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### An overview of Dutch examples of citizens' initiatives on civic production<sup>1</sup>

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#### Introduction

There is a new wind blowing through Europe. And that's the wind of citizens' initiatives and local self-organisation. There are thousands of citizens' initiatives in all shapes and sizes ongoing in the Netherlands, suggesting a genuine new social movement. Every month, new citizens' initiatives crop up in a range of different areas (energy, health care, child care, fibre optic cabling, culture, food, agriculture, mobility, swap shops, mutual aid), mainly in the form of associations and cooperatives. Tine De Moor, who was appointed professor of 'Institutions for Collective Action in a Historical Perspective' at Utrecht University on 30 August 2013, claims that the number of new cooperatives has grown by several dozen every year since 2005, especially in professional services, manufacturing, energy and transport, and care. Among these cooperatives is also the first cooperative for prostitutes, which was founded by 15 prostitutes in Utrecht on 15 August 2013.

As tempting as it may seem, capturing these citizens' initiatives 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. One of the trends that have emerged over the last year is that more and more citizens' initiatives are broadening their scope.

Although a citizens' initiative originates in a specific area, more and more citizens' initiatives enlarge their scope over time. Interesting examples of that are *Duurzaam Hoonhorst* [Sustainable Hoonhorst], which besides energy savings also provides care

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is an updated version of a paper written for the Sheffield TRP Seminar on Civic Production that was held on May 1<sup>st</sup> 2013 at Sheffield University.

services, and the *Nieuwleusen Synergy* cooperative, which offers as many as six different services (solar panels, neighbourhood car, fibre optic cabling, school gardens, thrift stores, energy savings). This overview of exploratory research into 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 intended decentralisations will double government funding for local authorities from 16 billion euros to 32 billion euros. The most sweeping one is 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 turn to family and neighbours for support. Citizens also have to pay more themselves. The previous government coalition of conservatives and social democrats slashed 3.5 billion euros from the budget for long-term care. Local governments will be required to reduce spending on (long-term) care by 1.6 billion euros (from a total budget of 10 billion euros). Besides that, the National Care Agreement that was signed on 24 April 2013 forces local governments to cut 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. Citizens will have to do more and more themselves, either on their own initiative or under pressure from the government. One example of pressure from the government is the proposal of State Secretary Van Rijn (Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Sports), as announced on 3 October 2013, to include incentives in the new Social Support Act (Wmo) to

'insistently' encourage elderly people who are on care to do voluntary work in exchange for care. Some have already branded this new piece of legislation a form of 'time tax.'

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 excessive 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 been pushing the current late-modern society into a transitional phase. Society is changing from a market economy into a civic economy. Consumption alone is no longer a bringer of universal happiness. Other values, such as sustainability, simplicity, compassion, justice, modesty, authenticity, solidarity, reciprocity, self-determination, and sensemaking are becoming more important. More and more people are realising that economy, consumption, and individualism are not everything.

Government cuts are heralding the bankruptcy of traditional institutions, leaving them no other choice but to cease operations in small or medium-sized towns, or to revert to their core business. This opens up, within the Netherlands' historically highly neo-corporate management model, possibilities for citizens to occupy the vacated playing field from the bottom up. Numerous citizens' cooperatives are funded through gifts, bonds, and membership rights. 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. Citizens are reclaiming control over crucial parts of society that had become the sole preserve of governments or semi-public institutions over the past few decades.

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 also be seen as an indication of this change. Fast development of society requires drastic autonomous adaptation of the government and the democratic system. In the developing new society, a representative democracy with elections every four years is not enough to be considered a 'true' democracy. Citizens will increasingly demand a direct say in and

influence on the organisation of society. An 'open society' calls for an absolutely 'open government.' And that is changing the concept of democracy.

### **Fundamental change or history repeating itself?**

The Netherlands is in transition. The country is changing from the bottom up. But are the citizens' initiatives also signs of an emerging social innovation of potentially massive importance? Will the pan-European economic crisis and sweeping government cuts indeed do away with the welfare state that was built after WWII and replace it with a participation society as devised by the Netherlands' current coalition cabinet of liberals (VVD) and social democrats (PvdA), building on the initial idea by the Christian democratic party (CDA)? Or will the society of the future merge welfare and participation? In a kind of welfare state plus, as Vice Prime Minister Asscher (PvdA) called it in an interview in the *NRC Handelsblad* newspaper on 18 September 2013. Or are we witnessing the awakening of a new society that is renouncing late-modern cynicism as new citizens' initiatives unfold, and where policy concepts such as 'welfare state' and 'participation state' simply do not work anymore? Are we, in other words, dealing with a structural development, a silent revolution if you like, or is it merely a temporary revival with distinctly romantic elements? Will, as outlined by Professor Tine De Moor in her inaugural speech entitled 'Homo Cooperans', the wave of cooperatives bring another correction mechanism to fill in the gaps left by the inadequacies of the free market? Like the previous wave of citizens' initiatives that started around 1880 in Western Europe with the emergence of agricultural cooperatives, such as the Raiffeisenkasse, because farmers struggled to get loans from regular banks. It seems as if, regardless of this mechanism, there is an increasingly autonomous independent development of local awareness.

