

An overview of Dutch examples of citizens' initiatives

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Introduction

There is a new wind blowing through Europe. And that's the wind of citizens' initiatives. There are thousands of citizens' initiatives in all shapes and sizes ongoing in the Netherlands. As tempting as it may seem, capturing these in an all-encompassing system or framework and slapping all kinds of labels, definitions, and explanations on them would, especially in the current transitional stage, not only be a futile attempt at painting an overall picture of all citizens' initiatives, it would also make little sense. After all, labelling initiatives at such an early stage will obscure our view of the citizens' initiative landscape as a whole, making us blind to interesting developments, patterns, lines, and trends. This overview of citizens' initiatives in the Netherlands is a snapshot that reflects the current state of affairs across the landscape of citizens' initiatives in the Netherlands. In compiling this overview, I have, however, refrained from using a strict definition of what exactly a 'citizens' initiative' or 'civic production' entails.

Background

The background to the thousands of citizens' initiatives is twofold. First: national and local governments have to cut spending and transform the housing market, labour market, and care market. At the same time three large decentralisation operations have been lined up, the most sweeping one being the transfer of (parts of) public services from the Exceptional Medical Expenses Act (AWBZ) to the Social Support Act (Wmo). Spending under the Exceptional Medical Expenses Act (AWBZ) will be cut from 27 billion euros to 12 billion euros. From 2015 onwards, entitlement to several forms of (long-term) care will be curtailed and provision of these services will be devolved to local government. Citizens will increasingly have to arrange care themselves or will have to ask family and neighbours for support. Citizens also have to pay more themselves. The current conservative and social democratic government decided on a cut of 3.5 billion euros on long-term care. Local government will be

required to cut 1.6 billion euros (on a total budget of 10 billion euros) on (long-term) care. Besides that, the National Care Agreement that was signed on 24 April 2013 forces local governments to slash the domestic care budget by 600 million euros. This budget cut will lead to the loss of about 50,000 domestic care jobs. Fewer than agreed earlier, but still a large number. Apart from the national government's cut in spending, local governments also have to cut spending due to losses on the development of residential and industrial areas. This will also lead to a reduction in public services. Second: there is a broad feeling within society that banks, major corporations, and large semi-public institutions have made a mess of the economy. Their policies resulted in a greed-and-grab culture, high salaries and bonuses. Liberalisation did not bring what some thought it would bring, and it has not solved the problems cities and regions are facing. Since 2008, the economy has put society in a transitional phase. Society is changing from a market economy into a civic economy. Other values, such as sustainability, simplicity, compassion, justice, modesty, authenticity and solidarity, are becoming more important. Supported by the revolution in information technology (internet) and the development of new and social media, we are now living in a network-connected society. A society of networks, platforms, and communities. Society has become more horizontal, faster, and global. We have flexi-workers, flexi-volunteers, and flexible networks. In fact, we are living in a rhizomatic society. A society that is also moving from a linear to a circular economy. Instead of a traditional way of producing we are moving towards a 'sharing economy' or a 'performance-based society.' The development of citizens' initiatives and the rapid growth of locally-oriented political parties must be also seen as an indication of this change. But are these also signs of an emerging social innovation of potentially massive importance?

Neighbours' help, voluntary work and informal care

These days, hundreds of services and digital platforms help local residents, care recipients, volunteers, and carers form networks. Applications like MINDZ.com make it easy for citizens to build their own online digital networks. The *Verbeterdebuurt.nl* [Improve the neighbourhood] website, for example, lets local residents report issues in their local area and suggest solutions. Other fine examples include online platforms such as the *Wehelpen.nl* [We Help] website, the social local marketplace *BUUV* in Haarlem, the *Resto VanHarte* chain of restaurants that double up as social meeting places (which in April 2013 counted 26 restaurants in 20 Dutch cities (attracting 60,000 people a year), with two further restaurants set to be opened soon), the *Voedselbank* [Food bank] (founded in 2002, this initiative distributes 30,000 food

parcels to 70,000 people from its 135 outlets, which are manned by 6,300 volunteers), the *Burenhulpcentrale* [Mutual aid centre] in The Hague, the online platform *Zorgvoorelkaar* [Take care of each other] (which is run by 1,100 volunteers, of which half are aged under 40, since 2011), the *BurenHulpDienst* [Mutual aid service] in Dongeradeel, and the *Doordewijks* initiative in Rotterdam that gives local residents access to affordable help within their neighbourhood. And then there are also a wide range of citizens' initiatives in the area of community mediation, neighbourhood watch, conflict resolution, community bus services, street coaching (Serve and Protect), quality of life (*Thuis op Straat* [At home in the street], *Geef om de Jan Eef* [Care about the *Jan Eef*, which is a street and neighbourhood in Amsterdam]), street cleaning, green area maintenance, playgrounds, and residents' initiatives to get fibre-optic broadband in their neighbourhood. Furthermore, numerous communities, mainly outside large urban areas, have seen local residents take over local shops (such as *Sterksef*) and village pubs (such as in the village of Esbeek). And an increasing number of local councils have been experimenting with a 'socially responsible' tender process since 2008.

A new player in the citizens' initiative landscape is the contemporary volunteering service *Nederland Cares* (launched in 2005, 100% flex volunteers). Like the *Stichting Present*, this organisation caters to 'unattached volunteers'. *Nederland Cares'* activities are focused on five different groups of people in need: 1) underprivileged children, 2) the homeless, 3) disabled people, 4) migrants, and 5) the elderly. *Nederland Cares* currently has 10,000 volunteers working in 9 cities, with further sites in the pipeline in 7 cities. This organisation employs fewer than 10 paid staff.

