionen für Gebäude erleben



Picture: Participants at the kick-off workshop for the start-up phase

Existing companies in reorientation: coworking space Startblock, Lörrach¹⁸

Initial situation:

The "Startblock" is the first larger and private company in the area that offers various forms of coworking workspaces, flexible rooms and a workshop. The Startblock was launched at the outset of the Covid-19 pandemic, presenting a challenging beginning with business not progressing as

¹⁸ Source: <https://startblock.eu>



anticipated. The work with the EBC was aimed at providing the management team with momentum to concentrate on the post-pandemic period.

Usage of the EBC:

In February 2022, the five-member team of the Startblock participated in a one-day workshop guided by an ECG consultant. The DIN A0-sized ECG poster was jointly created, alternating with group work. The content was refined by working on the topics from the various fields of the template. The canvas was followed up in subsequent team meetings and was also presented to the team as a poster during the transition phase.

Effect of working with the EBC:

Working with the canvas has led to a personal clarification and adjustment of the team structure in the employee stakeholder group. The different roles between voluntary participation, employees, and management, who own the coworking space, were clarified. A stable team was formed on the basis of clear role profiles.

In the supplier stakeholder group, the ecological sustainability of consumables and catering in particular were addressed and quick wins rapidly identified.

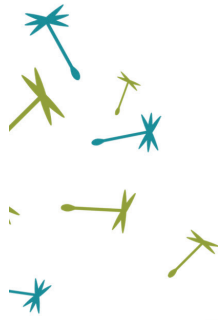
Within the "social environment" group, efforts were directed towards understanding Startblock's relationship with the surrounding neighborhood, encompassing both residential and commercial buildings. An initiative was created comprising open events and networking between Startblock, tenants and the neighbourhood, such as a flea market or a summer festival. Additionally, events on current topics relating to start-ups, personal and organisational development etc were launched.

The participants found the tool to be a hands-on introduction to the ECG, helping them to identify blind spots in their day-to-day work and providing new impetus.

Findings/specialties:

For a one-day workshop, it is important to start with a well-defined understanding of purpose and vision. This also reveals the extent to which the team shares a common start-up drive and vision. In an existing start-up, it is then important to transfer the impetus to day-to-day operations and to consistently work on the findings.





„With the EConGOOD Business Canvas, the Economy for the Common Good is really fun!“

... says Frederic Geiger, Managing Director of the coworking space STARTBLOCK, Lörrach, February 2022

The canvas reveals hidden potential as well as blind spots and opens the view for value creation in the entire micro-system of the company.

Picture source:
Knut Burmeister, alltag.li



Picture: Impression from a one-day workshop on reorientation

Project development: WoodenValley, Stuttgart¹⁹

Initial situation:

WoodenValley is a start-up based in Stuttgart, founded in 2021, and has adopted the legal structure of a non-profit limited liability company under steward-ownership. The company is committed to a positive experience of one's own self-efficacy in nature and promotes regenerative business practices. WoodenValley focuses on the implementation of circular processes in the construction sector as well as research and education on the topic of Cradle to Cradle²⁰. When the submission of a business model was requested for a project contest, the EBC was chosen.

Usage of the EBC:

The WoodenValley team initially started with the material provided by the ECG in open source on its website. In order to work more efficiently, an ECG consultant was brought in as a guide. The work was carried out in a half-day online workshop supported by a digital whiteboard, accompanied by several preparatory and follow-up calls.

Effect of working with the EBC:

The consistent work with the participants in the stakeholders' groups contributed significantly to the conception of a coherent business model for a mobile real-world laboratory for circular construction. In particular, the change in perspective towards the stakeholders led to a new holistic view and the conception of partnership-based relationships. The development of the

¹⁹ Source: <https://woodenvalley.de>

²⁰ Source: <https://www.startupbw.de/fokusthemen/gruenderinnen/news/detail/gruenderinnen-im-gespraech-woodenvalley-unterstuetzt-bei-der-kreislauforientierten-prozessoptimierung>



team is not informed when an organisation uses the canvas in self-study based on the documents available on the internet, or when it is implemented outside German-speaking countries. Translations into English and Spanish were carried out by the ECG movement and have already resulted in a known use case in Colombia²². The use cases of approximately 35 consultants who have undergone training in applying the ECG are also largely unknown. Coverage and expertise in Austria, Germany and Switzerland is ensured by the ECG core team. In Baden-Württemberg, start-ups can request advice funded by the official EXI voucher.

Thanks to the dedicated email address - canvas@ecogood.org - there are occasional questions, feedback and individual consultations. The ECG core team ensures that the documentation is kept up to date, that the canvas is developed further and that it is disseminated via websites and information events organised by ECG. Related organisations provide information on the EBC themselves. Occasionally, references to the EBC can be found in specialised literature.

For Germany, we expect wider adoption of the EBC, particularly due to the National Strategy for Social Innovation and Enterprises for the Common Good²³ and its field of action 2 (strengthening socially innovative and common good-oriented start-up culture and support structures).

Possible dissemination is envisaged via start-up and foundation centres, innovation labs, accelerators, impact hubs and via colleges and universities as well as business plan competitions organised by industry and local authorities.

For example as part of its transformation towards sustainability, the Ingolstadt Start-up Centre (EGZ)²⁴, drew up its own common good balance sheet and then tested the EBC within the management team. We believe it's desirable for such centers to work towards making the canvas the new standard for all new start-ups, offering it as an opportunity to existing start-ups as well.

The development and dissemination of the EBC have been largely driven by voluntary efforts thus far. The experiences and results encourage us to now tackle the dissemination on a large scale. Therefore, we are looking for partners who will help us to gradually disseminate the EBC in German-speaking countries, and internationally. We are proposing two stages:

Stage 1: Campaign for start-ups oriented towards the common good in German-speaking countries.