### **Mutual aid, 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 (with 6,500 users by October 2013), the social local marketplace *BUUV* in Haarlem, the *Resto VanHarte* chain of restaurants that double up as social meeting places (which in October 2013 counted 35 restaurants in 21 Dutch cities (attracting 60,000 people a year, and serving 120,000 meals in 2012), with four further restaurants set to be opened soon).

Other interesting projects are the *Voedselbank* [Food bank] (founded in 2002, this initiative distributes 45,000 food parcels to 70,000 people every week from its 135 outlets, which are manned by 6,300 volunteers), the *Burenhulpcentrale* [Mutual aid centre] in The Hague, the national online platform *Zorgvoorelkaar* [Take care of each other] (set up in 2011, this platform counted 5,036 registered volunteers and people requesting help on 11 October 2013, while 3,365 help requests had been placed by then), 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 numerous 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. Another new phenomenon is that of the so-called parent participation day care centre, seven of which are already up and running. These parent participation day care centres are fully managed by parents. It is basically a case of parents minding each others' children. Although this kind of child care cannot rely on government funding, parents using this form of child care do, for the time being, still receive the child care allowance.

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. By 11 October 2013, *Nederland Cares* had a total of 13,249 volunteers working in 10 cities, with further sites in the pipeline in 6 cities. This organisation employs fewer than 10 paid staff. Between 1 January 2013 and 11 October 2013, this organisation racked up a grand total of 18,313 hours of voluntary work.

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. The Netherlands still counts approximately 5.5 million active volunteers. But according to the SCP's 2012 Emancipation Monitor, the time men and women spend on informal care, volunteering, and do-it-yourself activities has dropped dramatically over the period 1975-2005. Where men and women together spent 13.9 hours a week on such activities in 1975, this number had dropped to 9.9 hours by 2005, i.e. a 4 hour drop. That is nearly 30% less. It would in itself be good if we could return to 2002 levels as a result of what is asked of citizens today. But is that a realistic and feasible aim, given citizens' other obligations?

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. One underlying reason for that is the fact that women's labour force participation rate rose over that same period. 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 is because they spent more time on work, taking care of children, and on household chores. 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.

### **Local shops taken over by citizens' initiatives**

Furthermore, numerous communities, mainly outside large urban areas, have seen local residents and volunteers take over local grocery shops (such as in 2004 in the village of *Sterksele*) and village pubs (such as in the village of *Esbeek*). Although the 'Villages Monitor' published by the SCP in mid-2013 shows that the number of shops, swimming pools, pubs, and schools in municipalities has been in decline for some time now, both in urban and rural areas, we have seen a striking turnaround over the past few years. With governments and 'old' institutions' in retreat, more and more residents have taken the initiative to fill the void by opening shops, village halls, and pubs themselves, or keeping existing ones open. As far as shops are concerned, there is the volunteers-run shop in the village of *Sterksel*, a village of only 1,200 inhabitants, but residents have also set up cooperatives in towns such as *Herwen*, *Oostwold*, *Someren-Heide*, *Almen*, *Loosdrecht*, *Esbeek*, *Eext*, *Espel*, and numerous

other small municipalities. Volunteers are helping, also aided by support from Rabobank and the Spar supermarket chain, to set up village shops. In all these cases, residents are members of a cooperative, volunteer in the shop, or have invested in the cooperative by buying bonds. Also in larger cities, such as Rotterdam and The Hague, we have recently seen citizens' initiatives in the form of people volunteering to open local shops or keeping existing ones open.

Two cooperative companies that play an important role in supporting residents who want to open a shop in a small town or village are Rabobank and the Spar supermarket chain. The latter has 12,000 stores in 30 countries across the globe, and has traditionally focused on local shops in small municipalities. In the Netherlands alone, Spar has 260 local shops in the 408 municipalities that make up the Netherlands. Spar is set to launch several new services, such as home delivery of diet meals, medication pick-up points at Spar stores, shoe repairs, pick-up option for driving licences or library books. Alongside the Spar format, the Spar supermarket chain also has the Attent format of small local shops in municipalities of between 1,000 and 2,000 inhabitants. There are currently 105 Attent stores, many of which were opened in partnership with local authorities, foundations, and housing corporations. The 100<sup>th</sup> Attent shop was opened in 2011 in collaboration with a local housing corporation and care institution. Besides small towns and villages, Spar has recently also started opening stores in cities. The number of city stores (which currently stands at 12) will next year be doubled to 20-25, while Spar has identified room for further growth up to 50 to 80 stores in larger cities.