Although we are currently seeing volunteering pick up slightly, the *Geven in Nederland 2013* [Giving in the Netherlands 2013] study showed that the percentage of people who do voluntary work dropped from 46 percent in 2002 to 38 percent of the population in 2012. Compared with other countries, that is still very high. But also according to the 2012 Emancipation Monitor from the SCP, the total time women spent on informal care, volunteering and do-it-yourself-activities dropped from 7.4 hours a week in 1975 to 4.9 hours in 2005. This because the spent for instance more time on work. In the case of men, time spent on these activities used to be 6.5 hours a week in 1975, while it stood at 5.0 hours a week in 2005. This because the spent more time on work, taking care of children and on the household. According to the 2012 SCP report entitled *Bijzondere mantelzorg* [Special informal care], a significant section of informal carers are overburdened. Of the estimated number of 3.5 million

informal carers, 1 million provide intensive (i.e. over 8 hours a week) and long-term (i.e. for over 3 months) care. As many as 450,000 informal carers feel overburdened or under strain. And that while 71% of informal carers combine their care duties with paid employment.

Care initiatives

Nowadays, there are numerous apps, platforms, and social media that facilitate self-care and self-management. And new initiatives pop up every day, such as the Seniors Platform *Dat doen we zelf* [We'll do it ourselves], which was launched on 4 April 2013, and the Andromeda society that was set up by a group of seniors in Eindhoven. While the number of elderly people is growing, the number of places available at nursing and care homes dropped from 196,000 in 1980 to 158,000 in 2010. And Berenschot predicts a further decline, down to 95,000 by 2020. How will this gap be filled? Besides initiatives such as *Buurtzorg Nederland* [Community care] (launched in 2006, with 550 local community care teams by April 2013), *Specialisterren*, the *Thomashuizen* homes (small-scale care homes for adults who are mentally ill, founded in 2003, which now runs 100 such homes), the *Herbergier* (small-scale care homes for people with dementia, such as Alzheimer's disease, founded in 2007, with 25 homes by early 2013), Only Friends (300 disabled children who play over 15 different sports every week), *Thuishuizen* (new concept, for elderly people who do not want to be on their own or are threatening to become isolated and lonely. The first such home was opened in Deurne in 2011, while the feasibility of further homes in Eindhoven, Boxmeer, and Amsterdam is currently being studied, and concrete initiatives for these kinds of homes are underway in 10 cities), *Buddy Rotterdam*, the *WeHelpen* website, the *Doordewijks* foundation in Rotterdam for affordable help from within the community, the *Zorgvoorelkaar* website (launched on 17 October 2012), three crowdfunding platforms in the area of care (Medstartr, MedCrowdFund, Farmafonds), and there are already ten care cooperatives and a further fifteen in the works. In some municipalities, such as Peel en Maas, elderly care duties have been outsourced to local social cooperatives.

Care cooperatives

Of the total of ten of the care cooperatives, six are in the North Brabant province, which can be considered best practices. First of all, there is the Hoogeloon care cooperative in the town of Bladel, which was set up in 2005 and has started providing housekeeping services and giving personal and nursing care from September 2008.

The goal of this care cooperative is to keep the elderly and people with a disability in the village, and help them take their care into their own hands. This care cooperative currently has 230 members and 40 volunteers. A care coordinator with qualified nurses frequently visits the elderly. Specialist care is brought in from a regional care institute. The Den Bogerd community house offers a day centre for the elderly, where activities such as singing, dancing and physiotherapy are organised. There is a daily meal for the elderly, prepared by volunteers. There is also a small job and transport service. And members can use mobility scooters, walkers, or wheelchairs. Membership of the cooperative costs elderly people only 20 euros a year. According to Ad Pijnenburg, chairman of this care cooperative, his care costs are 60 percent of those of a traditional care institution. Another interesting development is the partnership this care cooperative has struck up with a local housing corporation (De Zaligheden), which has resulted in two care villas for the cooperative's members, one for seven elderly people who are mentally handicapped, and one for seven elderly with dementia. Secondly, there is the *Zorg om het Dorp Mariahout* [Care for the Mariahout village] cooperative in the municipality of Laarbeek, which was set up in the year 2000, and which runs a food corner at the village hall, among other things. The third example of a cooperative association is *Tot Uw Dienst* [At your service], which was founded in 2005, also in the Laarbeek municipality. The fourth is the *Zorgsteunpunt Heusden* [Care support centre] in the municipality of Asten. The fifth on this list of social care cooperatives is the Helenaveen care cooperative in the municipality of Deurne, which was established in 2009. One of this cooperative's feats so far is the day care centre it built. And the sixth is the care cooperative of the *Dorpsoverleg Elsendorp* [Elsendorp residents' council] in the municipality of Gemert-Brakel, which had a number of sheltered accommodations built. These six care cooperatives have teamed up in the *Platform Zorgcoöperatieve Samenwerking* [Joint care cooperatives platform].

Alongside these six best practices in the realm of care cooperatives, there are also a few other care cooperatives. The village of Oosterend on the island of Texel, for example, has had a care cooperative since 2009, which set up a medical care unit at the village hall, and Schaijk (Landerd municipality) has been home to a care cooperative since 2011, which created a household chores services and a grocery shopping service. There is also the 't Loo care cooperative (in the Bergeijck municipality), which was established in 2010, and a village cooperative in Esbeek, which has been providing meals to single elderly people, among other things, since 2007. Chairman of the *Tot Uw Dienst* care cooperative in the municipality of Laarbeek, Don van

Sambeek, claims that residents of fifteen further towns, in the provinces of Friesland, Overijssel, Limburg, and others, are also in the process of setting up care cooperatives. Newspaper articles and online reports suggest that these are initiatives in Oerle, Lierop, Zeelt, De Mortel, Zeeland, Reek, Meers, Berg aan de Maas, Oisterwijk, Moergestel, Heukelom, Austerlitz, the Achterhoek region, Amsterdam Osdorp, Wijchen, and Voorschoten.

