

The Marterrade

REPORT

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AND DESIGN



MARTERRADE, THE HAGUE SOUTHWEST

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	4
CHAPTER 2: APPROACH	8
2.1 Theoretical models	9
2.2 Literature	10
2.3 Engagement Strategies	10
CHAPTER 3: RESULTS	12
The First Co-Creation Session	13
The Second Co- Creation Session	15
The Third Co-Creation Session	17
CHAPTER 4: DESIGN PROPOSAL AND INTERVENTIONS	22
Intervention 1: Greening	24
Intervention 2: Cleaning	30
Intervention 3: Connectivity	36
Intervention 4: Placemaking	42
CHAPTER 5: REFLECTIONS	50
REFERENCES	52
APPENDICES	54

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Bouwlust/Vrederust district in The Hague Southwest was developed after World War II to address the city's housing shortage (Wijkbus Zuidwest, n.d.). During the 1950s and 1960s many labor migrants entered the Netherlands (Castles, 1986) and settled in this area - which is part of the larger Escamp district (Severnstern, n.d.) - where affordable housing was available. Following the 1973 oil crisis, many of these migrants remained, partly due to the implementation of family reunification policies (Castles, 1986). Thereby, migrants transformed from being temporary guest workers to permanent ethnic minorities resulting in a lasting demographic shift in The Hague Southwest. Also, over time, limited investment in the aging housing stock, along with broader socio-economic changes, contributed to growing challenges such as poverty, unemployment, educational disadvantage, social isolation, and safety concerns. To address these issues, the "Nationaal Programma Zuidwest" (NPZW, 2023) was launched as a twenty-year regeneration plan to improve housing, employment, education, safety, and well-being. This approach, which combines place-based and people-based policies (Kleinhans, 2012), relies on collaboration between housing providers, social organizations, local government, and residents to build a more resilient community.

This report focuses on a specific part of this regeneration effort: the Marterrade, the central street in the Raden neighborhood of The Hague Southwest (see figure 1). Within this area, housing association HaagWonen is leading a community-driven regeneration project, which includes the renovation of elderly apartments, the construction of seven new studios, and the transformation of the community meeting space (NPZW, 2023). This meeting space, called Kamerrade - a play on the word "comrade" to symbolize friendship - has become a key social hub, hosting music evenings, bingo, and art lessons. Additionally, the regeneration plan prioritizes improving outdoor spaces, particularly the square and inner gardens, to foster social interaction, and a sense of safety. The main goal is to create a neighborhood where residents feel connected, engaged, and empowered to shape their living environment.

This report aims to explore how small-scale, resident-driven interventions can enhance public space, social cohesion, and community ownership in the Marterrade. Using an Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach (Russell, 2020), we build on existing assets in the community, and focus on placemaking strategies that strengthen the Marterrade as the center of the neighborhood. Thus, key subquestions include how earlier regeneration ideas (e.g. by Nieuwveld et al. 2024) can foster community engagement, how existing assets can be leveraged inclusively in this process, and how small-scale spatial interventions can create lasting connections between residents and their environment.

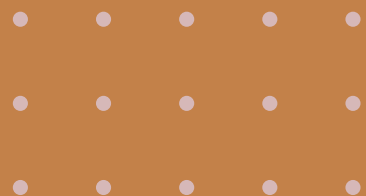
We build on previous research on the specific area (see Nieuwveld et al., 2024 for an overview), but have significant added contributions for the following reasons. First, the previous report did not employ an Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach. It primarily identified problems and proposed design solutions but did not systematically start from the existing strengths of the residents, such as their own abilities to make changes, existing local knowledge or the potential for community-driven initiatives. This is a crucial gap, as research shows that interventions rooted in local assets foster a stronger sense of ownership and long-term engagement (Ahmad & Talib, 2014; Mathie & Cunningham, 2003). Moreover, as emphasized by Russell (2020), "People can't know what they need from outside actors until they first know what they have within themselves and their communities. The most liberating discovery process starts with an exploration of local assets, not local need" (p.173). In this study, residents themselves are seen as the primary change agents.

Second, while the previous report focused strongly on long-term design interventions, such as restructuring public spaces and implementing large-scale changes, it did not provide practical, short-term actions that could be realized immediately in co-creation with residents. This study aims to bridge that gap by exploring feasible interventions. This approach is informed by previous literature which highlights that starting with short-term, experimental improvements can provide immediate benefits to public spaces and their users while serving as a foundation for longer-term changes (Project for Public Spaces, 2022).

Third, the interdisciplinary nature of the research team, combining the fields of urban planning, sociology, public administration, architecture and history, adds to the depth and innovativeness of the study. For example, sociological effects of architectural interventions will be reflected upon, such as emphasizing the positive effects of greening interventions.

Finally, this study employs a Theory of Change framework (ToC) to provide a structured approach to intervention planning. This framework defines the current state of the area, envisions the desired future, and systematically maps out the necessary activities, resources and inputs to achieve that vision, while also considering both short-term and long-term impacts. Thereby, it provides a solid and clear foundation to this report.

The report will be structured in the following way: First, we outline the research approach, detailing the engagement strategies, placemaking methods, and literature used to address the research questions. Next, we present the results and insights of the co-creation sessions. Then, we introduce the four design proposals and evaluate them through the ToC framework, assessing their feasibility and impact. Finally, we reflect on the research process, discussing lessons learned and potential improvements for future co-creation initiatives.



SCOPE OF WORK

A- Inner- garden at Rade

B- The Square

C- Inner- garden at Marterrade



The Marterrade Neighborhood Parks

CHAPTER 2

APPROACH

This chapter outlines the process through which the interventions for Kamerrade were developed, focusing on the strategies and methods used to engage residents and translate the gained knowledge and insights into concrete interventions. The approach in this report combines theoretical frameworks, literature and various engagement strategies to develop interventions that respond to the local context and are shaped by the people who live there.

2.1 Theoretical models

Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD)

The engagement strategies are guided by the principles of the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) model, a participatory approach that emphasizes identifying and mobilizing the strengths, skills and networks that already exist within the community (Russell, 2020). As stated by Mathie and Cunningham (2003), ABCD challenges the traditional needs-based development model by shifting the focus from what is missing to what is already there.

This philosophy shaped the process at Marterrade, where we aimed to uncover existing assets rather than focusing merely on responding to problems. The method influenced every stage of our research. Instead of approaching the community with predefined solutions, we used the co-creation sessions to uncover assets that were previously overlooked. In this, we focused on residents' local knowledge, social networks, existing initiatives and emotional connections. This ensured that the proposed interventions were all rooted in already existing assets present in the community. This makes the interventions not only relevant, but also realistic and feasible to implement, as we deliberately avoided large-scale, idealistic solutions.

Theory of Change (ToC)

To complement the ABCD framework, we adopted a Theory of Change (ToC) framework to structure the planning and goals of the proposed interventions. A Theory of Change, as described by Anderson (2005) and widely used in participatory development and urban planning, lays out how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a given context. It defines the inputs, outputs, activities, short-term outcomes and long-term impacts of any given intervention. This allows us to reflect critically on the detailed causal relations between the initiatives and outcomes.