Aside from grocery stores, citizens have also been taking over other kinds of shops in some places. One example is that of the Boomker bookshop in the municipality of Haren (20,000 inhabitants) in the Netherlands' Groningen province, which is set to be taken over by a cooperative of customers. Between 150 and 200 customers are expected to purchase coupons with a value of €1,000 or over and a 3% yield, and the new owners will benefit from lower rent and no interest or repayments payable to the bank when they start in 2014.

### **Untapped potential and altruistic surplus**

Although we have seen a drop in the average number of hours per week men and/or women spend on informal care, volunteering, and do-it-yourself activities, a closer look at separate groups does reveal a more nuanced picture. Depending on the life stage and whether or not people have children, and when they do have children, the

age of these children also plays a role, there are several differences in the time men and women devote to informal care, volunteering, and do-it-yourself activities. The SCP has found, for example, that parents with young children spend a lot of time on (the combination) of paid and unpaid work. That mainly goes for parents with children of up to 5 years old. This demographic spends 61.4 hours a week on paid and unpaid work. For men alone, that number is 65.5 hours a week. An average of 41.5 hours is spent on paid work, 20 hours on household chores and taking care of children, while 4 hours are devoted to informal care, volunteering, and do-it-yourself activities.

At the other end of the spectrum, i.e. where people spend the least time on paid and unpaid work, we find single people aged 40 and under without children, single people aged 41 and over without children, and the group of couples of 41 years and over without children. Of these three groups, the group of single persons up to the age of 40 who have no children spend the least number of hours on paid and unpaid work. The total time women spend on paid and unpaid work is 40 hours a week, over 20 hours less than female parents with children of up to the age of 5. Childless single men aged 40 and under spend just over 40 hours a week on paid and unpaid work, which is nearly 25 hours less than male parents with children of up to the age of 5. On average, younger (up to the age of 40) and older (aged 41 and over) single persons from the groups defined by the SCP are the least busy, also in comparison with those people who do have a partner, but no children (yet) or no children living at home (anymore).

The above illustrates the 'altruistic surplus,' a concept coined back in 2010 by Evelien Tonkens, Active Citizenship Studies Chair at the University of Amsterdam, that is thought to exist in Dutch society. Tonkens does not define this 'altruistic surplus' based on the actual number of hours certain groups of citizens would have left over for volunteering and informal care (see the three groups above), but rather based on citizens' intrinsic need to, without obligations, help others, give, and/or do good. Despite the altruistic surplus, citizens' willingness to take on volunteer work seems to be waning. Due to this mechanism, modern citizens' initiatives mainly seem to arise in areas where public sector parties or semi-public sector parties are withdrawing, where public duties are scrapped instead of handed over to residents, creating room for new ideas and solutions.

### **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 *Dat doen we zelf* [We'll do it ourselves] seniors platform, which was launched on 4 April 2013, and the Andromeda society for the elderly that was set up by a group of seniors in Eindhoven. Besides a club that opened its doors on 1 July 2011, the project also offers an innovative health concept, which has kitted elderly people out with bracelets with sensors containing their health details. 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 the Berenschot consultancy predicts a further decline, down to 95,000 by 2020. How will this gap be filled?

One interesting initiative in this context is *Buurtzorg Nederland* [Community care], which was launched in 2006, and by October 2013 has 550 local community care teams, 5,800 employees, and no management. In 2011 and 2012, *Buurtzorg Nederland* was voted 'best employer' in the Netherlands. In 2013, *Buurtzorg* came second, only 0.01 point behind the winner, KLM. Other interesting projects are *Specialisterren* (see section on Social Enterprises), *Thomashuizen* homes (small-scale care homes for adults who are mentally ill, founded in 2003, there are meanwhile over 100 such homes, with 8 new ones set to be opened over the coming months), the *Herbergier* (small-scale care homes for people with dementia, such as Alzheimer's disease, founded in 2007, with 28 homes in October 2013), the *Odensehuizen* homes (drop-in centres intended for people with dementia and memory disorders and their friends and family, in Vlissingen, Groningen, and Amsterdam, run by people with dementia, informal carers, and volunteers), 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 *Thuishuis* home was opened in Deurne in 2011, followed by homes in Harderwijk, Amstelveen and Woerden, 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. There are also *Thuishuizen* for migrants in The Hague, Amsterdam, Utrecht, and Rotterdam. Other fine projects are *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.