Family Group Conferencing

A textbook case of mobilisation of social resilience is provided by so-called Family Group Conferences. Family Group Conferences give derailed families the opportunity to get their lives back on track with the help of family members, neighbours, and friends. On average, such conferences bring together fifteen family members, neighbours, and friends. Together, they identify the family's problems and look for solutions. These kinds of conferences have been organised since 2000, and their number is growing. At the start of 2001, for example, the number of Family Group Conferences that had been organised stood at 15, while the number of applications had grown to 1,306 by 2011. That is a 30 percent rise on the year 2000. The most recent annual report (2011) stated that the 5,000th Family Group Conference was registered in September 2011. And by March 2013, the total of organised conferences stood at 7,000. Family Group Conferences lead to good results in different situations. In 2011, two scientific surveys were published with the conclusion that when citizens make their own plan it can lead to a cost reduction. A study of one hundred cases of Family Group Conferences arranged by the Greater Amsterdam Youth Care Office showed that in 22 of 24 cases an OTS (supervision of youngsters by a court decision) was no longer necessary. After deduction of the costs of the conferences, the net cost reduction is €284,000. The second scientific survey looked at forty multi-problem cases and concluded that cost savings for society could amount to as much as €4.8 million per hundred families during the whole period of care. There are currently 604 Family Group coordinators who organise conferences, and who speak 96 different languages and dialects between them. The Family Group Conferencing organisation employs 29 staff (as at 31 December 2011).

Energy cooperatives and Community Energy Enterprises

Estimations regarding the number of initiatives for decentralised power generation are inconclusive. In *Staat van de Energietransitie in Nederland* [State of energy transition in the Netherlands] (August 2011), Jan Rotmans estimated this number at three hundred. Jurgen van der Heijden (in *Buurtenenergie Nu. De volgende stap in 2013*

[Community energy now. The next step in 2013], March 2013) claimed that over 400 initiatives for joint purchasing of green energy, solar panels, and insulation material has produced around 50 energy enterprises between 2008 and 2013. The online platform for local sustainable energy initiatives states on its website, *Hieropgewekt.nl* [Generated here], that it already has nearly three hundred initiatives on its radar. On 27 April 2013, the *Hieropgewekt.nl* website actually listed 200 of these initiatives, i.e. 89 more than in August 2012. Groundbreaking research by Anne Marieke Schwencke (*Energieke BottumUp in Lage Landen. De Energietransitie van Onderaf* [Energetic BottomUp in the Low Countries. Energy Transition from the bottom up]) claimed that a total of 280 initiatives were known in August 2012, listing 111 of these initiatives on her website. So we see an remarkable growth.

The February 2013 update to Anne Marieke Schwencke's study distinguished three categories. Firstly, wind cooperatives. Her update identified 17 large wind energy cooperatives and (insofar known) 5 smaller-scale wind projects in the Netherlands. The large projects include the *Zeekracht* project with 9,500 members and *De Windcentrale* cooperative with 5,500 members. The second category contains local energy cooperatives or energy enterprises. These enterprises (LDBE [Local sustainable energy enterprises] or 'new utilities') are relatively new phenomena and focused on: 1) joint purchasing and supply of power/gas, 2) projects for generation, energy savings in the built-up environment or transportation, and 3) acting as service providers and intermediaries (residents, local authorities, corporations, SME, commercial parties). By February 2013, approximately 40 LDBEs had been registered with a notary (as a cooperative in most cases), while a further 30 LDBEs were in the process of being established. The enterprises with the most members are *Texel-Energie* (3,000 members, founded in 2007) and *Grunneger Power* (3,500 members, founded in 2012). The third category consists of so-called solar initiatives that focus on the development of solar energy projects. These concern joint purchasing schemes, community initiatives, or projects that will eventually lead to the creation of a new utility company. In some cases, a solar cooperative is created. Their number is still limited (approx. 10). The number of joint purchasing schemes and solar projects that are still on the drawing board is, however, countless. Fine examples of initiatives in this category are *Energie BoerEnBuur* [Energy farmer and neighbour] and the cooperative association *De Zonvogel*. On a national level, an interesting project is *WijWillenZon* [We want sun], which started in 2010. Within a year, *WijWillenZon* sold 50,000 solar power panels made in China with a total of 10Mw.

Neighbourhood and Community Based Enterprises

In 2012, the *Landelijk Samenwerkingsverband Aandachtswijken* (LSA, national community development alliance) started an experiment by setting up 10 to 15 Community Based Enterprises. The principles underlying this initiative were taken from the UK concept of Development Trusts and Community Enterprises. On 2 March 2013, festivities accompanied the inauguration of the first of these 15 Community Based Enterprises in the Netherlands. This first enterprise is based in the Heechterp-Schieringen neighbourhood in the northern town of Leeuwarden. This is a deprived neighbourhood and one of the poorest ones in the Netherlands. After having its business plan approved, each Community Based Enterprise under this scheme receives €200,000, which is their start-up capital to get the enterprise off the ground in two years. Five further Community Based Enterprises are currently in line to follow suit: 1) *Wishing Well West* in Utrecht, 2) *Op Eigen Houtje* [By ourselves] in Emmen, 3) *Berflo BV* in Hengelo, 4) *Kruiskamp Onderneemt* [Entrepreneurial Kruiskamp] in Amersfoort, and 5) the *Bruishuis* in Arnhem. Neighbourhood and community enterprises are an alternative for all those towns where government-subsidised community centres have been or are about to be closed.

A community enterprise is a generic term denoting initiatives by local residents who are teaming up to make their neighbourhood or village a better place to live. Local residents take the initiative, implement the initiative, and eventually end up running a centre or maintaining green areas themselves. They are taking over the services and activities that used to be provided by local authorities or semi-public parties in the area of green areas, housing, care, energy supply, welfare work, structured daytime activity, elderly care, and (public) facilities such as swimming pools, village and neighbourhood shops, village pubs, and libraries. This can be organised in the form of foundations and cooperatives that run and operate village and community centres, or in the form of community enterprises that generate power from wind or solar energy. Examples of community enterprises include: 1) Multifunctional Centre Oostwold, 2) *Duurzaam Hoonhorst 2050* [Sustainable Hoonhorst], and 3) *De Meevaart* community centre in Amsterdam.