This stage should start at the end of 2024 and last around two years. In a major roll-out (dedicated website and social media, interactive tools, online tutorials), we want to find a statistically relevant number of founders to use the EBC and share experiences with us. To this end, we are launching a broad-based campaign that includes founder awards, press articles, examples of good practice, etc. Different approaches with the canvas will be examined (self-application based on the open-source documents and tutorials provided, creation accompanied by ECG consultants, creation in peer groups, support during creation in start-up centres or at universities). Information and training

²² Source: <https://www.ecogood.org/latinamerican-pioneers-bringing-purpose-to-business/>

²³ Source: https://www.bmwk.de/Redaktion/DE/Publikationen/Wirtschaft/nationale-strategie-soziale-innovationen-gemeinwohlorientierte-unternehmen.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=24

²⁴ Link: <https://www.egz.de>



for consultants will be expanded and quality assurance introduced. The experiences of the pilot users will be scientifically evaluated. Improvements to the EBC tool and process should be implemented promptly.

Stage 2: Roll-out in the international start-up scene, ideally supported by a European project.

This stage processes the findings from the campaign transferring them into a European standard and involving of suitable institutions. The preparation phase should start in 2026. We expect the project to run from 2027 to 2030.

Organisations interested in collaborating for the distribution of the canvas are welcome to contribute. We are convinced that the innovative, holistic and value-based approach on which the EBC is based can unfold its impact for a sustainable and - even more - regenerative economy. At the same time, we are embarking on a learning journey to collaboratively reshape the economy alongside numerous other stakeholders. May the EBC be part of it!



5.1 Integrating 12 New Economic Theories into a Public University in Latin America

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Abstract

The partnership between an independent new economies learning platform and a national public university is an example of integrating new economic thinking into mainstream education in Latin America. This initiative leverages the University of Córdoba's longstanding credibility and extensive academic network, and the Platform for the Introduction to New Economies' specialised expertise in crafting transformative learning experiences and its network of relevant international alliances. Higher education is fertile soil for driving system change and establishing a network of trained changemakers who can learn how to build more sustainable and resilient economic models. This paper delves into the story behind this deep collaboration, the challenges encountered, and the opportunities this approach presents to integrate new economies into Latin American universities.

Introduction

The 'University Diploma in New Economies' represents a pioneering partnership between the Platform for the Introduction to New Economies (PINE) and one of the oldest universities in Latin America: the 403-year-old National University of Córdoba (UNC). PINE's primary goal is to empower participants with comprehensive knowledge and practical skills for fostering sustainable, resilient, and regenerative economic systems across our continent. This 18-week online programme –conducted in Spanish– was designed to delve into alternative economic models under the guidance of distinguished field experts and with innovative educational methodologies. Having concluded its 3rd edition in 2023, over 300 people from 15 countries have participated in the Programme.

About the National University of Córdoba (UNC)

The National University of Córdoba (UNC) stands as Argentina's oldest University and a cornerstone of the American continent's academic heritage, boasting over 400 years of rich history in cultural, scientific, political, and social realms. With a student population exceeding 180,000 across 15 faculties offering 345 undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate programs, including Master's degrees, Doctorates, and Specialisations, UNC is a powerhouse of academic diversity and excellence. Its 145 research centres, complemented by 25 libraries and 17 museums, underscore the University's commitment to advancing knowledge across various disciplines.

UNC's dedication to free and secular education reaches diverse sectors and territories and expands the potential impact of educational initiatives. Furthermore, being located in the heart of Argentina, it attracts students from various provinces and neighbouring countries, contributing to a



pollinated and multiplier effect of ideas in fostering academic and social advancements on a broader scale.

About the Platform for Introduction to New Economies (PINE)

The Platform for the Introduction to New Economies (PINE) was founded in 2019 to promote new economic models from a Latin American perspective, foster a vast network of changemakers, and connect movements and their leaders across the continent.

The Programme explores multiple approaches such as Doughnut Economics, Indigenous Knowledge and Good Living, Degrowth, Economy for the Common Good, Circular Economy, Regenerative Economy, Social and Solidarity Economy, Ethical Banking and Impact Investing, B Lab and B Corps, and Feminist Economy. For this, 17 experts join the classes, including Christian Felber, Carlota Saenz, Joan Melé, and Anja Lyngbaek. Together, we aim at redefining economic success by prioritising the well-being of individuals, society, and the environment.

We used diverse techniques and methodologies (like Design Thinking, the Art of Hosting, and Theory U) to design a Transformative Learning Experience based on meaningful conversations, cultivating critical thinking, and fostering collective learning. We create the space and structures that support and empower the learners' involvement, building highly participatory dynamics in the classes and asking participants to translate New Economics concepts into their daily lives for their final assignment.

Deep Collaboration

Through prior collaborations, Melisa Díaz Acuña and Victor Mochkofsky, founders of PINE, built a foundation for their programme at the National University of Córdoba. Their work promoting Sistema B in Córdoba connected them for the first time with UNC's Dean, John Boretto, who was then exposed to new economic models, and helped to establish trust. After the successful launch of PINE in 2019, Mr. Boretto invited them to develop a programme that introduced these concepts at the University.

That was the keystone for the deep collaboration journey between the UNC and PINE, establishing shared vision and purpose, fostering shared leadership and recognising that joint work goes beyond immediate profitability to drive systemic change. We identify three pillars for building collaboration with a Public University:

Top Leadership Endorsement and Trust

The endorsement and credibility of the top authority at the University proved crucial for introducing and overcoming internal resistance that arose when launching the Programme together. The Faculty of Economic Sciences (FCE) at the National University of Córdoba stands out in Latin America for its solid training in mathematical and econometric models, supported by a robust theoretical and methodological framework. The Diploma in New Economies faced criticism and resistance from some faculty members and researchers who believed the content lacked a scientific approach. There was a particular rejection of degrowth theories and the integration of ancestral knowledge, especially if UNC institutionally endorsed these topics. The backing of the top authority of the faculty was essential in overcoming this resistance. His message was that this



internal resistance was a sign that the University was bringing in new concepts and moving in the right direction.

Open Communication within Multidisciplinary Teams

In-depth conversations with university staff, including focus groups with teachers, were essential to understand their concerns and perspectives on new economies. We designed and facilitated conversations with executives, team members, and teachers to address anxieties about credibility and academic integrity, fostering a collaborative spirit through open communication. We created a multidisciplinary team to bridge the gap between traditional practices and PINE's innovative approach, embracing our differences and learning from both organizations' internal processes. This collaborative effort facilitated smoother contract negotiations, budget allocations, and effective communication, particularly during the application and enrollment phases.