One initiative that can certainly not go unmentioned are the so-called care farms that have shot up all over the Netherlands over the past 10 years. Where the Netherlands counted only 317 such care providers in green surroundings in 2001, their number had grown to 1,500 by September 2013. Every day, 23,000 people receive care at these sites. Of the 1,500 providers, 735 are care farms where farmers combine care activities with small-scale agriculture and livestock breeding and landscape management. These facilities are used by, among others, elderly people with dementia, people with psychological care needs, people with limited mental capacity, former addicts, young people with behavioural problems, former prisoners, autistic children, and people suffering from a burn-out.

### **Care cooperatives**

According to the SCP report on Informal Care in the Netherlands (2013), there are already 40 care and elderly cooperatives that procure or offer professional care themselves. Of all the care cooperatives, six are in the North Brabant province, and 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 people 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 has 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.

One of the villages where an innovative residential, care, and welfare concept has been set up over the past year is the Frisian village of Warffum. When the local care provider announced two years ago that it would be closing the Warfheem care home, villagers decided to join forces and step in. With the help of a thinktank, they developed a virtual care home. The project, which has meanwhile been given the status of experiment, is setting up a network of volunteers to support a home for the elderly, a meeting room, a care garden, and a small accommodation for psychogeriatric care.

An interesting example for large cities in the Netherlands is that of the *Stadsdorp Zuid* care cooperative. Within a time span of only three years, this cooperative based in Amsterdam's southern district welcomed 350 members, and it is still growing. They offer, among other things, tailored residential care, and they act as an intermediary between their members and professionals, such as painters and fitters. Newspaper articles and online reports suggest that there are similar 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 5,000<sup>th</sup> Family Group Conference was registered in September 2011. And by the summer of 2013, the total of organised conferences stood at more than 8,000.

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 order) 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. Speaking on 3 October 2013, Pieter Hilhorst, an alderman of the city of Amsterdam, stated that the total number of family supervision orders in Amsterdam has dropped from 2,100 to 1,400, a reduction of 33 percent.

There are currently 750 Family Group coordinators in the Netherlands who organise conferences, and who speak 96 different languages and dialects between them. The Family Group Conferencing organisation employs 33 staff (average number for 2012). Despite criticism from Professor Andries Baart calling Family Group Conferences 'politically naïve' and claiming that they 'ignore people's vulnerability and in no way address reasons underlying multi-problem systems,' the approach has proved successful.

### **Energy cooperatives and Community Energy Enterprises**

Citizens' initiatives in the area of energy generally tend to spring from a personal initiative by a citizen who starts out by supplying the generated energy to himself, and when he is faced with overproduction starts thinking about supplying the energy he does not need to the national grid or to others (neighbours, street, shops, companies). This is how numerous energy cooperatives started. 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, Professor of Sustainable Transitions and System Innovations at Erasmus University Rotterdam, estimated this number at three hundred. Jurgen van der Heijden van AT Osborne (in *Buurtenergie 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 7 October 2013, the *Hieropgewekt.nl* website actually listed 247 of these initiatives, i.e. 47 more than in April 2013 and 136 more than in August 2012. Their number is growing rapidly. 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, which constitutes 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 Wind-centrale* 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, which intends to supply the entire island of Texel with sustainable energy by 2020) 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], *Wij Krijgen Kippen* (energy production in Amsterdam's southern district) 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. A new initiative in this area comes from the *Stichting Natuur en Milieu* [Nature and Environment Society], which is partnering with energy company Eneco in the *Zon Zoekt Dak* [Sun seeks roof] programme, looking to have 1 million roofs in the Netherlands kitted out with solar panels by 2020.

Two further projects are also worth mentioning. First there is the *Amelandse Energie Coöperatie* [Energy Cooperative on the island of Ameland], which has set out to supply the entire island of Ameland with sustainable energy. The cooperative's 225 members have by now, three years after the cooperative was founded, purchased 1,000 membership rights at €50 each. They serve 1,000 customers to whom they sell energy. The second interesting project is the *Nieuwleusen Synergy* cooperative in Nieuwleusen, a town of approx. 8,000 inhabitants. This is a cooperative that was set up in mid-2012 and currently has 41 members. This cooperative is highly successful

and is active in six different areas: 1) local energy company, 2) thrift shop, 3) local car sharing, 4) fibre optic cabling, 5) school gardens, and 6) energy savings. It is a cooperative that creates value in multiple ways: 1) through a combination of services and business model that keeps transaction costs down, 2) they are boosting local spending power and stimulating the local economy, 3) they increase community building, 4) they lead to more democracy and give people a greater say, 5) they realise twofold objectives (sound insulation and solar panels), and 6) they bring social and technological innovation.