De Meevaart is a particularly interesting example of a Community Based Enterprise. With ownership transferred to local residents in January 2012, this was the first community centre in Amsterdam that ceased to be run by a third-party institution. Instead of giving the welfare organisation Civic Zeeburg a €800,000 subsidy to run *De Meevaart*, the council of Amsterdam's eastern district decided to give the

community €300,000 directly to run their own community centre. It has never been as busy at the community centre as it is with the community in charge. *De Meevaart* now opens seven days a week, from 9am to 11pm, and is run by the community as a whole, meaning that everyone has a say and there is no single boss. The Community Based Enterprise *Heechterp* started on 2 March 2013. It is the first of a group of 10 to 15 Community Based Enterprises that will be set up in the next two years by the National Community Development Alliance. The four areas for which the *Heechterp* Community Based Enterprise is responsible are: 1) maintenance of green areas and a big community garden, 2) cleaning apartment buildings, 3) cleaning the streets, especially litter picking, and 4) catering and setting up of a food collective.

A report by Aedes that is set to be published in May 2013 concludes that 23 community enterprises are partnering with housing corporations. Housing corporations' involvement in these community enterprises primarily consists of making available or letting premises, providing limited subsidies (management agreement), or sitting on a cooperative's supervisory board. One of these cases with housing corporation involvement concerns an energy cooperative (Almere), three are care cooperatives (Helenaveen, Hoogeloon, and Amsterdam), two are shops (Sterksel, Almere), eight are neighbourhood, community, or village centres (Krommenie, Koog aan de Zaan, Utrecht, Arnhem, Westzaan, Amsterdam, Eindhoven, Roosendaal), one is a restaurant (Krimpen aan de IJssel), while the final eight consist of another form of self-management (Delft, Rotterdam, Den Bosch, Arnhem, Amsterdam, Emmen, Hoogvliet, and Utrecht).

The transfer of libraries, swimming pools and sports fields

In 2008, the municipality of Oss was the first Dutch municipality to launch a pilot for a socially responsible tendering process. Dozens of other municipalities have since followed suit. *WIJEindhoven*, for example, was set up in only two (!) weeks with the ambition of rolling it out for the entire city by 2014. The municipalities of Utrecht, Leudal, and Maassluis are also implementing socially responsible tendering conditions. And ever since Amsterdam sparked social enterprise by transferring management of the *De Meevaart* community centre to local residents, other cities have also been actively exploring ways of putting residents and other informal parties in charge of running community centres (Rotterdam) and green areas (Albrandwaard). Community centres in dozens of municipalities are currently in the process of being taken over by residents, under a wide range of different management constructions.

There are also cases where the management of libraries, swimming pools, and sports fields is placed in the hands of the community.

One example is the closure of the library and subsequent opening of a plug-in library, an unmanned mini-library at an Albert Heijn supermarket, in Callantsoog. This library only lends books for adults. Books for young people (10-12 years of age) are lent out by a special bus that stops at schools. Staff members at the Albert Heijn store check the books in the mini-library. Another example is the *BurgerBibliotheek* [Citizens' library] in Rotterdam. Budget cuts are forcing 13 of Rotterdam's 18 community libraries to close, reducing the total number of community libraries to 5. After two such community libraries were closed in the western part of Rotterdam, local residents joined forces with local entrepreneurs to start *De Leeszaal*, a citizens' library run by over one hundred volunteers, in a former hammam on the Rijnhoutplein. In March 2013, this library's collection consisted of over 4,000 books, all donated by local residents. No one needs a library card for *De Leeszaal*, and there is no loan period. People don't even have to return the books they take out. *De Leeszaal* receives bags of books every day, including books that are only under two months old.

In the municipality of Sluis a cooperation of nine football clubs and a korfbal club took over the maintenance of the sports fields. In Zwolle, management of a swimming pool was transferred from a local authority to residents in 1992. The pool currently has 5,500 members who, as part of their membership, also have to do volunteer work at the pool. And last year, management of the local De Zwaoi swimming pool in the municipality of Borger Osdorn was transferred from the local government to the De Ommezwoi village cooperative for two years. After two years, the goal is to also transfer ownership to the village cooperative. These are examples of the transfer of public facilities in different cities in the Netherlands. Hundreds will follow over the coming years.

Reusing, repairing, sharing, borrowing and leasing

Over the past few years, numerous projects have got underway where intermediaries have been removed from the chains, and citizens provide services directly to each other at low cost. Examples include the Repair Cafés, various forms of car sharing (Greenwheels, Togethr, or Car2Go), neighbourhood tool lending schemes (Peerby), peer-to-peer sharing or letting of accommodation (Airbnb has been operating in the U.S. since 2008, and meanwhile racked up a total of 4 million bookings) or neighbours cooking for each other (*Thuisafgehaald* [Home takeaway]). And these initia-

tives sometimes develop extremely rapidly. The first Repair Café was organised in Amsterdam in October 2009, and there are now 59 Repair Cafés across the Netherlands. The *Thuisafgehaald* project, which was launched in March 2012, has already signed up 4,700 home cooks. This latter initiative has meanwhile produced 32,000 meals. There are also over eighty LETS (Local Exchange Trading System) enterprises across the Netherlands, which offer services and products. One fine example of a LETS is the *Noppes* trading scheme in Amsterdam, which was set up in 1993, and currently has over 1,500 members, making it the largest such scheme in the Netherlands and Europe.