In this report, the ToC model helped clarify and structure how resident-led interventions, extensively discussed in chapter 4, could contribute to increased visibility of the Kamerrade and increased (intergenerational) contact between residents. The model serves as both a planning tool and a framework for linking the engagement activities to tangible, long-term outcomes in the neighborhood.

The use of the ToC also supported our emphasis on adaptive planning. As we gathered more input from residents and learned more about the local context, the goals and steps of our design evolved along with it. It helped us visualize potential risks, stakeholders involved and how certain ideas might or might not work in practice. This made it a useful tool for turning our initial ideas into practical and well-structured interventions.

2.2 Literature

Aside frameworks like ABCD and Theory of Change, we employed literature stemming from multiple academic disciplines (i.e. architecture, sociology, history, global sustainability science and public administration), which offered a strong theoretical foundation for our proposed interventions, thereby thoroughly answering the research questions.

Literature on urban spaces, greening and social interaction also played an important role in shaping the interventions. Research in this field highlights how green public spaces are not only beneficial for the environment but also for strengthening social ties and community wellbeing (e.g. Oikonomaki et al., 2024), which contributed to our decision to integrate biodiversity and greening into multiple interventions.

Literature rooted in the social sciences also helped us understand the role of small-scale, participatory interventions in activating public space. It showed that even minor transformations can create shared experiences and increase residents' sense of belonging. This reinforced our use of informal, creative interventions like the sticker campaign, workshops and culture nights. Rather than using theory in isolation, we applied it alongside what we learned in the field, allowing insights gained through literature to support, validate and sometimes challenge our assumptions and findings about what would work best in this specific neighborhood.

2.3 Engagement strategies

Interactive mapping

To facilitate community-driven discussions, we designed an interactive mapping method that placed residents at the center of the conversation. Rather than relying on a questionnaire or occupying excessive time, this method was intended to be playful and easy to understand while still providing valuable insights. The interactive mapping serves as an ice-breaker, allowing residents to express their feelings about the space in an engaging and participatory manner. It also serves as a starting point for follow-up questions, offering a deeper understanding of community perspectives. This method aligns with the ABCD framework by identifying community strengths and empowering residents to shape their environment (McKnight & Russell, 2018).

The mapping consists of a clear map of the Marterrade area with markers that visually capture the perspectives of different community members. This approach helps identify existing assets, highlights potential areas for improvement, promotes collective decision-making through shared observations, and ensures that proposed changes reflect community values rather than external assumptions (Russell, 2022).

The map used for the interactive mapping can be found in Appendix A and the markers have been color-coded as follows:

- **Red** for areas residents dislike or find problematic
- **Green** for areas they appreciate and want to preserve
- **Yellow** for areas they wish to change or improve
- **Pink** to draw their everyday route

While the interactive mapping proved more complicated in practice than expected, it still provided some valuable insights. In chapter 3 of the report, this process and the outcome of the interactive mapping will be further discussed.

To complement the interactive maps, images were printed out and shown of already existing greening interventions, to give residents an idea of different options and make them think about possible locations. The pictures shown to residents can be found in Appendix B.

Empathy mapping

Empathy mapping is a qualitative and participatory research tool with its origins in user experience research, and now used widely across disciplines - from patient care to urban development (Kelm et al., 2019). It is uniquely designed to capture and articulate the lived experiences, motivations, perceptions, thoughts, emotions, and behaviors of individuals or groups (ibid). It goes beyond the surface-level understanding of "what", and aims to answer "why" by providing a structured framework, typically divided into quadrants exploring what subjects say, think, do, and feel.

With our focus on ABCD, empathy mapping uncovers the connection between assets and how people interact with them. It gives us insights into their underlying motivations and concerns. Embedding interventions within the everyday realities of the community enhances both their relevance and potential for long-term sustainability. Giving residents a central role allows them to exercise their agency and influence collective decision-making, implementation, and participate in ongoing management. Over time, such involvement creates a sense of accountability and ownership which aligns with the principles of bottom-up placemaking and participatory area development (Russell, 2020).

The empathy mapping framework informed other strategies, like semi-structured interviews and open discussions, by providing structure and enhancing the effectiveness of questions asked. Since the questions are focused on understanding others in a non-intrusive manner, the process would also build mutual trust, empower participants, share and validate their ideas, thoughts, and experiences (Efsthathiou & Walker, 2014). A crucial limitation of the empathy map is its complexity in real-time application. It requires a fair amount of recording, sorting and analyzing open-ended discussions. However, despite the intensity of the process, the depth and richness of the insights it generates make it a highly valuable and worthwhile method.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Open-ended discussions are quick and informal but can lack depth, hence, building upon the empathy mapping ("why") and ABCD ("what"), we made some questions to guide the conversations, leading to Semi-Structured Interviews (SSI). These guiding interview questions used in the co-creation sessions can be found in Appendix C and D. The SSI questions were designed to first establish a connection with participants, gradually moving toward deeper topics by focusing on specific experiences rather than abstract outcomes. This would make the process feel easier, more comfortable, and informal - which was the best fit for the setting and target audience. To make the experience of the semi-structured interview more engaging and playful, gamifying strategies like picking out questions from a box/bowl were applied.

Before each co-creation session, we developed a set of questions for the participants tailored to that specific evening, while making sure to leave room for flexibility to incorporate an open and free conversation. During the session, attention was paid to the way the phrasing of the questions was received by participants, informing our approach for subsequent sessions. For instance, insights from the first co-creation led to a change in approach to oral histories, elaborated on at the end of this chapter.

Street interviews

The conducted street interviews were quick conversations with residents of the neighborhood centered around pre-determined key themes of interest, such as wayfinding and connectivity. These interviews allowed us to gain knowledge about the area and its features, the perception and attitude of local residents, and their awareness about the Kamerade. These street interviews provided important insights that would inform our interventions and approach further. This also enabled us to reach a larger and more diverse population - adolescents, youth and middle-age in particular. Guiding questions for the street interviews can be found in Appendix E.

Oral History

This approach of open dialogue is what historians call oral history, focusing on the micro-level by centering the dialogue around the participants (Bleyen & Van Molle, 2012). Rather than asking static, predefined questions, the focus is on identifying important topics and naturally weaving them into the conversation. This qualitative research method allows participants to be very honest, as you gain their trust by actively listening to their story and asking questions that relate to them or their story. This method is interdisciplinary and used widely among sociologists, psychologists and historians (ibid).

CHAPTER 3

CO-CREATION RESULTS

This chapter offers a chronological account of the three co-creation sessions. We elaborate on the insights gained during these sessions and reflect on the effectiveness of the engagement strategies we employed. The final part contains a concise overview of the key insights, serving as a foundation for chapter 4 of the report.