What is striking is that in municipalities where residents have caught the citizens' initiative bug after opening a local shop (such as in Sterksel) or setting up an energy cooperative, they often also venture into other areas. Residents of the province of North Brabant, for example, set up the *Coöperatie HSLnet* [HSLnet cooperative], which has laid fibre optic cable networks in the villages of Sterksel, Heeze, and Leende. On 1 August 2013, the first home was connected to this fibre optic network. By 1 January 2014, all village centres will be connected to the fibre optic network. And the network will be extended to the outskirts of these villages from 2014.

### **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-run enterprises. The principles underlying this initiative were taken from the UK concept of Development Trusts and Community Enterprises. On 2 March 2013, the first of these 15 community-run enterprises in the Netherlands was festively inaugurated. 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-run 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-run 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 team 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 take 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-run 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 has 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 a food collective.

A report by Aedes that was published in May 2013 concluded 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.

On 27 June 2013, the local council of the municipality of Hollands Kroon took the rather drastic decision to transfer ownership and management of municipal accommodations to associations, institutions, and boards. The council unanimously adopted the municipal government's preferred accommodation policy option for this municipality of 22 villages. Based on the specifics for each accommodation, the local council will over the coming years decide on whether or not to transfer ownership of welfare, educational, sports, and municipal accommodations, such as village halls, schools, museums, libraries, sports centres, fire stations, and old municipal offices.

Another 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, and they expect to welcome 20,000 visitors this year.

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 Ommezwoai village cooperative for two years. After two years, the goal is to also transfer ownership to the village cooperative. They are following the example set by the municipality of Loppersum, where residents took over management of the local swimming pool back in 2011. 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. Slogans such as '*Lekker huren van de buren*' [Rent from your neighbours], '*Delen is het nieuwe hebben*' [Sharing is the new owning], and '*Door delen heb je meer*' [Those who share have more] are used to market the new sharing economy. It is a phenomenon that is known by several names: collaborative consumption, the share company, the rent economy, the lease economy, the peer economy, which all denote more or less the same trend. Examples include the Repair Cafés, various forms of car sharing (Greenwheels, Togethr, SnappCar, or Car2Go), neighbourhood tool lending schemes (Peerby), peer-to-peer sharing or letting of accommodation, such as Airbnb and Wimdu (operating in the U.S. since 2008, Airbnb has meanwhile racked up a total of 4 million bookings. In the Netherlands, the number of overnight stays arranged through Airbnb shot up by 800 percent in 2012, according to its founder Joe Gebbia, with the site listing over 7,000 rooms and apartments in Amsterdam alone. The Wimdu site offers 2,000 apartments

in Amsterdam) or neighbours cooking for each other (*Thuisafgehaald* [Home takeaway]). These initiatives sometimes develop extremely rapidly. The first Repair Café was organised in Amsterdam in October 2009, and by 11 October 2013 there were 162 Repair Cafés across the Netherlands, i.e. 100 more than at the start of 2013. 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. According to the *Kennisplatform Verkeer en Vervoer* (KPVV) [Transport Knowledge Resource Centre], the number of shared cars increased by 86 percent to over 5,000 this year. By now, over three quarters of Dutch municipalities have at least one shared vehicle. In a number of cases, the new sharing economy works together with the old product economy. Car manufacturer Daimler, for example, runs the Car2Go car sharing service, while the Dutch national railway operator, NS, is the driving force behind the growth of the Greenwheels car sharing corporation. Partly as a result of the introduction of shared cars, car ownership among 18-to-29-year-olds in Amsterdam has dropped from 24% to 16% over the past 10 years. New interesting developments are the foundation of the *Vereniging voor Gedeeld Autobezit* [Shared Car Ownership Association], companies sharing their commercial vehicles through the Amsterdam-based startup Wego, and cable company Ziggo's move this year to allow their customers to use each others' wireless networks. Ziggo has over 1 million customers.

### **Social enterprises**

According to the report entitled 'Opportunities for the Dutch Social Enterprise Sector' of 2011, there are 4,000 to 5,000 social enterprises in the Netherlands. 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 of delivering social values in a financially sustainable and independent way. According to the study there is a growth potential of 10,000 social companies. And McKinsey's 'Social Enterprise Monitor 2013' showed that employment at social enterprises that comply with the definition has gone up 25% since 2010. Among the 3,000 social enterprises, as defined by SocialEnterprise.NL, 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 Chocolonely, which introduced the world's first slavery-free chocolate, is another example of a social enterprise. The sustainable supermarket chain Marqt (with 10 stores in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Haarlem) and the Fairphone are also fine examples. Over 150 of the 3,000 social enterprises have meanwhile registered with Social Enterprise.NL, which uses coaching, research, and lobbying to help strengthen the position of social enterprises.