Measurable Results to Drive Credibility

The initial success of PINE 2022, evidenced by positive feedback and strong demand, was beyond UNC's expectations. Usually, the University's short online programmes attract an average of 40 participants, primarily from Argentina. However, the 2022 inaugural edition of PINE had 117 participants from 10 countries. Encouraged by this response, the Programme's duration was extended and turned into the first New Economies Diploma in 2024, attracting 130 learners from 15 countries.

Recognising our transformative educational approach and impact, we were honoured with the PRME 2023 International Award for the "Best Good Practice in Sustainability Education", emphasising our commitment to transformative learning. The jury highlighted our development of twelve alternative economic models, our open approach to sharing quality resources in Spanish, the inter-institutional collaboration with the National University of Córdoba (UNC), and the full scholarship granted to university professors.

Impact and Learnings

Over the last three years of collaborative work, we have learned how to drive growth together and create a transformative learning experience for our students. We have also innovated in our internal processes, defining a regenerative budget. We have expanded the frontiers of the University with new frameworks to democratise knowledge, and we have learned how to approach university professors with new economies.

Defining a Regenerative Budget

Implementing new economies requires us to engage in discussions about money to incorporate new economic mindsets in the classroom and in our internal processes as well. We are experimenting with a regenerative and distributive budget based on the Doughnut Economics's approach. It is regenerative because we donate 5% of the diploma's value to organisations involved in the regeneration and restoration of natural ecosystems in the province of Córdoba. In 2022 we donated \$225,000 (ARS) to the organisation called Sembradores de Agua, and in 2023, \$618,000 (ARS) to the organisation Amigos de la Reserva San Martín from the city's only urban Nature Reserve. For this, we facilitated participatory workshops with experts in new economies, and the



leadership of the faculty co-created a plan for assigning the budget and implementing it within the University's traditional framework.

Commitment to Democratizing Knowledge

The democratisation of knowledge is a priority: all theoretical classes of PINE 2022 were published on YouTube. We published Cosecha (Harvest), the first magazine of New Economies for Latin America in Spanish, which was co-created by more than 80 and 100 people in 2022 and 2023, respectively. To build a repository and make information more accessible, we created and released a comparative table integrating all the new economies. To reflect the redistributive approach, we created eight partial scholarships for students and twelve full scholarships for UNC teachers from different faculties.

Reaching University Professors

The initial PINE Programme at UNC lacked university teachers' participation. Because we were missing the potential impact of introducing teachers to new economic theories. The second edition offered 15 scholarships to University teachers from different faculties and areas of the University, and we organised several focus groups to learn what barriers they encountered within the learning experience and how we could collaborate closely.

These efforts revealed challenges: time constraints due to multi-institutional teaching and a shift from traditional educator roles to co-creation, trust in the collective intelligence and finding that academic knowledge is one dimension of this transformative learning ecosystem, but not the only one. On the other hand, we found the value of connecting teachers from different disciplines or faculties. In their testimonies, we heard the excitement in this knowledge exchange, which encouraged dialogue, active collaboration, and peer support. Weaving these collaborative networks between teachers innovating in different classrooms is vital for expanding new economies across the education system.

Conclusions and Future Opportunities for Latin America.

Higher education has a critical role in shaping our economy's future. Each year, universities graduate new cohorts of professionals equipped to sustain and enhance our current economic model. Yet, only a fraction possess the tools to innovate and design sustainable economic paradigms within the planetary boundaries. Integrating new economies approaches in mainstream education empowers students to think critically, integrate multiple theories, and foster innovation for systemic change.

However, entering traditional institutions presented challenges that required a new approach to collaboration. Our experience highlights the importance of open communication with facilitation tools. This fosters trust with university authorities, overcoming anxieties and promoting deep collaboration. This journey requires willingness to explore a new territory, both theoretically and empirically, including discussions about money and resource management within the educational system.

We stand at a pivotal juncture in Latin America politically, economically, and socially. Central to seizing these opportunities is elevating discussions surrounding new economic paradigms within the academic sphere. These discussions are indispensable for driving the imperative of change and



fostering the development of a regenerative future for our region. PINE's success at UNC underscores the potential for broader adoption. Based on our learnings, three key areas require development: 1) connecting actors: mapping and fostering collaboration through existing initiatives and committed university Deans; 2) educators' training: develop programs to furnish faculty with new economies knowledge and transformative teaching skills; and 3) academic research: focus on Spanish-language resources, including translations and funding original research work by Latin American scholars.



6.1 The Frisian Energy Development Network - FREON

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Abstract

On October 14, 2022, a consortium of eleven parties actively engaged in bottom-up energy transition practices in Fryslân, signed a proposition towards the Provincial Council. This consortium forms FREON: the Frisian Energy Development Network. In the proposition, the FREON partners state that they can shape the energy transition themselves, aiming to achieve a stable and affordable energy price for both residents and businesses. This can be done by realizing so-called Local4Local Energy Hubs. The proposition has resulted in an intensive collaboration between FREON and the province. A broad range of actors is involved, including municipalities and the power grid operator Liander. It appears that the proposition is feasible and acceptable. For some companies it is urgent. A joint study shows that balancing energy production and demand in the short term can result in an additional capacity of 25 to 30% on the existing power grid. By shaping the energy transition themselves, €50 to €100 million a year less flows out of the province. This money can be used to create additional values. Relationships have been established with the Sustainable Development Goals, Broad prosperity and the ESD framework through a value-based approach.

Keywords

Broad prosperity, Common Good, Complexity, Energy transition, Local4Local Energy Hubs, Parallel planning, Three playing fields, Value-based approach.

Observations

The FREON initiative arises from various observations made by different organizations and individuals involved in generating energy from renewable sources. Individually, they have marginal influence, but in collaboration, they can truly make a difference.

Observation 1: Government and market dominance

Currently, governments and the market primarily dominate the energy transition game, involving energy production and euros (see left part of figure 1). Large-scale wind and solar energy parks are being established, often by large companies from outside the province, the Netherlands, and even outside Europe. They do so gladly based on attractive business models, partly because of the subsidies provided by the national government. There is also trading in parks. The whole system is based on old economic principles. Profits largely disappear to areas outside Friesland. Many residents experience this as: "they reap the benefits, we bear the burdens." The focus is solely on SDG 7 'affordable and clean energy.' Residents and local entrepreneurs are as if sitting in the stands in this collaboration between the free market and government. They watch and may participate here and there, both in terms of input and financially. Dutch policy dictates that at least 50% of this sustainable generation must be locally owned, but this principle is often not met. At the moment, energy cooperatives make a modest contribution in terms of volume. In Fryslân, there are



over seventy energy cooperatives. Additionally, there are many other foundations and associations that manage (and own) solar fields and wind turbines.