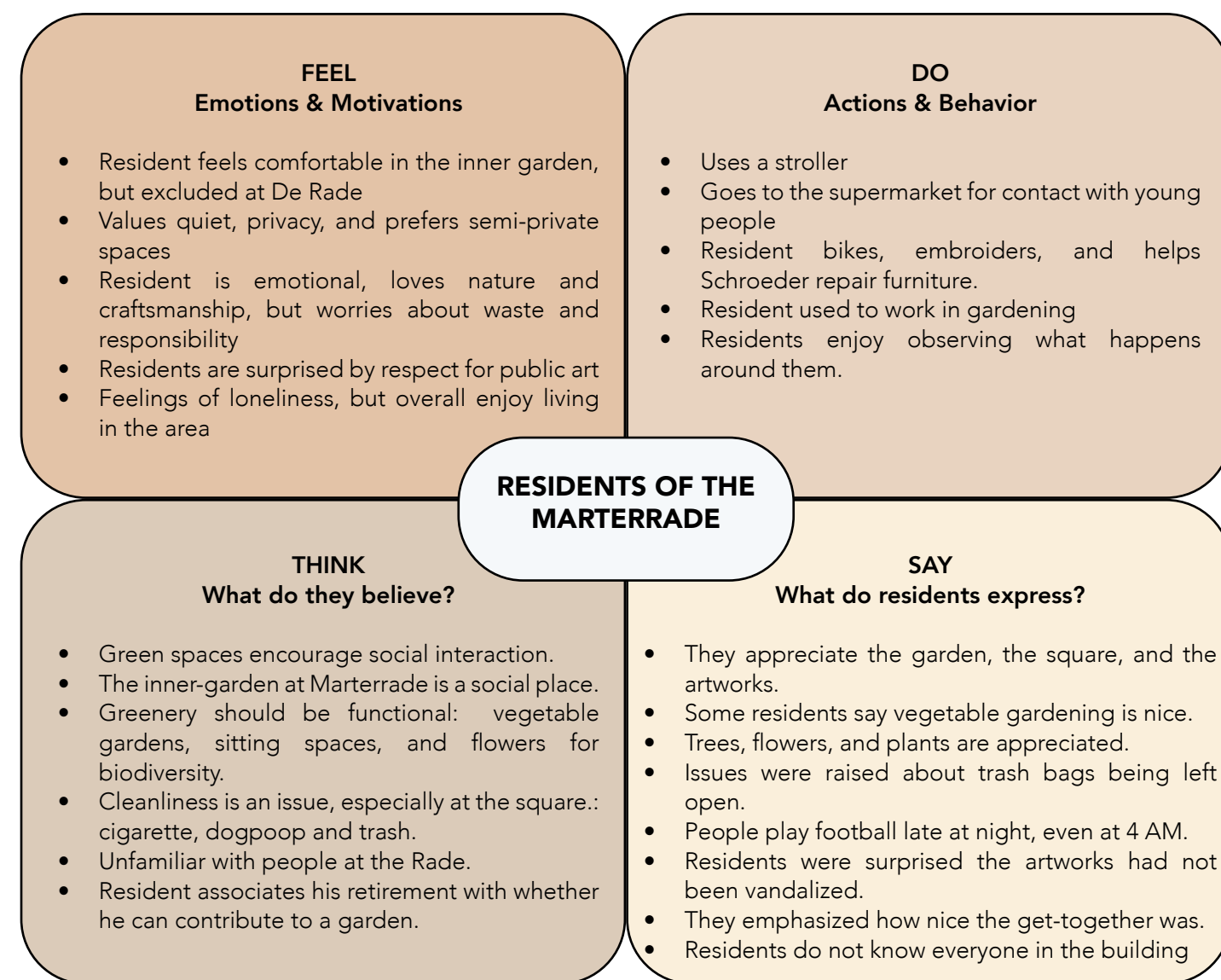
The first co-creation session

The first co-creation session focused on gathering resident input regarding greening initiatives. Our goal was to explore the wishes and needs of residents concerning greenery in their surroundings. Before the session we had no idea what to expect, upon arrival we saw that attendance was low, with around six elderly participants. The participants all ranged from 70-80 years old, meaning that no intergenerational perspectives were captured. Still, insights were valuable and captured the needs of this demographic. The insights from the session were processed and visualized in an empathy map.

Figure 2

Empathy Map Co-Creation Session 1

Co-Creation Session 1



Residents expressed a strong emotional connection to the inner garden, which was described as calm, familiar, and a place for social interaction. As seen in the “feel” and “think” sections, this space is considered peaceful and interactive, a setting where casual social contact can take place without pressure. The map shows that green spaces are believed to encourage social interaction and are valued for their function as meeting points. At the same time, the map reveals that engagement with green space is highly site-specific. One resident, for example, reported never visiting the inner garden at De Rade simply because she didn’t know anyone there (“say”, “think”). This highlights how unfamiliar environments can discourage exploration, even if physically accessible. The idea of communal gardening drew mixed responses. Several residents expressed enjoyment of gardening and mentioned a desire for more flowers, insects, and even a vegetable garden (“say”, “think”). One participant associated retirement with gardening as a meaningful contribution (“think”), while another believed that elderly people in the area would not take part at all. This contrast suggests that any future greening initiative should provide flexible modes of participation, offering both active and passive roles.

Concerns about cleanliness and maintenance were recurring across the map. In the “say” and “do” sections, residents voiced frustration over littering, open trash bags, and poor maintenance, particularly on the square. These concerns reveal an underlying skepticism about whether others in the community will take responsibility for shared spaces. In turn, this skepticism may affect how willing individuals are to invest time and energy in new green initiatives. The “feel” and “do” sections also indicate that physical ability and mobility play a crucial role. One resident needs to use a stroller on uneven pavement and only visits spaces she feels safe navigating. This reinforces the need for accessible design in any green intervention. One of the biggest assets is seen under the ‘do’ section, as one resident assists Schroeder in repairing furniture. These skilled Schroeder workers show great knowledge on how things can be made or repaired, and are also in possession of tools and materials. The Schroeder shop is a second hand shop, but also a giveaway shop for people in need.

In conclusion, the empathy map demonstrates that residents care deeply about greenery as a source of beauty, biodiversity, and connection. However, their willingness to participate in greening initiatives is closely tied to perceived feasibility, existing social relationships, and trust in collective care. Greening efforts in Marterrade should therefore be designed around small, accessible, and co-owned interventions that recognize the realities of aging, build on established routines, and allow for different levels of involvement.

Reflection engagement strategies

The interaction with residents proved more difficult than anticipated, largely due to a low number of residents participating and the presence of many students. This created a challenging dynamic, as you did not want to interrupt other ongoing group activities. Additionally, some residents struggled with hearing or were not in a very clear state of mind, making it harder to effectively engage with them and fully understand their responses.

The interactive mapping method, while initially promising, proved to be more complicated than expected. The presence of many groups with different strategies made the process too fragmented, which led to the decision to scale back on its use. The residents were not able to fully focus on the maps and when asked what they liked/disliked on the map, their response was that they did not want to change anything. These questions were probably too big. Nevertheless, the interactive map still provided some useful insights, particularly in understanding how people move within the neighborhood and to nearby amenities. One resident was able to show us how she walks to the shopping center. Our other visual aids were pictures and examples of greening interventions implemented in other places. However, this also proved difficult in implementation. We struggled to capture the attention of the participants and they had difficulties to imagine how such interventions would translate to the context of the Marterrade. Rather than sticking to the method, we decided to adapt our methods to reality. When we just started talking about greenery, plants and gardening, a more open-dialogue emerged which gave many insights into their activities, wishes and needs.