A particularly interesting social enterprise is Sjoerd van der Maaden's *Specialisterren* [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 *Specialisterren* 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 Maaden 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. *Specialisterren* has grown considerably since 2009 and currently employs 25 people. The way Sjoerd van der Maaden came up with the idea for *Specialisterren* in 2009 is exactly the same as how Thorkil Sonne came up with the idea for *Specialisterne* in Denmark in 2004. Both are father to a child with autism, and both found that autistic people are excellently suited for IT testing.

### **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 initiatives 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. Over 50,000 Waka Wakas have meanwhile been distributed all over the world, providing light for over 255,000 people. 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. Over the past year, WakaWaka has broadened its scope to include Haiti and Syria. The WakaWaka website shows the impact of the lamp on an interactive map that lets you zoom in on the 45 WakaWaka-supported projects.

Two other fine examples are the 1% Club and the BiD Network. The 1% Club is an international online platform that was launched 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, up to October 2013, 16,220 members have supported 510 realised projects in 71 countries, and a total of €940,000 has been raised. The BiD Network was set up by NCDO, the Dutch expertise and advisory centre for citizenship and international cooperation, following the Entrepreneurs Without Borders contest, coaching and helping enterprising citizens who want to set up social enterprises in developing countries in finding investors. Over the past four years, BiD Network matched 120 enterprising citizens to investors representing a total capital of €16.5 million.

### **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 the best example is the city of Almere which leads the field in self-building in the Netherlands. The city is planning whole self-build 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 to the municipality for the long term, 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 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 by 2011 (10% of total housing construction).

A new phenomenon in the area of house building are citizens' initiatives that take over the role traditionally played by housing corporations. In the Frisian village of Wons, for example, local residents are set to take over from housing corporation Elkien and start managing 6 rental properties in the village. In mid-2013, residents set up their own cooperative after the housing corporation decided to cease its operations in the village. All aspects of this initiative are unusual. The legal form (cooperative), form of financing (residents will lend their own money to the cooperative, charging interest), the decision-making model (based on sociocracy), and the business model (Osterwalder's Business Model Canvas) are all highly innovative in this context. And after a village cooperative in the Frisian village of Reduzum had built a 27-home residential area, the residents of the village of Aldtsjerk (population 670) in the same province decided to follow suit and build a new residential area of 30 homes on 8 hectares of former agricultural land. The 500,000 cubic metres of sand that will have to be moved will be sold to raise funds for the property development.

### **Urban agriculture and food**

Ever since the Dutch translation of Carolyn Steel's *Hungry City* was published in 2011, urban agriculture and food (feeding our cities' future) has taken off in a big way in the Netherlands. Literally hundreds of citizens' initiatives in this area (kitchen gardens, vegetable gardens, community gardens, neighbourhood restaurants, food banks, allotments, vegetable gardens, Vertical Agriculture, *Thuisafgehaald*, *Wereldkoks*) 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, Almere, Haarlemmermeer, Alphen aan den Rijn, Rotterdam,

Utrecht, Breda, Enschede, Groningen, Nijmegen, Tilburg, and Zeist. The *Zuidelijke Land- en Tuinbouworganisatie* (ZLTO) [Southern Agriculture and Horticulture Organisation] is also a member of the Urban Agriculture Network. The number of cities with urban agriculture, for example for local consumption (citizens, restaurants, catering), 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. Jan Jonker, Professor of Corporate Sustainability at Radboud University Nijmegen, is currently researching business models that are used in the area of urban agriculture. In September 2013, Wageningen University published its social cost-benefit analysis of urban agriculture, which studied three cases: *Voedseltuin Rotterdam* [Rotterdam food garden], De Nieuwe Warande urban agriculture in Tilburg, and the Hazennest urban farm in Tilburg.

One of most interesting projects, which should not go unmentioned here, is the *Proeftuin Amsterdam* [Amsterdam experimental garden] project, which was launched in 2007, and its successor *Platform Eetbaar Amsterdam* [Edible Amsterdam Platform]. This platform brings urban agriculture initiatives in Amsterdam and surrounding area together. These are initiatives for community vegetable gardens and urban agriculture that are driven by citizens' commitment: doing it yourself, learning together. The platform has set out to join forces to raise food awareness, and it is making a significant contribution to the further development of Amsterdam's food strategy.

Another 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.

Urban food supply initiatives are, however, not confined to city limits. The scope is increasingly expanding to metropolitan farming. This is a broader concept that focuses on food supply in a (larger) area around a city, with city dwellers and residents of surrounding areas partnering in collaborations and also including links to care provision. One example is that of the care farm, as discussed in the section on care initiatives. And although the contribution of urban agriculture, or better urban horticulture, to local food supply will be limited (also refer to Louise C. Fresco in 'Hamburger in het paradijs' [Hamburger in paradise], 2012), the most meaningful role of urban agriculture and metropolitan farming is that of being a linking factor between urban consumers and food producers. As a result, many city kids will learn that food is not made at a factory, but produced by the land.