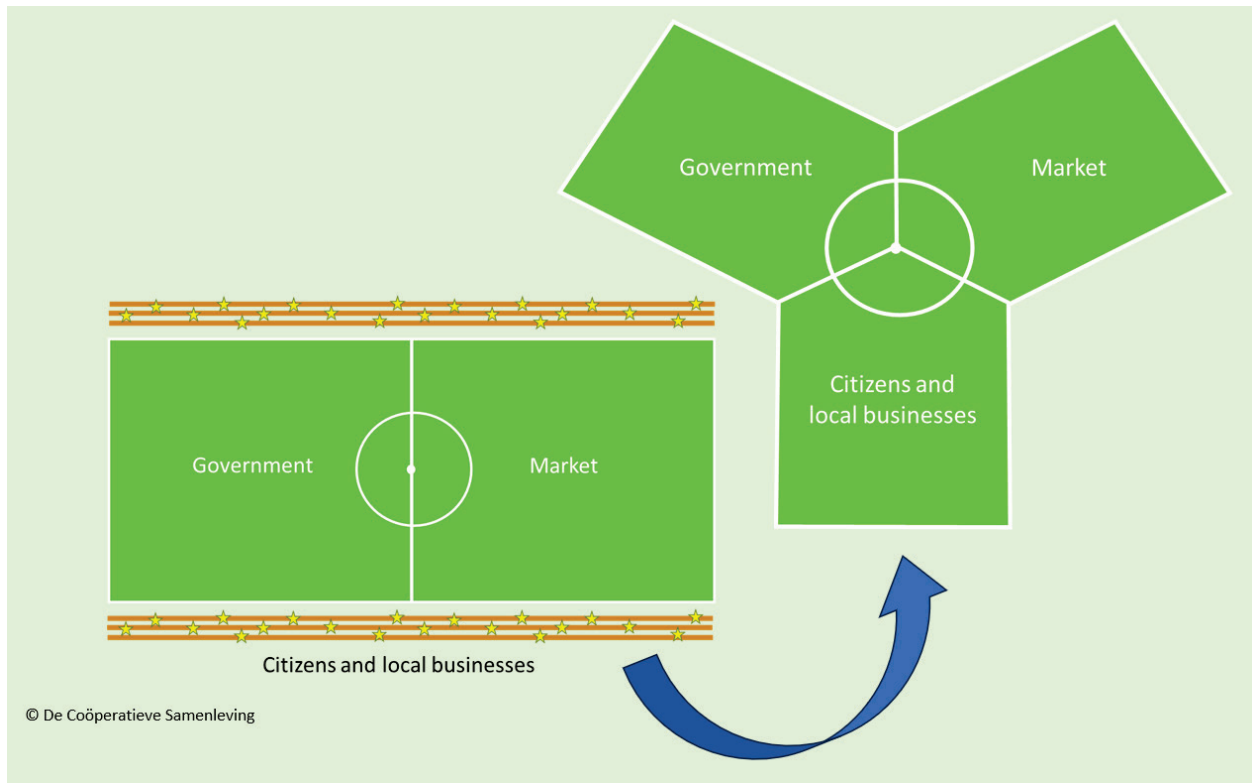


Figure 1. From two to three playing fields.

Observation 2: Local projects have broader impacts

People actively involved in local energy projects have broader concerns than just energy and money. They genuinely want to contribute to the community. For example, the village mill in Tzum, a village close to Franeker in the northwest of Fryslân, generates electricity and money. This money largely goes to initiatives in the village. This makes a significant contribution to projects such as: increasing the ecological values of allotment gardens, installing solar panels on the village hall, providing new vests for the football club, and organizing a winter fair. Also, once a year, a lesson on sustainability is given to the children at the primary school. The mill is a part of the community. There are many other (energy) projects where many SDGs and thus broad prosperity (Common Good) come into play.

Observation 3: Local knowledge is not taken seriously

Planning is mainly carried out by consultancy firms, partly because the knowledge of residents and local businesses, while seen as an important (free) source of data, is inadequate for independently developing larger projects. For example, to obtain a permit for the construction of a wind turbine, an investigation had to be conducted into an area that may be a goose foraging area under the Nature Conservation Act. Residents indicated that geese had never been observed in the area in question, but the government claimed these were 'anecdotal observations.' Certified ecologists



had to be hired. The problem is that much of the residents' knowledge is tacit, difficult to convert into the 'objective' information desired by the government.

Observation 4: Energy poverty among residents and urgency among companies

Especially in 2022, energy prices have fluctuated significantly, and many residents and businesses have faced financial difficulties. In the current situation, our geopolitical dependence is too great. Some financial leeway is needed to better insulate homes and buildings because the most sustainable energy is energy not used. Many local businesses – significant consumers of energy – want to move away from gas by 2030, partly because of CO2 levies, but find little alignment with the governments developing plans.



Figure 2. After signing the proposition in Bolsward by FREON partners, October 14 2022.

Observation 5: There is grid congestion and imbalance

The power grid is not designed for decentralized energy generation and is therefore at the limits of its capacity. This applies to almost the entire Netherlands. Especially companies cannot develop sustainably because of investing in the urgent energy transition, such as electrification of production and fleets. Energy cooperatives also cannot offload their generated energy onto the grid for larger projects. There is imbalance, meaning that the demand for energy and its generation are not simultaneous. In particular, solar fields produce electricity when there is no demand for it.

Observation 6: Politicians partly sidelined

In the Netherlands, we have introduced dualism in local governments. This means that there is a separation between the municipal council and Provincial council (the politics) on the one hand, and the aldermen and deputies (the executives) and civil servants on the other hand. Formally, the municipal council and Provincial council set the course, and the executives must implement it. Practice shows that new policies are mainly developed by executives and civil servants and are submitted for approval to the political arena, often in the form of thick study reports. If residents and local businesses have ideas for projects, they mostly approach executives and civil servants.