The empathy mapping method allowed for a deeper understanding of the residents’ desires and needs. By actively listening and carefully recording their stories, we were able to capture valuable insights into how they use their spaces and what they prioritize. The open-ended questions and dialogues, especially about greenery, were particularly effective in drawing out more detailed responses. While the answers were not always clear-cut, the stories shared were rich with information and helped paint a fuller picture of the community’s preferences and values. For future sessions, we would adapt our engagement strategy by simplifying it and making it more flexible and adaptable to fit into disorderly group conversations. Also, we feel that it is important to gain insight into the younger residents of the neighborhood.

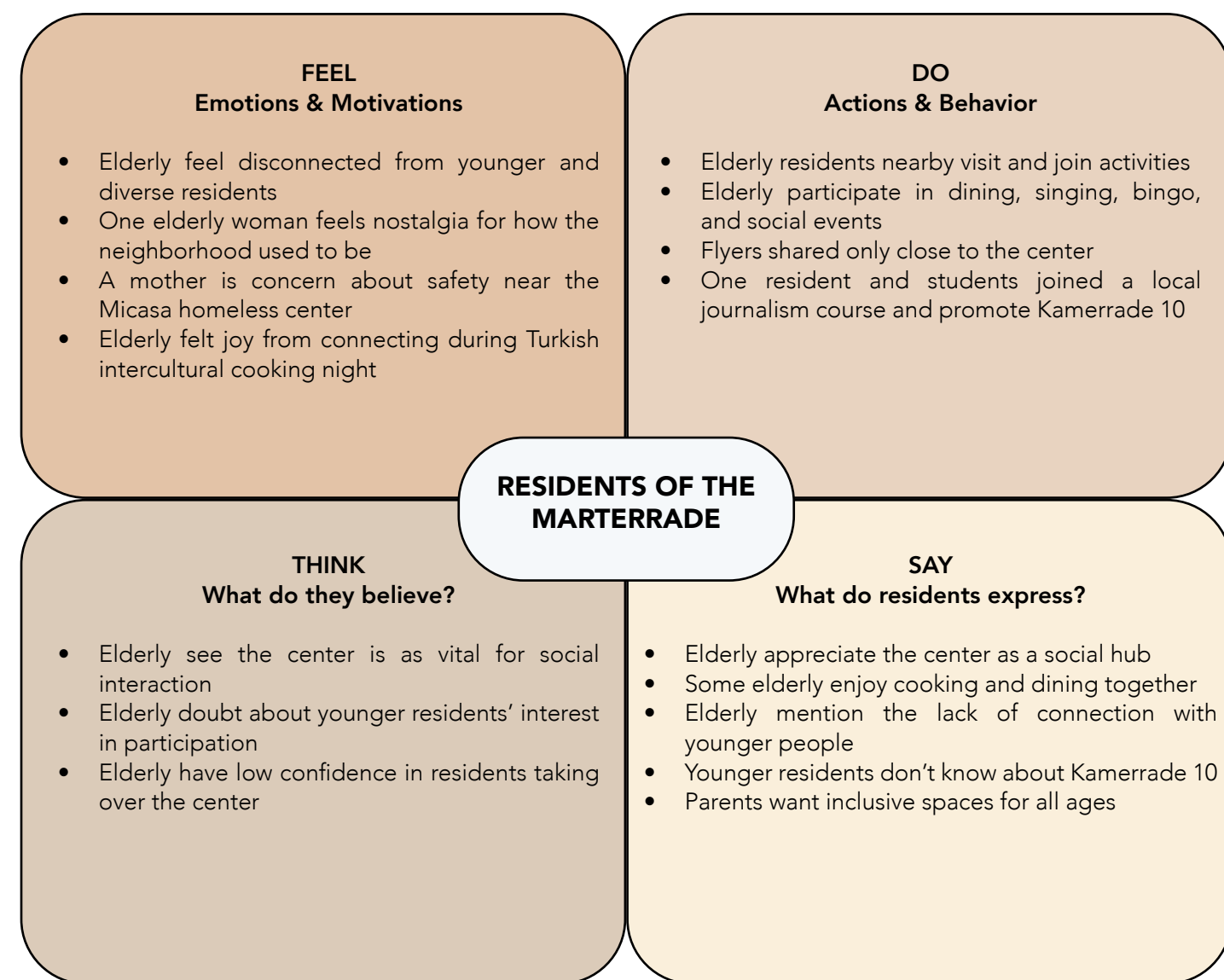
Overall, our engagement strategies succeeded in fostering open dialogue and uncovering community perspectives, though they also revealed the importance of adapting methods in real-time based on the residents’ needs and group dynamics. Moving forward, a more simplified approach, focusing more on empathy mapping and open-ended questions, could enhance participation and clarity.

The second co-creation session

The second co-creation session aimed to gain more insight into the Marterrade community center. The goal was to assess how people find their way to the community center, examining the accessibility and challenges they might encounter. Additionally, the session aimed to understand the role of the community center in the daily lives of residents, to explore how it functions as a social hub and what improvements could make it more welcoming and inclusive.

Figure 3

Empathy Map Co-Creation Session 2



Most attendees were elderly residents living either in the senior housing or directly across the street. They emphasized that the center plays a key role in their daily lives as a social hub. As shown in the “say/do” section of the empathy map, these residents attend activities regularly and view the center as familiar and comfortable. However, they also shared concerns about a lack of connection with younger people and voiced doubts whether younger residents would be willing to get involved.

This perception is reflected in the “think/feel” section, where elderly participants expressed skepticism and a sense of social distance from the rest of the neighborhood. Prior to the session, we engaged with younger residents in the neighborhood as they were not present at the co-creation session. It was important to ensure an intergenerational perspective on the connectivity and awareness of the Kamerrade. These informal conversations with mainly parents at the nearby playground revealed low awareness of the center. Many had never heard of Marterrade 10 or confused it with Wijkcentrum Bouwlust, which they saw as the main community hub. This is captured in the “see” and “hear” categories of the empathy map: younger residents know other centers, not Kamerrade 10, and receive little to no information about its events. Flyers are currently only distributed within the elderly housing block, which reinforces the centers’ limited visibility beyond its immediate surroundings. In terms of mobility and access, those living nearby reported no issues getting to the Kamerrade. However, younger residents from other parts of the neighborhood felt disconnected, not physically, but socially and informationally. When asked what would make it easier to visit, many pointed to a need for more outreach, better signage, and more inclusive activities, as reflected in both the “think/feel” and “say/do” sections of the map. Several also expressed a desire for events like cooking or creative workshops that include families and younger people.

Some striking observations of the session were the mentioning of the Turkish cooking class and how this made the elderly residents feel more connected. Also, the local journalism course was something we did not know before. Taken together, the empathy map reveals a sharp contrast between two resident groups: older participants who rely on the center and feel at home there, and younger residents who don’t see it as a place for them. These insights highlight the need for improved communication strategies, intergenerational programming, and better integration of the center into the wider neighborhood.