### **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* report €4.7 billion in 2009, according to the *Geven in Nederland 2013* report, the Dutch donated €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 has grown explosively in the Netherlands. Crowdfunding for the realisation of citizens' initiatives is a form of micro financing. Crowdfunding, introduced in the Netherlands in mid-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, which was 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.

According to calculations by Douw&Koren (NuZakelijk, 2 August 2013), a total of €13 million was raised through crowdfunding in the first half of 2013. This amount was raised by 501 projects and companies. Over €10 million was raised by companies. Furthermore, 20 new platforms were set up in the first half of 2013. There are now 50 platforms in total in the Netherlands. The *Geldvoorelkaar* [Money for each other] platform was the first to pass the €10 million mark in funding raised. The *Voordekunst* [For art] platform for art and creative projects recently broke the €1 million barrier. An editorial in *De Volkskrant* newspaper even expressed the expectation that crowdfunding will be a €255-million business by 2015, and will break the €1 billion mark soon after that. Crowdfunding consultancy Douw&Koren (Crowdfinance, advice to the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, May 2013) claims based on the current market situation and growth expectations that only 1 or 2 platforms (*Geldvoorelkaar* and Symbid) will raise at least €20 million in 2015. Crowdfunding can be considered supplementary to products offered by banks. There is one bank in the Netherlands, ABN AMRO, that has its own crowdfunding platform, entitled Seeds.nl. In an attempt to attract large investors, Symbid struck up a partnership with credit advice organisation Credion in mid-2013 (NuZakelijk, 15 July 2013).

On 23 October 2013, the *Financieel Dagblad* newspaper reported that Symbid, which was set up by two students at Erasmus University Rotterdam two and a half years ago, and which focuses on helping investors find companies to invest in and help companies find investors, went public that week with a listing on the over-the-counter market (OTC), the first step towards a listing on a major US stock exchange. Symbid has so far helped 23 companies raise over €2 million from a pool of 15,000 financial backers. By branching out to the US, Symbid is looking to attract new growth capital. A total of €4 million has already been promised by investors in Europe and the US. Besides its new office in New York, Symbid also has plans to open offices in Berlin, Milan, and London.

### **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 61 bread funds on 1 November 2013. The 61 bread funds are based in 38 cities and have 1,865 members between them. Of the abovementioned 61 bread funds, the website reports that 7 are based in Amsterdam, 4 in Groningen, and 8 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 20 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, at that time, 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. The number of bread funds and the number of cities with a bread fund doubled between 1 May 2013 and 1 November 2013. The total number of bread fund members more than doubled over this same period.

### **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 cause 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 *Ontwikkelgids 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, Den Haag, Tilburg, and Eindhoven.

Given the fact that ANBIs 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.

### **Social Impact Bonds (SIB)**

Based on initiatives and experiences with Social Impact Bonds (SIB) in the United States (Rikers Island prison) and the United Kingdom (Peterborough prison), the Dutch Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations and the Netherlands School of Public Administration are currently supporting an initiative to apply this investment tool in the Netherlands for the first time. As part of this, social investments with quantifiable social effects in the area of tackling social issues are agreed with investors from the capital market. The parties involved are currently exploring the possibilities of using Social Impact Bonds (SIB) in tackling youth unemployment in the Netherlands' 4 largest cities (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, and Utrecht), for the youth intervention team in Rotterdam, and for the Social Hospital to deal with multi-problem families. This latter project is an initiative by the *Instituut voor Publieke Waarden* (IPW) [Institute for Public Values]. The use of this tool is promoted by the Society Impact Platform, in which government, banks, philanthropists, and social entrepreneurs participate, working together to address urgent social issues. Rotterdam is a pioneer in the area of SIBs.

### **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. Credit unions can play a key role in providing small business loans of between €50,000 and €500,000 to small and medium-sized enterprises. It is an example of the growing number of peer-to-peer initiatives. Entrepreneurs who are a member of a credit union will put up capital for fellow members who need capital. The US is home to a huge number of credit unions, and there are also many such associations in the UK. The US counts 10,000 credit unions, which in mid-2011 had a total capital of \$830 billion and provide financial services to 93 million Americans. Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett 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 in the Netherlands, which are supported by the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs. According to Paul van Oyen of *Kredietunie Nederland* 50 applications have already been submitted for the creation of more credit unions. However, this ambition is

complicated by European legislation (CRR and CRD IV), which through the Dutch Financial Supervision Act (Wft) blocks the 'restricted circle' route. In order to change that, one member of Dutch parliament, Eddy van Hijum, has submitted a bill to the lower chamber of Dutch parliament to create a legal basis for credit unions through an alternative route as soon as possible. The bill also proposed capping the number of credit unions at 3,000 and the balance sheet capital at €100 million. Various countries, such as the United Kingdom, Ireland, Poland, and various Baltic states, have already created such a legal status that complies with CRR and CRD IV legislation.