Social enterprises

According to the report entitled 'Opportunities for the Dutch Social Enterprise Sector' of 2011, there are in the Netherlands 4,000 to 5,000 social enterprises. But not all of these fit the definition McKinsey and Social Enterprise NL use. Their definition is that a social company is a company with the primary goal to deliver social values in a financially sustainable and independent way. According to the study there is an growth potential of 10,000 social companies. Among these 3,000 social enterprises, there are companies such as the restaurants Fifteen, Ctaste, and Freud, which are social enterprise models where young disabled persons, visually impaired persons, and people with a history of mental illness cook up delicious meals. Tony's Choc Lonely, which introduced the world's first slavery-free chocolate, is another example of a social enterprise.

And a particularly interesting social enterprise is Sjoerd van der Maden's *Speciali-sterren* [Specialist stars]. Founded in 2009, this company works with autistic people to test computer software. As it turned out, highly gifted autistic people are extremely good at that. So good, in fact, that *Speciali-sterren* outperforms regular IT testing companies by 30 to 100 percent. This company came about when Sjoerd, who is father to a son with a form of autism, started looking for work for his son, and found that the labour market offered very few opportunities for people with a form of autism. And that is where Sjoerd van der Maden spotted a gap in the market. There are around 190,000 autistic persons in the Netherlands. Half of this group of people, i.e. 95,000 people, can work. And a third of these 95,000 autistic people, around 32,000 people, are highly qualified. But only 5,000 people from this group of highly-educated autistic persons who can and want to work actually have a job. So there you have it, a labour market of 27,000 highly-qualified autistic people

Development aid and cooperation

Although public support for more public funds going to development aid is shrinking (from 17% in 2006 to 10% in 2011), citizens are, in line with the trend towards more civic initiatives, increasingly launching small-scale development aid initiatives themselves. One example is the amount of €700,000 raised through crowdfunding for international cooperation. A November 2012 SCP report entitled *Particuliere initiatieven in ontwikkelingssamenwerking. Een casestudie naar nieuwe verbanden in de Nederlandse civiele society* [Private initiative in development aid. A case study of new connections in Dutch civil society] puts the number of private initiatives in this area at between 6,400 and 15,000. The majority of initiatives reviewed for this study were run by 10 or fewer people, and nearly all of them are operated by volunteers. Many of the volunteers involved in such initiatives join these initiatives because they were launched by a family member, neighbour, acquaintance, or friend.

A fine example of an initiative in the area of development aid is the crowdfunding for the Waka Waka solar lamp. According to an article in the *De Volkskrant* newspaper on 16 January 2013, the Waka Waka solar lamp makes for an ideal camping lamp as it will provide light during eight hours after having been placed in the sun for only four. This project is run by a social venture called S3C, which stands for Solar for Sub-Saharan Schools and Communities. This company intends to market the lamp in Africa, starting in Kenya and Ethiopia, where this social venture is looking to sell them on a large scale in areas that are not connected to the power grid, i.e. about 80% of the total area of these countries. The lamp costs €20 to buy, and when including a set of new rechargeable batteries, the buyer will spend USD 35 for five years of light. The Waka Waka solar lamp is therefore an extremely cheap enabler for people who want to read, study, or work at home. This social venture is partly made up of a (private limited) company, and partly of a foundation.

Another fine example is the 1% Club, an international online platform that was launched in the Netherlands in 2008. The goal of this project is to support small-scale development aid projects. Participants are asked to put in 1% of their time, money, or knowledge. So far, 14,000 members have supported 433 realised projects, and a total of €800,000 has been raised.

Construction and residential facilities

In a range of cities and villages, citizens and associations of residents are taking initiatives to build houses and residential facilities themselves. This is another form of

self-management in the civic economy. Next to self-building there are also hundreds of examples of property, owned by various layers of governments or building corporations, that are difficult to improve, that have been sold or let to citizens for a period of 5 or 10 years for a reasonable price as so-called do-it-yourself houses. Big cities like Amsterdam, The Hague and Rotterdam are frontrunners in this respect. But absolutely the best example is the city of Almere which leads the field in self-building in the Netherlands. The city is planning whole neighbourhoods. Through the project entitled 'I built a house in Almere' the municipality offers citizens the opportunity to buy a plot so that they can design and build a house themselves. In the next few years Almere will be offering 600 plots a year to citizens. The municipality is constantly innovating with self-building and new arrangements whereby citizens are in charge. In the Oosterwold project, for instance, a new part of the municipality providing 15,000 houses and 26,000 jobs will be built in an organic way; citizens are enabled to set up their own living and working areas. Citizens are responsible not just for their houses, but also for waterways, streets, the sewerage system and street lightning. Not just citizens, but also institutional parties that want to commit themselves for a long period to the municipality, are given more freedom and responsibility in self-building in the Netherlands.

Other examples in Almere include the Noorderplassen-West area, where a total of 300 plots of land were put on sale, most of which have meanwhile been sold. What we are seeing in Almere is a shift in responsibility, not only towards residents, but also towards institutional parties such as investors and corporations that are willing to commit to the city for the long term. In the case of the *Nobelhorst* project in Almere Hout and the *Kustzone* project in Almere Poort, for example, the Almere city council has largely transferred responsibility to the Ymere housing corporation and Amvest (project developer) respectively. In both these cases, urban planning is not handled by local authorities, but 100% in the hands of Amvest and Ymere. Both parties take care of the management of streets, neighbourhoods, and the city. Contrary to the *Kustzone* project, the *Nobelhorst* project is more community-driven as a 'neighbourhood of initiatives.' At Section 4 of the *Nobelhorst* site, future residents will have complete freedom in defining the size, location, and layout of the individual plots themselves in mutual consultation. Other major cities, such as The Hague, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Eindhoven, Dordrecht, Enschede, Haarlem, Groningen, Heemstede, Tilburg, and Nijmegen, have meanwhile followed Almere's example in the latest developments in the area of (joint) private project commissioning or combinations thereof.