They often hear: "this initiative does not fit within the current policy frameworks." Politics is kept at a distance.

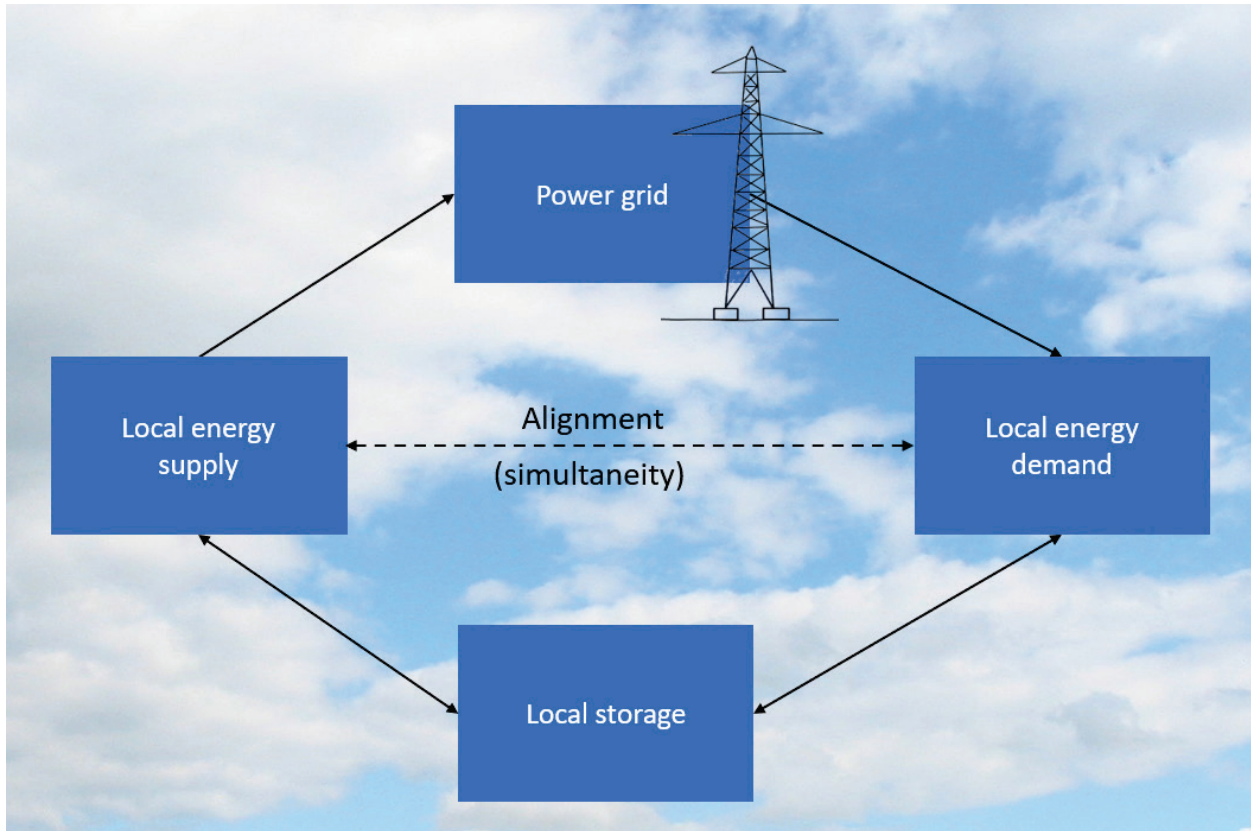


Figure 3. The principle of a Local4Local Energy Hub.

FREON Objectives

Based on these observations, FREON was founded: the Friese Energy Development Network. This network is primarily formed at the grassroots level by eleven organizations involved in energy generation and other aspects of sustainability and broad prosperity. Partly, these are volunteer organizations. Involved are, among others: the VWF (Association of Wind Turbine Owners Friesland), Ús Koöperaasje (umbrella organization for Frisian energy cooperatives), Netwerk duurzame dorpen (Network Sustainable Villages), the Windunie, Energie Samen (the national umbrella organization for energy cooperatives), and the SDG Network Fryslân. They have collectively formulated the following objectives:

- As FREON partners, we take ownership of the energy transition in Fryslân ourselves, cooperatively, aiming for 100% local ownership;
- There must be affordable energy for everyone, with stable prices;
- Benefits, burdens, and governance must be distributed fairly;
- The focus is on so-called Local4Local Energy Hubs. A healthy balance between energy generation and consumption must be achieved;



- Residents and local entrepreneurs must be involved from the outset. Local knowledge – tacit knowledge – must be fully integrated into the process and recognized and compensated accordingly;
- Connections must be made with broad prosperity and other transitions such as agriculture and climate. There are also relationships with biodiversity, healthcare, education, community life, and digitization, with a focus on the well-being of all residents. Jansen et al. (2023) refer to this as Sustainable Inclusive Wellbeing.

The connection with the ESD Framework is clearly recognizable in these goals. FREON takes a broader approach to the living environment than just energy and focuses on development for and by a broad social network. By engaging in dialogue with politicians in the implementation of the goals and working towards the establishment of Energy Communities in accordance with EU legislation (European Commission, 2019), democratic legitimacy is enhanced.

Local4Local Energy Hubs

Figure 3 illustrates the principle of a Local4Local Energy Hub. The former principle is that electricity generated from wind, solar, and other sources is put on the grid, and energy consumers draw their electricity from the grid. Due to the imbalance, both shortages and surpluses of energy from renewable sources occur, leading to grid congestion. An important initial step in the formation of an energy hub is to balance local generation and demand by adopting a healthy mix of generation systems. The aim is to achieve simultaneity, where the highest consumption occurs when there is ample energy available and minimal energy is put on the grid when there is little demand. Balancing generation and demand is a complex puzzle requiring flexibility from all involved parties. Artificial Intelligence can assist in this process. The gap between generation and demand can be reduced by storing electricity locally or converting it into hydrogen gas.

An energy hub can be defined at different scales (see Figure 4). In this case, we refer to micro, meso, and macro levels. The local hubs at the micro level form the building blocks of hubs at the meso level. The electricity grid is mainly used to transport the imbalance (Galama & Yntema, 2023). By actively balancing on all three levels, an energy hub with high adaptive capacity is obtained. It has been agreed with the FREON partners to focus mainly on the meso level at the Local4Local Energy Hubs, as this is where the most opportunities lie.