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. In early 2013, the plan was still for the credit union for mobility entrepreneurs and the Zeeland credit union to go live in the summer of 2013, while the Central Netherlands credit union and the credit union for bakery entrepreneurs are expected to follow suit in the fall of 2013. Due to pending amendments to legislation, these go-lives will in most cases be pushed back. Nonetheless, the *Krediteunie Midden-Nederland* [Central Netherlands Credit Union] still formally started operating on 2 October 2013. This nonprofit cooperative association intends to serve SMEs in the province of Utrecht and the Eemland, Amersfoort, and Vechtstreek regions. Expectations are that they will start issuing their first loans early next year. This credit union is affiliated with the *Vereniging van Samenwerkende Kredietunies en Kredietcoöperaties* [Association of Joint Credit Unions and Credit Cooperatives].

Credit unions (especially regional ones) can play an important role in strengthening local city economies. Besides credit unions, the Qredits organisation that was set up four years ago also plays a key role in issuing loans to SMEs. Qredits is the largest non-banking lender to small enterprises in the Netherlands, providing microcredits of an average of €17,000 and with a term of four or five years.

## **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 the *Batavier en 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 introduction of the *Zuiderling*, which was 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.'

A new development is that of hybrid time banks. Unlike local complementary currencies and the time banks that are mostly used in the area of (community-based) care (WeHelpen.nl), hybrid time banks allow, for example, unemployed participants to exchange time they have saved up or energy they have generated with other participants, whereby exchanges can also cross municipal borders. Various such initiatives are currently underway in the province of Gelderland.

### **Social citizens' initiatives**

Finally, there are five 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.' Desso is one of the pioneers in the business community that has made the switch from a linear to a circular economy. In 2008, Desso started a process towards making all its products using the cradle-to-cradle principle by 2020. Products and materials are reused and recycled. Thomas Rau also designed the *Duurzaamheidsfabriek* [Sustainability factor] in Dordrecht, which was opened on 4 October 2013 and where entrepreneurs, green investors, and engineering talents work together on innovative and sustainable products and production methods. On 14 December 2012, the *Duurzaamheidsfabriek* won the *Duurzaamste Gemeente Prijs* [Most Sustainable Municipality] prize in the 'Best Plan' category. Second: 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 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 Geldermalsen develops and builds 3-D printers as open source technology. In Amsterdam, a canal house will be built this year by DUS architects using 3-D printing technology and the largest mobile 3-D printer (called *De Kamermaker* [the room maker]). 3-D printing technology opens

up the possibility of every consumer becoming a personal producer as well. This year, the Dutch startup 3D Hubs has started listing locations where people can rent 3-D printers. And Eindhoven has since 24 October 2013 been home to two 3-D printers at the Netherlands' first 3-D printing plant, which make, layer by layer, metal machine components for companies such as Philips and ASML. Fourth: In 1998, Heleen Terwijn used private funds to set up the first IMC Weekend School in Amsterdam's southeastern district. At this school, immigrant students who are lagging behind in their learning receive additional classes on Sundays for a period of three years. These classes are taught by astronomers, solicitors, surgeons, etc., i.e. people with real-life experience who can talk about their jobs with great enthusiasm. A total of 1,350 students have meanwhile finished this 3-year remedial course. The 10<sup>th</sup> such school is set to open in Rotterdam soon. The school budget has meanwhile grown to €2.5 million. Over 100 sponsors are involved in this project. Fifth: 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. In contrast, there is also the phenomenon of more and more political parties that have no or barely any presence on a local level, such as PVV and 50+.

## **Conclusions**

I will now formulate several conclusions and points for discussion. First: it seems that the top-down society is changing into a hub-and-spoke network society, and moving in the direction of networked community governance. Prompted by the economic crisis, we will no longer focus on economic growth, but seek 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, which also leads to the creation of more and more hybrid organisations. 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 shift 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,

hybrid organisations, 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. Sixth: consumers are no longer just consumers. And citizens are not only citizens. New technologies are empowering consumers (or users) to also become producers, turning them into 'prosumers' of energy, food, care, services, and even industrial products. Intermediaries are increasingly disappearing. Seventh: the shift to a network 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). Eighth: the greater focus on local communities in combination with the Dutch perspective on a new form of network governance and society will 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. Ninth: 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 after the local elections of 19 March 2014 (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? Tenth (my last point for discussion): the advent of the network-based society seems to constitute modern reflective man's final renunciation of the cynicism of the late-modern old society through the new social movement of citizens' initiatives. A new type of society is developing.

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