Reflection engagement strategies

Following the first co-creation session, we initially attempted to introduce a playful element by gamifying the conversation. Participants were invited to pick a question at random from a box to guide the discussion. However, this structured approach proved to be less effective. The questions led to short and static answers, but did not lead to elaborate stories for the reason why participants gave the reply. This outcome highlighted the need to simplify our approach. We observed that open-ended dialogue worked significantly better as participants felt more at ease during informal conversations than with structured questioning. As a result, we shifted towards an oral history method in subsequent sessions, allowing topics to emerge naturally through storytelling. Prior to the session, we identified three key themes: awareness of the community centre, liked and disliked activities, and whether alternative activities might motivate them to attend Kamerrade. These themes served as subtle guides during the conversations, leading to rich personal narratives, reflections on the present, and memories of the past. Ultimately, oral history as a method for active listening and naturally steering a conversation emerged as the most powerful tool. When given the freedom to speak openly, participants shared generously. This insight confirmed that open, semi-structured dialogue remains the most natural and insightful way to engage with the elderly residents.

At the same time, we became increasingly aware that our sessions lacked the perspectives of younger residents. To address this, we supplemented the co-creation sessions by walking around the neighborhood and identifying places where younger people were likely to gather. This led us to the streets, school routes, and the open playground area next to the local school. There, we approached residents informally and engaged them in brief, open conversations. This informal street-level outreach to younger residents proved to be incredibly valuable. It gave us access to perspectives we would not have otherwise captured. The contrast between the insights gathered in these informal encounters and those shared in the structured sessions highlighted the importance of adapting engagement strategies to the audience and setting.

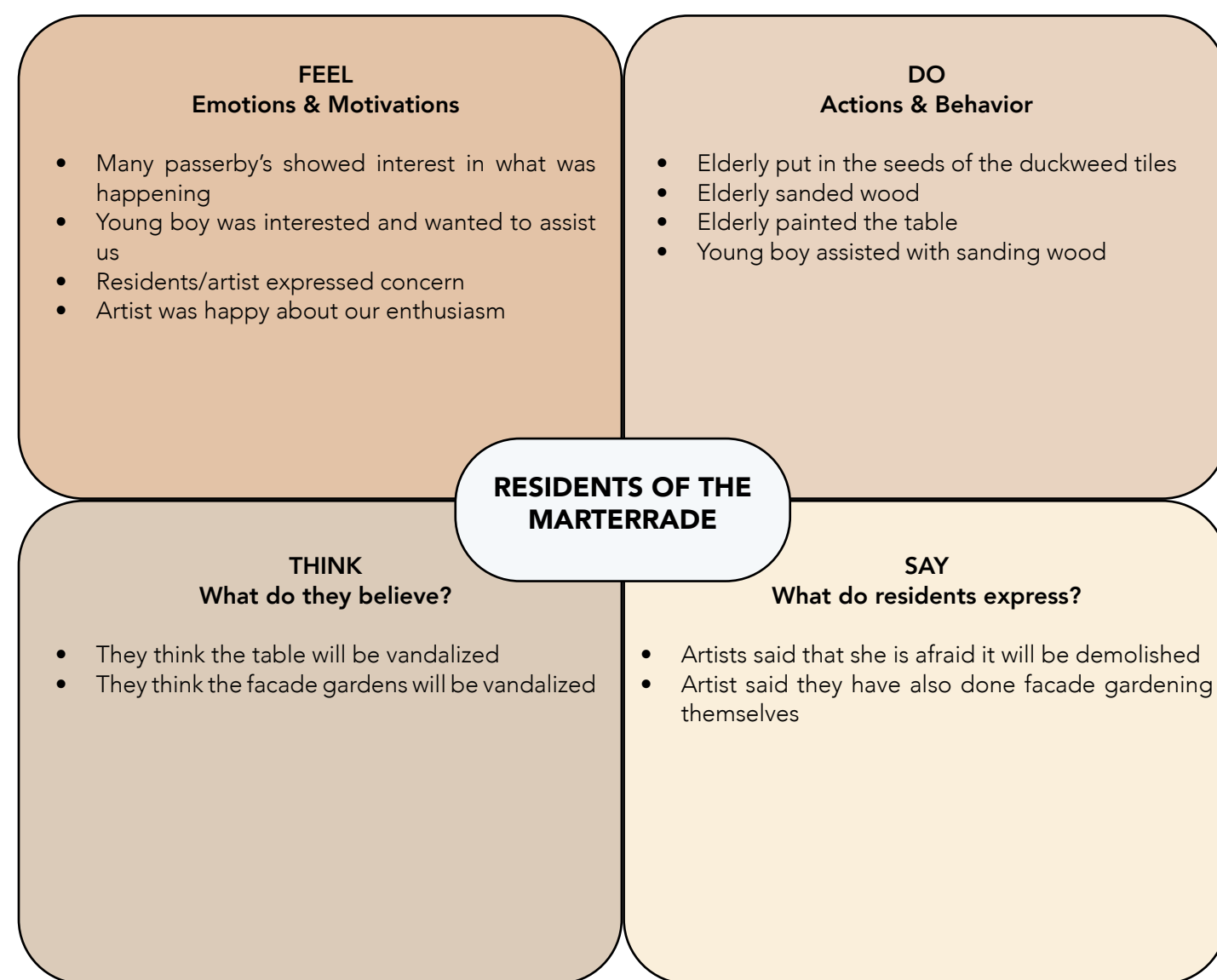
Overall, our experience showed that open-ended, empathetic dialogue was the most effective strategy, whether during scheduled co-creation sessions or spontaneous street-level conversations. It confirmed that meaningful engagement is not about applying a fixed method, but about listening carefully, meeting people where they are, and remaining flexible throughout the process.

The third co-creation session

The third co-creation session was marked by a lively and joyful atmosphere, characterized by strong intergenerational engagement and spontaneous public interaction. A significant presence of elderly participants defined the day, many of whom expressed genuine happiness and enjoyment throughout the session. There were many things happening at the same time, tile removal, the construction of the elevated communal garden table and many residents wanting to engage in conversation. Therefore the last co-creation session was the most enjoyable, but also chaotic one.

Figure 4

Empathy Map Co-Creation Session 3



It was really striking how many people walked by and showed interest in what was happening, as we were all standing outside with food, drinks, music and good conversation. The event fostered a sense of gezelligheid - a Dutch term that captures the feeling of cozy togetherness - through lively conversation and shared activity. A striking moment involved a young boy who initially passed by with his friends, maintaining a 'cool' demeanor. However, he later returned on his own, expressing a genuine interest in contributing. This shift highlights the potential of such sessions to inspire curiosity and personal engagement. The empathy reflects this potential, as the 'do' section is filled with people participating.

The session also attracted attention from people walking past the Marterrade, suggesting the public visibility of the activity served as an unintentional form of outreach. This spontaneous interaction with the broader community helped increase awareness and lent the event a dynamic, open character. One older man passing by even walked inside the building and found out that Schroeder has a store inside, contributing to increasing the awareness of Kamerrade. From a creative standpoint, the session was highly productive. Participants collaborated on guerrillagardening, as well as constructing the elevated communal garden table. These interventions not only beautified the space but also reinforced a sense of shared ownership and environmental stewardship. A recurring feeling and thought was shared among artists and residents, as seen in the empathy map ("feel", "think", "say"), the fear of vandalism runned deep. Even though the artists involved were happy with the participants' enthusiasm and energy, they voiced doubt about the long-term fate of the work. This is not only determined by vandalism but also whether it will be maintained and embraced by the community. This uncertainty reflects the reality of working in public and semi-public spaces, where outcomes often remain open-ended. Time will tell how the results of this session are received and sustained.