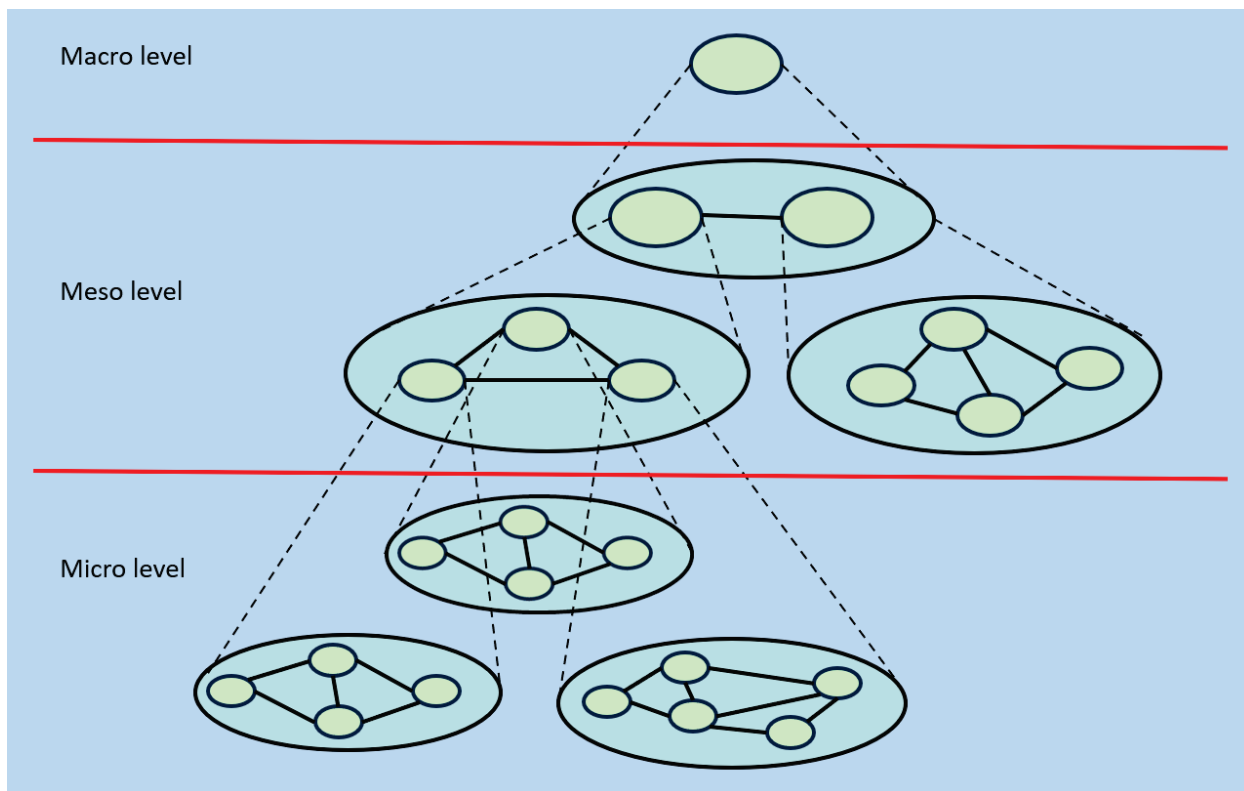


Figure 4. Energy Hubs at three scale levels.

Methodology

No plan has been drawn up to implement measures chronologically. The uncertainties are too great for that. An emergent approach (Geldof, 2002) has been chosen. This means taking steps while continuously assessing the effects in practice. Based on this, plans are adjusted if necessary. The formulated goals remain guiding, of course.

The approach involves adaptive planning (see Figure 5). Activities are not carried out sequentially but concurrently, as parallel tracks. Each track indicates which team is responsible. All tracks involve uncertainties. For example: At the outset in 2002, policy freedom (track 1) for realizing generation with wind and solar was almost zero. Village windmills were limited, and rooftop solar panels were allowed. The task for Fryslân in the RES (Regional Energy Strategy) was set at 3 TWh by 2030. This is going to change, so it cannot provide guidance. In 2023, the development of a Frisian energy vision started. This will be finalized in 2024 and likely include an additional task for 2050.

Thus, all tracks in Figure 5 involve many uncertainties. By running them concurrently and regularly making connections, a result emerges. To a large extent, what is achieved is a surprise. Two years ago, we couldn't have predicted where we are now. Elements from the process followed are outlined in this paper in a broad manner, along with some research results.

Provincial Council Proposition And Motion

Partly due to the limited policy space and the fact that provincial elections were scheduled for March 15, 2023, a proposition was signed by the FREON partners on October 14, 2022, addressed



to the factions of the Provincial Council (see Figure 2). This proposition encompasses the aforementioned FREON goals. Subsequently, positive discussions were held with all political parties within the province, resulting in constructive talks. For the politicians, it was important that the offer came 'from the bottom up' and that by implementing the energy transition through local people and organizations, less money flows out of the province. The comprehensive approach and the relationship with broad prosperity were also appreciated, as revealed in the discussions. There was a realization that the province had to act on its own, or else they would relinquish control.

