

## Verslag

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## Report Webinar Zelfsturing Peel en Maas (instead of the life site visit)

Ineke Ketelaar does the introduction of the session: she says thank you to the translators. Last year, the site visit could not take place due to illness and then corona. We have made the decision for not translating the concept of zelfsturing because in English there's no equivalent for it: self-governance, agency, n-power and community power.

Mr Wismans is responsible for the pilot (similar to N-power) from twenty years ago, this shows what it has been and what it can become: with regard to ownership, sustainability and co-creation. In the public domain, it is still not so obvious who can exercise influence, this became clear in the presentations this morning in Liège.

Everyone is allowed to ask questions to the presenter, there are also moment for questions and discussion. The main question is "how can this be applied to our own projects and contribute to the idea of N-power?"

### ***Presentation Geert Wismans***

Trust, faith, giving space to communities (project for twenty years) was not always easy in reality because of the understanding of agency of citizens. Most important underlying values are participation, collaboration, self-determination.

Detail of the presentation: the City Hall of Peel en Maas is called Hall of the Citizens.

### *Introduction*

Peel and Maas is a rural municipality in North Limburg, which originated from 4 smaller municipalities. There are 11 smaller communities (villages) with a total of 43 000 inhabitants. Question: what do you see as the best result of your project in relation to citizen participation or community development?

E.g. answers:

- More understanding of each other
- Independence from municipality

Historically, a shift in governmental perspectives: from doing everything for the citizens to listening more to citizens and giving more responsibilities to citizens. Citizens are seen less as objects of policy and more as co-actors.

People/citizens/residents used to be reduced to different groups for whom a certain programme or policy was designed, e.g. unemployed people, people with a migration background etc.

Now, there is more focus on dialogue, the position of the government should not determine everything and citizens are seen as a whole instead of box thinking. Within the communities there came a sense of co-owners and co-responsibility for the community.

*Context and emergence of zelfsturing*

Introduction of zelfsturing concept by the municipality was based on the ideas of the philosophy of Arnold Cornelis:

1. Communicative zelfsturing: Philosophy of quality and values and the paradigm of people as professionals of and in their own life
2. Rule-governance: Contract society: we agree on how we are going to do it and the paradigm of the citizens as being customers with claims
3. Authoritarian control: Government determines what will happen, the citizens are silent and submissive to the power of the government.

Habermas (transformation from public space to living world): distinction public space and collective space.

System world = government and partner organisations (public domain) customer - subject

Living world = collective domain, living world, community, subject

Confusion often arises when it is not clear whether something belongs to government or not

Collective domain(zelfsturing):

Type 1 activities: community is owner

Type 2 activities: community is owner and municipality or social organisation contributes

Public domain:

Type 3 activities: municipality or social partner is owner and citizens contribute = interactive policy/implementation

Public domain:

Type 4 activities: municipality or social organisation is owner: communication aimed at understanding and receiving authority

A lot happens in a community is invisible for the government. The distinction between the types of projects is determined by ownership of the activities.

*Interactive question: Ownership: who is responsible?*

- Community house management → preferably by citizens
- Restructuring village square
- Cooperation with associations
- Apply for passport → definitely municipality
- Constructing play facilities for young people
- Create and maintain a city garden → interactively

Sometimes it is tempting to define activities as a mutual responsibility but when push comes to shove, there can be confusion about who is responsible in the end.

The government only has a small influence on the whole; municipalities often think they are involved in a lot of concerns, but they do not have influence on everything.

*Villages take the lead*

Villages develop visions, each village chooses its own route, no format is imposed that says how to do it and follow a "natural route":

- Determine agenda and themes
- Set up surveys, distribute them, process them and interpret them.
- Meetings with inhabitants of different ages and backgrounds
- Establish visions and reports
- Providing feedback on visions

*Role of village meetings is dialogue:*

- Non-institutionalised and non-political
- For and by the community
- Process monitor: structural quality discussion resulting in a village development vision or plan
- Process monitoring of content of working groups
- Communication and coordination in the village

Representativity test: Did everyone get the chance to think along?

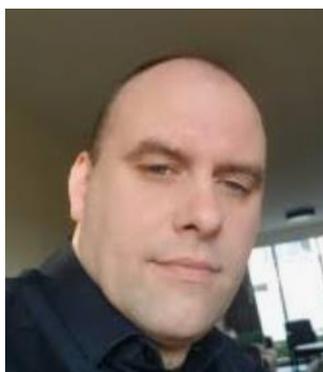
*Visions on village development: Physical, social, mental*

*Role of the municipality + lessons learned*

- Find a balance between the policy programme and listening to what is going on in the communities, i.e. finding a balance between your own priorities and those of the community
- Adapt yourself to the logic of the communities
- Do not do things or solve problems that can also be done or solved by the communities themselves
- Adapt your own rules so that the responsibility actually lies with the community
- Support communicative ability of the community (community workers)
- Stimulate community networks
- Pay attention: don't hang back because it's all up to the citizen
- Give stage to success stories and best practices

*The professional of the municipality is committed and aligned because of*

- Knowledge of own policies and village agendas
- Guarding the direction and purity of the role
- Maintain relationships



"We hebben 40.000 ervaringsdeskundigen die weten hoe een duurzame vitale gemeenschap gerealiseerd moet worden. Die kennis kan niet verbeterd worden door 300 ambtenaren ...."  
Geert Wismans

(We have 40.000 citizens who know how to build a sustainable vital community. That kind of knowledge cannot be improved by 300 civil servants)

Breakout session: in the presentation is trust the key concept. What could trust mean to your project to empower citizens in order to give power to the neighborhoods (N-Power!!!)