Reflection engagement strategy

For the third co-creation session, we continued with the open dialogue approach that had proven successful in our previous engagements with both elderly and younger residents. Former adaptations of making open-dialogue more interesting by gamifying it or visualizing it with the map, proved less valuable than simply engaging in conversations. By this point, we had developed a clear sense of who we had already spoken to and which perspectives were still missing. We did not have a chance to speak to some artists before and were very curious about their activities, wishes and needs for the neighborhood.

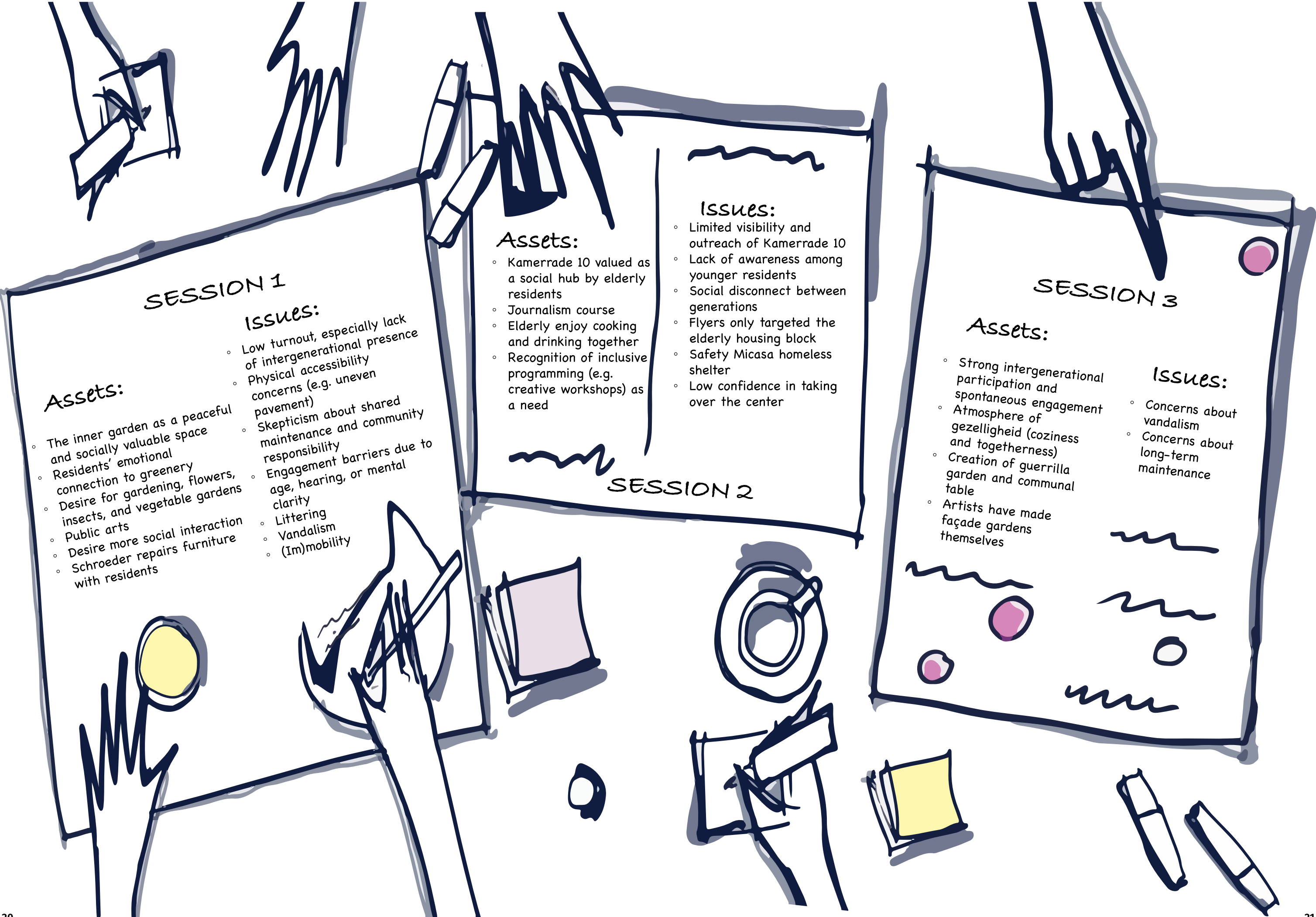
Standing outside and simply engaging with them by asking how they are doing, an open conversation about the neighborhood quickly emerged. As Bleyen and Van Molle (2012) said, people give meaning to occurrences by placing them in a story. Therefore, especially for residents living in the neighborhood for a longer period, it is difficult to respond to static questions as these do not allow the participant to fully explain their experience. Open dialogue allowed us to engage in a more relaxed, human way, one that encouraged storytelling and spontaneous input. Going into the session, we had a few topics in mind, but rather than steering the conversation rigidly, we introduced these themes organically through casual discussion. This approach created a playful and inclusive atmosphere, helping residents feel comfortable while still giving us valuable insights on the topics we aimed to explore. The open-dialogue method does not only align with oral history, but fits in seamlessly with implementing Asset-Based Community Development. This, because it is crucial to understand and get to know the residents that make the community.

Conclusion

The three co-creation sessions allowed us to gain deeper insights into the existing assets of the community and their issues. These have been visualized in Figure 5 and are the starting point of our proposed interventions. This ensures sustainable solutions that can be maintained by the community itself. Our process demonstrated that a mixed engagement strategy is essential.

Conclusion

FIGURE 5 - THE THREE CO-CREATION SESSIONS



CHAPTER 4

Design Proposal
and ToC
Evaluation

This section will outline the proposed (design) interventions on greening, cleanliness, connectivity, and other relevant issues that were shared during the co-creation sessions. All ideas are tied together by the motivation to adopt a low-cost, high-impact framework (Project for Public Spaces, 2022), focusing on solutions that are feasible and "within-reach" for the community. The small-scale nature of (most of) our suggestions ensure strong, immediate benefits, and inform longer-term improvements over time. We will start with the interventions that can be achieved in the short term, building up towards bigger ideas that take a bit longer to realize. Also, all interventions strongly highlight the need to promote the Kamerrade, as it only recently opened its doors as a community center.

Our interventions are for, of and by the people - who we firmly believe are the strongest asset and can create the greatest change in the Marterrade in the future. In proposing our interventions, we use the ToC approach, start from the existing assets in the neighborhood, and pay attention to potential obstacles that could hamper the implementation of the interventions. Feasibility, relevance and maintenance are considerations that will be reflected upon, taking into account how the community of the neighborhood itself can take on full ownership of the interventions proposed. As emphasized in the previous chapters, the assets, talents, and resources that already exist in the neighborhood are prioritized.

In Appendix G, at the end of the report, a clear, visual overview is given of the interventions proposed in this chapter.