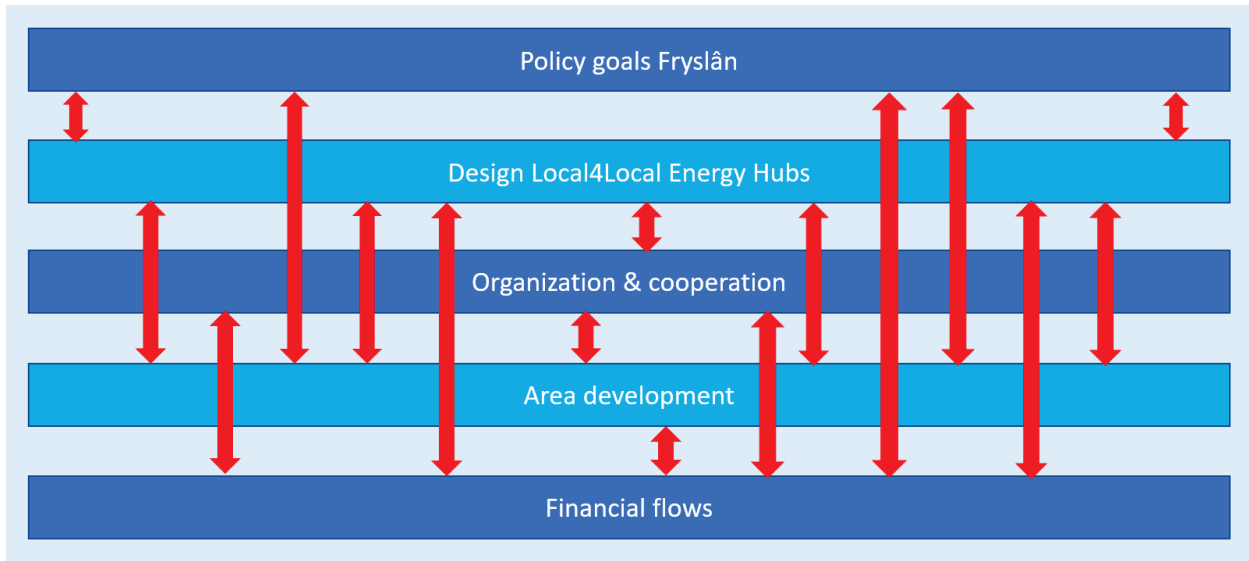


Figure 5. Parallel planning.

This played into observation 6. It turned out that this approach was innovative. In other parts of the Netherlands where various parties seek collaboration, mainly executives and civil servants were approached.

The discussions resulted in the widely supported motion on November 30, 2022. CDA Member of Provincial Council Anton Meijerman initiated it. The motion called for taking the proposition of the FREON partners seriously and jointly exploring its feasibility and acceptability, marking the beginning of an intriguing research process.

Hackathon On May 23 And 24, 2023

To provide a well-founded answer to the questions in the motion, the province organized a hackathon on May 23 and 24, 2023. The eleven FREON partners had to design research with provincial employees in fields with many uncertainties, numerous players, and rapid developments. The goal of the hackathon was to get to know each other better in two days and to form working groups around tightly defined topics and associated questions.

During the hackathon, other parties also joined, such as municipalities and power grid operator Liander. Ultimately, five working groups were launched in the parallel tracks depicted in figure 5. In addition, FREON partners had an extra track: expanding the network, especially with companies. Discussions were held with companies that felt the urgency of grid congestion.



From two to three playing fields

Even though not everyone was aware of it, we underwent a transformation from two to three playing fields (see figure 1). Through the FREON partners, residents and local entrepreneurs became full participants in the game around the energy transition. We distinguished governments, the market, and societal bottom-up players. The market includes consultancy firms and companies that realize physical infrastructure for energy generation, transport, conversion, and demand. Each playing field has strengths and weaknesses. They complement each other. The collective game – not against each other but with each other – has all the characteristics of a complex process, which is a strength rather than something unpleasant. Complexity is a precondition for change (Geldof, 2002). It is important to establish clear game rules. These were not available at the beginning, so the initial phase was characterized by a lot of chaos. As work progressed, more structure emerged. Parties had to get used to each other. Work cultures differ.



Figure 6. Hackaton May 23 and 24, 2023.

Selection of Results

During the process, it became clear what a Local4Local Energy Hub is and how it can be built. The focus was largely on industrial estates. To make Fryslân energy independent, it is necessary to realize an additional 4.4 TWh of electricity generation by 2050, on top of the previously mentioned target of 3 TWh. This requires a significant boost in the Frisian energy and knowledge network. Affordable energy for everyone, with stable prices, proves to be achievable when Local4Local Energy Hubs are realized at the meso level. Then, the rates for supplying energy to the people and businesses in Fryslân will be lower than the market price, which can fluctuate greatly. It is also important that if the FREON partners, together with other organizations, shape the energy transition themselves, €50 to €100 million per year will not flow out of Fryslân but can be used to protect and strengthen important values in the province: Landscape and Community.

An important insight gained is that with Local4Local Energy Hubs, approximately 25 to 30% more capacity can be realized on the existing power grid in the relatively short term. This is achieved by engaging energy consumers in dialogue and making agreements about energy distribution. Then the energy and demand balance will be improved. The available capacity can be used, among other things, by companies that would like to develop activities and/or disconnect from the gas grid by 2030. Local (Frisian) ownership and management of energy hubs are also of great importance for existing and new (high-quality) employment.