Potential demand for private project commissioning in municipalities with under 70,000 inhabitants (WoON 2009) is approximately 165,000 households, of which 25,000 (15%) are interested in joint private project commissioning. In municipalities with over 70,000 inhabitants, demand is approximately 150,000, of which 40,000 (26.5%) are interested in joint private project commissioning. Despite that potential demand, the number of privately commissioned new housing developments halved between 2000 and 2011. Where 12,249 homes were built this way in the year 2000 (17% of total number of homes built), privately commissioned new housing developments were down to 6,470 in 2011 (10% of total housing construction).

Urban agriculture

Ever since the Dutch translation of Carolyn Steel's *Hungry City* was published around 2011, urban agriculture has taken off in a big way in the Netherlands. Literally hundreds of citizens' initiatives in this area (kitchen gardens, vegetable gardens, neighbourhood restaurants) have cropped up since then. The second national urban agriculture day was held on 25 April 2013, the Rabobank-sponsored Urban Agriculture Award was presented for the second year in a row, and there is now an actual Urban Agriculture network covering various cities. Twelve local initiatives are currently affiliated with this network: Amsterdam, Alkmaar, Haarlemmermeer, Alphen aan den Rijn, Rotterdam, Utrecht, Breda, Enschede, Groningen, Nijmegen, Tilburg, and Zeist. This number will undoubtedly grow over the coming years.

Urban agriculture covers a multitude of initiatives relating to food supply, local food chains, recycling, and greenery in all its diversity. This includes urban front gardens, community gardens, roof gardens, roof terraces, balconies, wall gardens, community and neighbourhood vegetable gardens, allotments, urban nurseries, urban farms, self-harvest gardens, vegetable nurseries, shops selling organic produce, neighbourhood and community restaurants and catering companies that grow, promote, and sell locally and regionally grown products.

One of the most interesting urban agriculture projects is the *Uit je Eigen Stad* [From your own town] project in Rotterdam, which came second in the vote for Rotterdam's best initiative. This is a state-of-the-art commercial urban agricultural enterprise that grows vegetables, produces chicken, runs a shop and a restaurant, and supplies to the local catering industry. Another interesting project is the *Dakakker* [Farming on

the roof] project at Rotterdam's Schieblock: growing vegetables on a 1000-square-metre patch on the roof of an office building.

Citizens and charities

Despite these tough economic times, the Dutch are continuing to give to charity. The total contribution in 2011 has lowered only slightly over the past few years. Where the total amount given to charity stood at €4.4 billion in 2005, according to the *Geven in Nederland 2007* report, and according to the *Geven in Nederland 2011* €4.7 billion in 2009, according to the *Geven in Nederland 2013* report, the Dutch were donating €4.3 billion to charity in 2011. Of that total amount, €1.8 billion came from households. What is interesting to see is how various funds are helping charities. The 129 Dutch charitable trusts who committed themselves to the survey (in total there are 300 charitable trusts), have a total capital of €3.8 billion, while the 844 Dutch fundraising organisations have amassed a total capital of €3.1 billion between them. Charitable trusts donated a total amount of €239 million to charity. And fundraising organisations helped charities with a total amount of €55 million. Fine examples of funds are the *Stichting Verre Bergen*, the Turing Foundation, the Van Leer Group Foundation, the VSB Fund, the VandenEnde Foundation, and de Start Foundation.

It should be noted, however, that insight into charitable trusts' capital position and concrete figures on how much they donate to charity is generally lacking. Public benefit organisations [*Algemeen Nut Beogende Instellingen, or ANBIs*], such as charitable trusts, are under no obligation to publish financial data regarding their capital or the amount of money they give to charity. In 2014, this situation will change, because as of 1 January 2014 all 65,000 ANBIs will be required to publish financial information under the *Ruimte voor Geven* [Room for giving] covenant, which was signed in 2011.

Contrary to the United Kingdom, non-profit organisations in the Netherlands receive little funds through philanthropy. While in the United Kingdom non-profit organisations' income from philanthropy is 9 percent of their total income, Dutch non-profit organisations receive only 2 percent from philanthropists. It is therefore not unthinkable that as a reaction to government spending cuts and subsequent changes to the welfare state, the role of philanthropy could increase over the coming years.

Crowdfunding

Crowdfunding grew explosively in the Netherlands. Crowdfunding for the realisation of citizens' initiatives is a form of micro financing. Crowdfunding, introduced in the Netherlands half of 2010, can generate a financial contribution to a community project in the form of a loan, an investment, a donation, or in return for a concrete product as the end result. Douw & Koren, a crowdfunding consultancy, calculated that total crowdfunding revenue in the Netherlands reached €14 million in 2012. That was already six times as much as in 2011, when €2.5 million was raised through crowdfunding, already a significant improvement on 2010, when that amount stood at €0.5 million. In 2012, a project called *De Windcentrale* raised €7 million, i.e. half of the total crowdfunding revenue of 2012. *De Windcentrale* raised this amount by selling 'wind shares' of €350 each to 5,500 households. The €7 million they raised was used to build two wind turbines that will provide these 5,500 households with power. By partnering with Greenchoice (founded in 2001, 100% green power and gas), *De Windcentrale* is able to deliver the power it generates to its investors.

The *Crowdfunding in Nederland 2012* report showed that an average amount of €12,000 per project was raised for 5,670 projects and enterprises. Besides the €7 million raised by *De Windcentrale*, 108 other enterprises raised €4.1 million between them. In 2011, total funds raised stood at €700,000. Furthermore, 25 projects in the area of local communities, nature, and sports raised a total amount of €300,000 in 2012. And finally, 174 projects in the area of international development aid raised an amount of €700,000, while 262 creative projects (film, theatre, art, literature) raised an amount of €1.9 million. Expectations are that funds raised through crowdfunding for neighbourhoods and communities, village and urban renewal, and care will continue to increase.