INTERVENTION 1

GREENING

“BOOMSPIEGEL”
AND
“PAVE TO PLANT”

As highlighted in the previous chapter, the lack of greening was frequently mentioned by the residents of the Marterrade. On the central square, and the two inner gardens, the greening was perceived as monotonous, limiting biodiversity and seasonal appeal. However, residents did mention that they enjoy gardening, and would appreciate more small-scale communal gardening activities. In the final co-creation session, residents worked on such an activity, switching tiles for greenery in front of the community center. This was an enjoyable, small-scale activity, and our proposed interventions build on this, and similar initiatives. The two proposed interventions can be realized in the short-term (0-2 months).

Alongside these insights from the co-creation session, our interventions on greening are also informed by literature. The introduction of greening could have promising effects on the cohesion of the neighborhood, which is currently lacking. As highlighted by Oikonomaki et al (2024): “By transforming concrete landscapes into vibrant green spaces, these initiatives create communal hubs that encourage social interaction, and shared experiences” (p.3). Studies have shown that this enhances mutual trust, civic participation, social connectedness, and health and wellbeing of residents (Camps-Calvet et al., 2016; Kingsley & Townsend, 2006; Peters et al., 2009).

CURRENT SITUATION

GREENING

Intervention 1a - Boomspiegel	
Intervention (Desired Vision)	<p>A boomspiegel (tree pit) is the piece of ground around a tree in the street. This piece of earth is usually bare. On the central square, and in the inner gardens, there are several trees in which the small piece of ground around the tree is indeed bare. The currently bare soil around trees can be transformed into green spaces with low-maintenance plants and flowers. These spaces can be co-created by Duurzaam Den Haag and residents, and eventually be co-designed and maintained by residents themselves, fostering local ownership. See figure 6 for the current boomspiegels and an example of a boomspiegel in which this intervention is implemented.</p> <p>Partly based on the information of “Duurzaam Den-Haag” (2025) the following steps should be taken to implement these boomspiegels.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Prepare the Soil<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remove any trash and weeds from the area.• Loosen the soil using a small rake or hands to create a good seedbed.• If the soil is too compact or dry, remove a small layer and add organic potting soil or garden soil• Avoid using fertilizer and be careful not to damage tree roots.2. Sowing the Seeds<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evenly scatter a mix of flower seeds over the prepared soil. This will firstly generate greening, and over time, flowers.3. Maintenance<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Water if necessary• Avoid overgrown boomspiegels <p>This low-maintenance, resident-led intervention ensures that boomspiegels remain green and attractive over time with minimal effort.</p>
Programme Efficiency	<p>Input: “Duurzaam Den Haag” (n.d.) is a municipal initiative aiming to enhance the greening in the city. For the ‘boomspiegels’ specifically, basic gardening tools and flower seeds can be provided by this organization, but existing assets in the community might also be used (e.g. via Schroeder). Duurzaam Den Haag will play a supportive role by offering advice, providing seed kits and guiding the first residents through the process. Eventually, the role of Duurzaam Den Haag can gradually be taken over by the residents themselves. The initial contact with Duurzaam Den Haag will be made by a representative from Kamerrade 10, to kick-off the collaboration and coordinate the first steps.</p> <p>Activities: First, residents should be informed about the initiative, which can be done during an information session at Kamerrade 10 with a representative from Duurzaam Den Haag. Then, residents could jointly participate in a short planting workshop, creating small flower beds which could spark interest among other residents. Notably, residents should be made aware of the type of maintenance that is needed for these boomspiegels. During the planting workshop, this can be communicated clearly. Some residents, such as the artists, are already familiar with the initiative and they can support other residents in the process. Over time, residents can take over the initiative and help each other in placing and maintaining the treepits.</p> <p>Outputs: Several greened boomspiegels on the square, inner gardens, or even in the broader neighborhood, enhancing aesthetics, and micro-habitats for pollinators.</p>
Programme Effectiveness	<p>Intermediate Impact: Increased resident engagement, a sense of ownership, and a visibly greener square, garden and street. It stimulates small-scale placemaking efforts.</p>

Programme Effectiveness	<p>The intervention increases resident engagement by providing a hands-on, low-barrier activity that allows individuals to contribute to their shared environment. The activity can thereby strengthen the connection between residents and the public spaces they share, one key aspect of placemaking (Project for Public Spaces, 2022). Moreover, the act of collectively planting and maintaining greenery fosters a sense of ownership, as residents see direct results from their efforts. Finally, the visible transformation of previously bare spaces into green, vibrant areas enhances the aesthetic appeal of places.</p> <p>Long-Term Impact: Improved social cohesion. The intervention fosters sustainable behavior, with more residents taking care of public greenery.</p> <p>As residents regularly interact through the maintenance of the planted areas, social cohesion is strengthened. This aligns with sociological literature emphasizing repeated interactions as an important mechanism for enhancing cohesion (Thy et al., 2004). In the long-term, upscaling can take place when residents view boomspiegels as a positive change to the neighborhood and are happy with the joint responsibility they share.</p>
Strengths	<p>The boomspiegel intervention aligns strongly with the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach (Russell, 2020) by utilizing existing neighborhood assets, specifically the trees already present in the neighborhood. Since Duurzaam Den Haag already offers this as an existing project, it can be easily adopted and implemented locally. By building on their existing framework and resources, the intervention becomes more feasible and does not need to be developed from scratch.</p> <p>As studies emphasize that interventions rooted in local assets foster long-term engagement (Ahmad & Talib, 2014; Mathie & Cunningham, 2003), this solution is very promising. Also, as the current streetscape is perceived as uninviting due to a lack of greening (see empathy map), this intervention contributes to improving this perception.</p> <p>Additionally, the initiative has a social dimension. Simple activities such as soil preparation and seed sowing create opportunities for casual conversations. Over time, repeated interactions can enhance relational closeness and cohesion (Thye et al., 2004).</p>
Potential obstacles + solutions	<p>Obstacle 1: Risk of neglect over time</p> <p>One potential obstacle is the risk of neglect, as initial enthusiasm may fade, leading to unmaintained tree pits. This highlights the importance of being critical when applying the ToC approach: while the intervention assumes ongoing community engagement, it does not guarantee sustained participation. If residents lose interest or face barriers to continued involvement, the intervention may not achieve its intended long-term impact.</p> <p>Solution: To address this, a structured seasonal planting event can be introduced, encouraging periodic re-engagement and reinforcing a sense of shared responsibility. Also, setting up a roster of citizens who look into maintenance might be helpful, as well as bimonthly checks/inspections on the surrounding infrastructure.</p>

Figure 6: Boomspiegel (before and after)