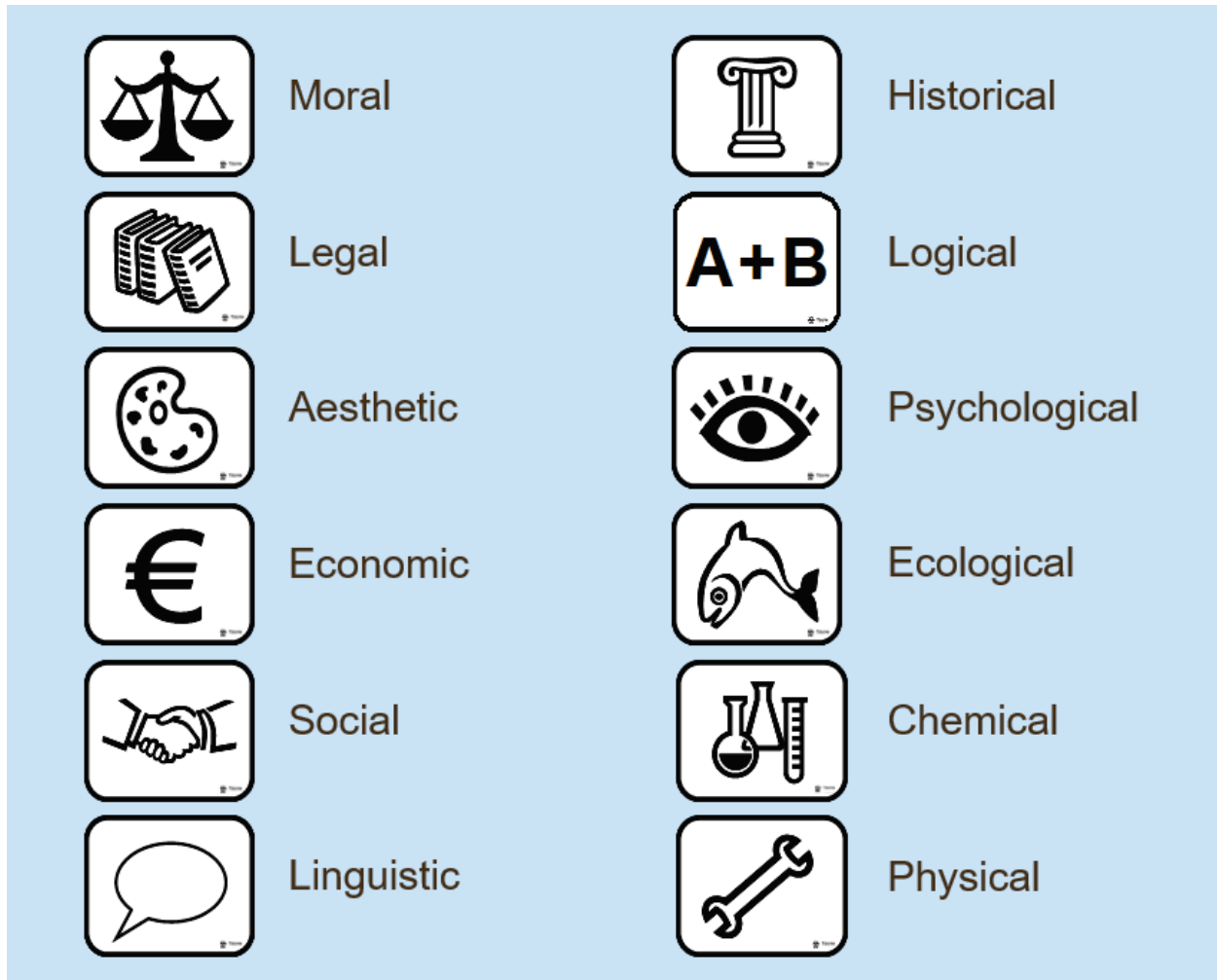


Figure 7. Twelve aspects based on Dooyeweerd (1935).

Value Approach

As indicated, a FREON goal is to establish connections with other major transitions (challenges), including the agricultural transition, biodiversity, climate adaptation, healthcare, and community life in villages and neighbourhoods. FREON sees the energy transition as part of a whole, as an engine of societal development towards broad prosperity. The aspects theory of Dooyeweerd (1935) was used to explicit the broad approach values. Figure 7 shows twelve aspects, ordered from low (physical) to high (moral). All aspects are present in area processes, but only become

values when people assign meaning to them. In the exploration conducted, we made these explicit. The value approach relates to the SDGs, broad prosperity, and the ESD framework.

An example: the Frisian landscape, a core value for the province, is represented in various ways through the aspects. It starts with the physical aspect, the fact that the soil across the province is formed by clay, peat, and sand. Especially when considering energy storage in the water and soil system, they require different approaches. There are opportunities for aqua- and geothermal energy. In the peat areas, greenhouse gas emissions due to oxidation (a chemical aspect) are significant. The biotic aspect comes to life in biodiversity and is under pressure, partly due to intensive agriculture. Healthy soil life is important for water retention and thus for climate adaptation. Healthy soil life is also crucial for healthy food.

The organization of the Frisian landscape is largely the result of human interventions (the historical aspect). For example, the strip along the Wadden Sea contains many terps, human-constructed residential mounds up to nine meters high. Peat excavations have resulted in a network of numerous lakes that have many recreational values (social aspects). In combination with the linguistic aspect, it can be stated that we should not approach the living environment as an ordering of objects but as an ordering of stories. People are connected to their immediate environment through these stories. For energy projects, it is important to know these stories and assign value to them. In an area development, where energy supply is a significant part, projects add new stories to the existing ones. It is clear that a traditional approach to the economic aspect does not do justice to the many values that are interconnected.

The aesthetic aspect of the Frisian landscape sparks many discussions. Frisians cherish their scenic views of land and water. Because of the expansive view, this landscape is vulnerable. An exploration by H+N+S Landscape Architects (2023) illustrates that it is better to place a limited number of wind turbines with a tip height of 200 meters than a multiple thereof with wind turbines with a tip height of 100 meters. Ultimately, the goal is – the moral aspect – to create a sustainable landscape that connects people.

In relation to the motion

Based on the results of the various working groups in conjunction, the questions in the November 30 motion can be answered positively. Yes, the proposition made by the FREON partners to the Provincial Council to take up the energy transition with Frisian parties themselves, is feasible and acceptable. The results are compiled in a joint report (see figure 8) and submitted in March 2024. Based on this, conversations with members of the council about the follow-up will take place again.

Conclusions

The process is not far enough along to conclude that the formulated FREON goals will actually be achieved. However, significant progress has been made in a short time. The following can be concluded:

The added value of collaboration among societal players like FREON is significant. Something has been achieved that the parties could never have accomplished separately. The consortium as a



whole is taken seriously. This has laid the foundation for the transition from two to three playing fields (Figure 1).

By directly approaching political parties at the provincial level, the process has accelerated. There has been a good response to the characteristics of dualism in government.

The FREON partners are closely connected to practice. This makes it easier to take a broad approach to the energy transition and to move away from an approach limited to energy production and financial returns. This enables a good connection with broad prosperity, SDGs, and the ESD framework. A rich array of values is involved in the game.

Parallel planning is a necessity for handling the complexity of the process with many actors and a rich array of values.

The realization of Local4Local Energy Hubs at various scales is promising. Valuable connections are established because both the demand and supply sides of energy are considered.



Figure 8. The final report made by the Province of Fryslân and the FREON partners.

Follow-Up

The process with FREON continues, as does the game in the three fields. The aim is to broaden the FREON consortium and to involve companies in the network, particularly. A list of around ten companies has been drawn up to start working with in the short term, often in conjunction with adjacent residential areas or villages. This list will be reduced to a shortlist of 4 to 5 business parks in consultation with the province and municipalities. These will be designated as pilots, with the aim of having more policy space than was available at the beginning of 2024. Prioritizing the realization of 25 to 30% capacity on the overloaded grid is essential. To democratically anchor the



process, energy communities are established in accordance with European legislation (European Commission, 2019). The Area Value Cooperative North Netherlands takes the lead in this. The parallel planning will continue.

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