Bread Funds

A bread fund provides mutual disability insurance for self-employed professionals, and the first such fund in the Netherlands has 43 members. The *broodfonds.nl* website counted a total of 27 bread funds on 1 February 2013. These are based in 16 cities and have 822 members between them. Of the abovementioned 27 bread funds, the website reports that 7 are based in Amsterdam, 4 in Groningen, and 3 in Utrecht. The remaining ones are based all over the Netherlands, from Huizen to Breda, and from Nijmegen to Rotterdam. Most of these bread funds are tied to a certain region or city. And then there are also two bread funds that have members from all over the Netherlands. Furthermore, there are 15 bread funds that are in the process of being set up. The 16 March 2013 edition of the *Financieel Dagblad* newspaper claimed that

there were already 31 bread funds on that date, with a further 20 in the pipeline. Given the number of self-employed professionals, which currently stands at around 750,000 and is expected to grow to 1,000,000 by 2020, there are (still) relatively few bread funds.

Participatory budgeting

Numerous cities and villages have village, neighbourhood, community, and liveability budgets. The IPP study *Burgerparticipatie in de lokale politiek* [Civic engagement in local politics] (2010) showed that 46.2% of the Netherlands' 145 municipalities have some kind of village or community budget. However, most village and community budgets are implementation budgets. They are generally budgets communities can use to do something extra. One town that does not adhere to that general trend is Emmen. In the municipality of Emmen, 32 village and community representatives have a neighbourhood budget at their disposal. They can save up these funds and are free to spend the budget on any causes in the public sphere for residents of the village or neighbourhood. By taking the tendering process off the council's hands, residents ended up realising a cost saving of 60%.

A fine example of participatory budgeting is the community budget for Amsterdam's eastern district, which was the first community budget to be integrated into the governance process. The deliberative phase has been firmly incorporated into this project. A so-called Perspectives Report is presented in May, for example, followed by a draft budget in October, and the community budget is finally adopted by the district council in November. The budgeting process allows residents and companies in 6 areas and 31 neighbourhoods across the district to submit proposals and suggestions regarding the spending of funds. In its current form, the community budget for Amsterdam's eastern district is, however, still a light version. It is expected, however, that this Amsterdam district will go much further in the coming years.

Local Community Funds

The concept of the community fund is by no means a new one. Originating in the United States, it was introduced in the Netherlands in 2001. There are approximately 1,700 community funds worldwide, 850 of which are in the United States. These funds support national and local initiatives. Collectively, they hold around USD 31 billion of combined assets, and spend around USD 2.6 billion every year. And they are growing fast. The other 850 community funds are based in 51 countries outside the US. While as many as 234 community funds were set up in Germany over the

past 10 years, community funds are still a rare occurrence in the Netherlands. As far as this local structure is concerned, the Netherlands is lagging behind. The *Ruimte voor geven* [Room for giving] covenant signed by the Dutch government and the *Stichting Samenwerkende Brancheorganisaties Filantropie* (SBF) [Association of joint philanthropy sector organisations] intends to change that. One of the eight agreements from this covenant is that both parties will jointly stimulate the creation of local community funds. The covenant was prompted by the fact that resources that existing philanthropic funds have available are currently underused (and not combined).

According to the covenant, community funds were already being trialled on the island of Texel, as well as in Amstelveen, Groningen, Rotterdam, Venlo, and Maastricht when the covenant was signed (21 June 2011). Based on pilots in Groningen, Eindhoven, Rotterdam, and Maastricht, and partly also based on community funds that have been around longer (Texel, Schiedam), the SBF and the Dutch Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations published a guide to the development of community funds in the Netherlands entitled *Ontwikkeldgids ten behoeve van de verspreiding van gemeenschapsfondsen in Nederland*, which constitutes a practical manual. Aside from community funds in the above municipalities, data sourced online shows that there are currently also community funds, or initiatives to that effect, in Blaricum, Zwolle, Winterswijk, Hoekse Waard, Goirle, Den Bosch, Goes, Leidschendam-Voorburg, Alkmaar, Waalre, and Eindhoven.

Given the fact that ANBI's currently do not have to publish financial data, we do not have an aggregated picture of the capital of community funds, or the total amount they have contributed to citizens' initiatives. Nevertheless, local community funds are increasingly important. Local authorities should team up more with local community funds to support citizens' initiatives. The First Conference on Community Funds, which was held on 31 October 2012, has produced an initiative for a platform for community funds that is currently under development. The obligation for ANBIs to publish financial data from 1 January 2014 is likely to lead to better focused use of the available local capital.

Credit unions

Like cooperatives, credit unions, i.e. credit associations of, for, and by entrepreneurs, can be considered a special form of citizens' initiative in the civic economy. It is an example of the growing peer-to-peer initiatives. The US is home to a huge number of credit unions, and there are also many of such associations in the UK. The US

counts 10,000 credit unions, which have a total capital of USD 600 billion and provide financial services to 83 million Americans. Richard Wilkinson and Kate Picket put the number of credit unions in the United Kingdom at 650. Expectations are, however, that the number of these kinds of citizens' initiatives will rise as a result of the economic crisis. Besides the umbrella organisation *Kredietunie Nederland*, which was established in 2012, there are currently four credit union pilots ongoing, with a further 26 credit unions in the pipeline. *Kredietunie Nederland* aims to set up 50 credit unions within 5 years, and they have already received 24 applications for the creation of credit unions.

Of the four abovementioned pilots, two are sector-based credit unions and two are regional credit unions. The two sector-based credit unions are the *Kredietunie voor Mobiliteits Ondernemers* (KMO) [Credit union for mobility entrepreneurs], which is being created with the help of the trade organisation for the mobility industry, BOVAG, and the bakery industry-backed *Kredietunie voor Bakkerij Ondernemers* (KBO) [Credit union for bakery entrepreneurs]. This latter credit union serves independent bakeries, of which there are over 3,900 in the Netherlands. The two regional credit unions are the Amersfoort-based *Kredietunie Midden Nederland* (KMN) [Central Netherlands credit union] and the regional *Kredietunie Zeeland* [Zeeland credit union] in Goes. The credit union for mobility entrepreneurs and the Zeeland credit union are expected to go live this summer, while the Central Netherlands credit union and the credit union for bakery entrepreneurs are expected to follow suit in the fall of 2013.