Heerlen: vraag vanuit de buurt om te petanquen, gemeente petanquebaan aanleggen? → gemeente en buurt trekken goed op samen, niet volledig zelfsturend

Mensen krijgen meer vertrouwen in hun leefomgeving als ze zien dat ze zelf iets kunnen veranderen

Vraag van inwoners wordt serieus genomen → vertrouwen  
In toekomst zullen ze meer gemotiveerd zijn om meer vragen te stellen

Verkeerssituatie bij nieuwe school → bewoners hadden verwacht meer inspraak te hebben en zijn ontevreden  
=> Verwachtingenmanagement!

## Vertrouwen

Hoe krijgt dit in jullie eigen projecten vorm? Wie moet wie vertrouwen geven en hoe kan dit de N-power projecten veranderen?

Kost ook tijd: vertrouwen opbouwen duurt soms jaren  
Soms moet er vaak uitgelegd worden wat wijkontwikkeling is en het belang hiervan → in Aachen heeft Rita ook nagedacht hoe ze dit meer structureel kan doen

Intentie overeenkomst: we vertrouwen elkaar en we maken een kader om te bepalen hoe we vorm geven aan een bepaald project

Belang regelgevend kader, bv geen plaats voor politici in projecten → belang van houding waarin die aansluit

## confiance

- **Changer les mentalités des PL:** transparence
- Communication: transparence, créer des espaces, des moyens pour ce faire
- Donner la place aux citoyens, les « responsabiliser » mais attention au terme responsabiliser => donner la place à CHACUN:
  - o Notion d'accompagnement
  - o Notion de relais entre les citoyens, les quartiers et avec les autorités publiques.
- **Tisser des liens:** on ne fait pas confiance à ceux qu'on ne connaît pas. Travailler la notion de l'inter connaissance: écoute, collaboration.
- Comment créer le **collectif** ? comment créer des espaces pour ce collectif. Collectif plus important que l'individuel. Apprendre la gestion de la collectivité (responsabilité de l'intérêt commun, on a pas l'habitude de le faire)
- **Changer les mentalités:** « Responsabilisation » : lâcher prise sur décisions à prendre, sur la forme des projets. De responsabiliser l'état mais responsabiliser le citoyens (encore dans la mentalité que l'état doit gérer)
- **Donner la place,** le pouvoir d'agir aux citoyens: créer un **espace** pour ce faire.
- Autre **forme d'implication** de la ville: rôle d'accompagnement, de suivi et d'échange.

## Vertrauen

- Zeit nehmen für einander
- **Zeit nehmen ist wichtiger als Geld**
- Man soll einander kennen lernen Kommunikation ist wichtig
- Zutrauen generieren
- Kommunikation zwischen Bürger und Verwaltung ist wichtig aber kostet Zeit
- Nichts unter Druck, von zwei Zeiten ☺
- Volle Verantwortung soll gegeben werden (Gegenseitig Vertrauen)
- Vertrauen meint: ich habe keine Sicherheit.....
- Vertrauen ist ein gemeinsames Ziel
- Erwartungsmanagement ist wichtig

### Notes Dutch break-out group

- Bob - community worker Heerlen
- Rita - Aachen, sustainable neighborhood, community development (StadteilKonferenzen).
- Social program in Aachen conference to work on sustainability (30 years ago), this was found to be a good tool and had to be introduced in every district
- Infrastructure (e.g. old factories) to attract creative people, who also want to be sustainable
- Stadteil conferences: organizations from the districts are invited to meet 4 times a year
- Geert made the switch from community work to municipal policy, is Peel & Maas the only municipality where this is possible?
- Bob - Heerlen also has civic participation, but not as elaborated as Peel & Maas, but much of the story is very recognizable
- Petanque court: chose a path with the neighborhood and checked whether there was enough space and enthusiasm for it
- Traffic situation at new school: residents were under the impression that they had effective influence, but in the end it turned out that the municipality decided how they would do it, citizens were disappointed and trust was harmed
- Expectations management: clearly delineate up to what point citizens can have influence
- Importance of intention with which politicians are involved in projects: to hear what is going on or to realize own agenda
- Rita – it takes time to build trust, had to explain many times what community work is and why it is important.

With thanks to Leen Swinnen for her notes!