Credit unions (especially regional unions) can play an important role in strengthening local city economies.

Complementary currency

There are over eighty local LETS enterprises across the Netherlands, where services and products are offered and exchanged, but there are no cities where these local exchange trading systems have led to the creation of a local currency that is convertible to the euro. More and more cities and villages across the world are introducing their own currency to boost their local economy. In the Netherlands, too, these kinds of local currencies are likely to become more prominent. The Dutch Transition Town Network, as well as LETS initiatives and the Dutch movement of Economy Transformers, are all stimulating a rethink on money. Nijmegen, for example, has *Zonnen* (which can be exchanged for euros within Nijmegen's LETS network),

Groningen has *Ecos*, Amsterdam's Indische Buurt neighbourhood has the *Makkie* currency, as well as the *Noppes* since 1993, while the *WeHelpen* cooperative works with reward points, which it calls credits.

A new initiative is the proposal for the *Zuiderling*, which is to be launched on 21 August 2013. Following several projects outside the Netherlands, the *Zuiderling* is the first documented Dutch initiative that aims to introduce a local currency that the initiators want to be convertible to euros in phase 3 (possibly in 2016). The first phase (2013-2014) will see the introduction of the currency, which at that stage can only be used by citizens between themselves. The *Zuiderling* will have a value of half an hour of someone's time, which is spent providing a service. In the second phase (possibly 2015), the people behind this initiative want to link the *Zuiderling* to the real economy, enabling people to use the currency to buy products at shops.

The contribution of complementary currencies to the real economy of an urban area of the size of South Rotterdam is expected to be limited in economic and financial terms. Also on the level of the city of Rotterdam as a whole it will be limited in economic and financial terms. The regulator of the Dutch monetary system, the Dutch Central Bank, has so far been reluctant to express an opinion. When asked about the reliability and quality assurance of complementary currencies, the Dutch Central Bank replied that the Netherlands has only one currency, the euro. That means that as long as people who are taking part in the *Zuiderling* project agree on the use and 'convertibility' of the currency, and bear the associated risks themselves, there seems to be nothing standing in the way of the introduction of this currency, but it can never be a 'public currency.'

Social citizens' initiatives

Finally, there are four other citizens' initiatives I would like to mention to make the picture of the present state of affairs in civic production even clearer. First: an initiative by the Dutch architect Thomas Rau. When he redecorated his office he decided to do so in a completely different way. Instead of buying light fixtures, he made a deal with Philips to buy a 'service' instead of a 'product'. The service consists of a certain amount of light per workplace. Philips provides electrical fixtures and power, and will take the hardware back at the end of the lease. Based on the cradle-to-cradle principle, the old fittings will be reused in new products. Thomas Rau made the same agreement with Desso for his carpets. This is what Thomas Rau is also promoting with his company Turntoo, i.e. 'performance-based consumerism.' Se-

cond: the innovation of Peter van Dommele and the company Sublean (Sustainable Building and Living Environment as Normal) in making rotating 4-D house fronts. These can be used to harvest solar power and capture and purify rainwater, while also providing advertising space. Third: the development of 3-D technology, such as in 3-D printers. This opens up the possibility of a new industrial revolution. Refer to, for instance, Chris Anderson's book, *Makers. The New Industrial Revolution*. In the Netherlands, the young innovative company Ultimakers in the municipality of Gellermalsen develops and builds 3-D printers as open source technology. In Amsterdam, a canal house will be built this year using 3-D printing technology. 3-D printing technology opens up the possibility of every consumer becoming a producer as well. Four: the last example, the growing role of local political parties in the last five years (also a form of citizens' initiative) who are not a part of political parties who are active at the national level. The development of these parties, not only in the last 10 years but also in the coming years, is interesting in relation to the development of citizens' initiatives.

Conclusion

I will now formulate several conclusions and points for discussion. First: it seems that the top-down society is changing to a network society, and moving in the direction of networked community governance. Helped by the economic crisis, we will no longer focus on economic growth, but sustainable growth at a lower rate. Society is moving from a linear to a circular economy. Second: the dividing lines between government, market, and citizens are changing. They are becoming more fluid and more diffuse. No longer does one of these three parties have a monopoly on how society will be run. We are moving from a market economy to a civic economy. Third: there is a shift from a 'production economy' to a 'sharing economy' or 'performance-based economy'. Sustainability, repairing, sharing, reusing, borrowing, and leasing are the new buzzwords. Fourth: there is a change from shareholders to stakeholders. And from maximising profit to creating value. Not a greed-and-grab culture, but a society with other standards and values. Fifth: society is changing from organisations, institutions, and top-down decisions to a more rhizomatic society. A conglomerate of continuously changing networks, platforms, and communities. Supported by the internet and social media, we are moving towards society 3.0, in other words community-based, small-scale, open-source, and transparent. Six: consumers are no longer just consumers. New technologies are empowering consumers (or users) to also become producers. They are turning into 'prosumers' of energy, food, care, services, and even industrial products. Intermediaries are increasingly disappearing. Seven: the change to a net-

work society and the devolution of the implementation of care-related legislation to local government will have an important effect on the mechanics of local politics (especially with respect to nationally oriented parties). Eight: will the greater focus on local communities in combination with the Dutch perspective on a new form of network governance and society lead to a model that is more akin to the Rhineland model of civil society, rather than - although we do import quite a lot of the Anglo-Saxon approach - an Anglo-Saxon society? Nine (my last point for discussion): will the three large decentralisation operations and the development of society in general, lead to a new form of network governance and a change in the attitude of political parties on the local level? What will happen with local political parties (will they be driven back?) when the local branches of traditional political parties at the local level are also forced to focus more on the local community due to the three decentralisations?