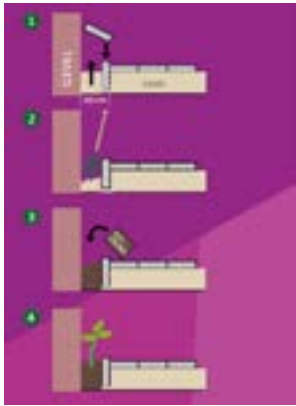


Intervention 1b - Pave to Plant (Tegel Eruit, Plant Erin)	
Intervention (Desired Vision)	<p>An easy minimal effort way to create significant changes in the streetscape is by removing the row of tiles at the edges of buildings and flipping them 90 degrees and putting them back in the ground, creating a ‘geveltuin’ where plants and flowers can be grown (figure 7).</p> <p>The Pave to Plant intervention aims to replace selected pavement tiles on key areas of the Marterrade’s central square and its access paths with small patches of greenery. These areas currently lack vegetation, making the space feel stark and uninviting according to residents of the Marterrade. By replacing tiles with plants, initially with support of Duurzaam Den Haag, residents can co-create a more inviting, biodiverse, and climate-adaptive environment.</p> <p>This intervention will be implemented on a small scale first, focusing on the edges of the square and the pathways leading into it. The implementation of this solution is done in several steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Tile Removal: Residents, volunteers, and people from Duurzaam Den-Haag, remove designated pavement tiles in pre-agreed locations, ensuring structural integrity is maintained.2. Soil Preparation: The ground underneath is loosened and enriched with compost or garden soil to support plant growth.3. Planting Selection: Low-maintenance, drought-resistant greenery (e.g., ground cover plants, wildflowers, or small shrubs) is planted, considering shade and sun exposure.4. Community Involvement: A collaborative planting day might be organized, encouraging residents to take ownership of the spaces.5. Ongoing Maintenance: Residents commit to light maintenance such as occasional watering and weeding, with only minimal external support from Duurzaam Den Haag if needed. <p>In the long-term, residents can also think of replacing pavement tiles for greening on strategic places, preventing late night football games or fatbikes on selected places. This aligns with the concerns expressed during co-creation session 1.</p>
Programme Efficiency	<p>Input: Guidance and materials from Duurzaam Den Haag (tools, soil, plants) Duurzaam Den Haag has an ongoing project in multiple neighborhoods in Den Haag through which residents can bring in their tiles and get free plants in return. Also, resident engagement, and potential expertise from local gardeners in the community are needed.</p> <p>Activities: The intervention could begin with a small planting day organized by Kamerrade 10, inviting local residents to co-create the green patches. Flyers and conversations in and around Kamerrade 10 can help bring together a first group of interested residents. Once this group is formed, Duurzaam Den Haag could be contacted to provide support and guidance with the first small planting day. Thereafter, the community can take over the initiative.</p> <p>Outputs: Greener pathways leading to and from the square, reducing heat retention from paving and increasing visual appeal.</p>
Programme Effectiveness	<p>Intermediate Impact: Enhanced neighborhood aesthetics, making the public space feel more inviting, and increased informal interactions among residents due to shared involvement in implementation and maintenance.</p> <p>The intervention improves neighborhood aesthetics by replacing bare, uninviting pavement with greenery, making public spaces more visually appealing and welcoming. The collaborative process of removing tiles and planting encourages informal interactions among residents, fostering a sense of shared accomplishment and reinforcing local social ties. When people see immediate, tangible results from their efforts, they are more likely to stay engaged and take pride in their surroundings.</p>

Programme Effectiveness	<p>Long-Term Impact: Strengthened community bonds as residents collaborate on public space improvements. Literature shows that the involvement of residents can enhance enthusiasm, and can lead to the perception that the benefits of interventions outweigh the potential costs involved (Project for Public Spaces, 2022).</p> <p>In the long run, if resident satisfaction is high, this intervention could inspire larger-scale de-paving efforts across The Hague Southwest.</p>
Strengths	<p>First, the solution aligns with the ABCD approach (Russell, 2020): Rather than introducing entirely new infrastructure, this intervention builds on existing assets, transforming available spaces without the need for extensive external funding. As multiple residents attended co-creation session 3, the idea is already familiar and some may even already know the procedure which could be shared with other residents.</p> <p>Second, it encourages micro-level engagement: Unlike large-scale projects, replacing pavement tiles with greenery is a tangible, manageable action that residents can directly participate in and maintain.</p> <p>Third, it improves local climate adaptation: Replacing heat-retaining pavement with plants can reduce heat stress and improves water absorption, benefiting the microclimate of the area (Cheela et al., 2021).</p> <p>Finally, social interaction is fostered: The hands-on process of planting and maintaining greenery fosters a sense of collective responsibility and neighborly interaction. Studies show that shared urban gardening activities strengthen social ties and trust among residents (Oikonomaki et al., 2024).</p>
Potential obstacles + solutions	<p>Obstacle 1: Resistance to change Some residents may hesitate to remove pavement due to concerns about accessibility, maintenance, or inconvenience.</p> <p>Solution: A pilot project can be implemented in a small, visible area to demonstrate its benefits (i.e. similar to the small-scale intervention during co-creation session 3). If successful, the intervention can be expanded through a participatory approach, ensuring that residents are part of the decision-making process from the start.</p> <p>Obstacle 2: Maintenance uncertainty If responsibility is unclear, plants may be neglected, reducing long-term impact.</p> <p>Solution: Residents who participate in planting workshops can “adopt” a specific section, creating a shared sense of responsibility. If responsibilities are clearly allocated over the several areas in which this intervention is implemented, residents might feel more responsibility for its maintenance.</p>

Figure 7: Process Pave to Plant!

Source: Duurzaam DenHaag



INTERVENTION 2

CLEANLINESS

“DIY CIGARETTE BUTT BINS”
AND
“CREATIVE SIGNAGE STICKERS”

Cleanliness was a recurring concern and frustration during co-creation sessions and street interviews. Residents pointed out issues such as littering, cigarette butts, and the lack of trash bins (see empathy map in chapter 3). Scientific evidence indicates that litter and trash can negatively impact residents’ perceived health, contributing to increased stress (Bennett, 2012). Moreover, insights from Global Sustainability Science show that cigarette butts are notably resistant to decomposition (Kadir & Sarani, 2015) underscoring the importance of mitigating long-term ecological impacts. Residents of the Marterrade indicated that trash is a pervasive problem at the central square, as well as in the inner gardens, but tangible solutions are not yet proposed. Therefore, we came up with two specific interventions that can be implemented in the short-term (0-2 months), and can provide immediate benefits. Moreover, our suggestions directly involve residents themselves, clearly emphasizing community ownership.

CURRENT SITUATION

CLEANLINESS

Intervention 2a - DIY Cigarette Butt Bin (DIY Peukenbakken)	
Intervention (Desired Vision)	<p>Small cigarette butt bins are created and decorated by residents themselves in an interactive and playful way. Especially in a neighborhood like the Marterrade, where a lot of local artists are living, such a creative event has potential to strongly engage them. They could take on a more prominent role in the creation and decoration process, helping other residents in the process. Furthermore, this initiative can attract both older and younger generations, stimulating intergenerational interactions. For example, existing (art) lessons at the Kamerade can be devoted to DIY bin-making workshops involving youth groups or schools. Residents could think of catchy messages to write on the bins (see figure 8).</p> <p>The bins will be installed in hotspots for litter; near benches, entrances of buildings, parks and squares. These bins can be designed in a way that they are bright in color and clearly visible to draw the disposers attention.</p> <p>By engaging residents in the creation process, a sense of responsibility and awareness is formed. To expand the awareness to individuals who do not participate in the creation process, a broader awareness initiative of the butt bins might be beneficial (such as through using posters, through social media, or via a letter informing residents).</p> <p>Emptying the bins will first be done by volunteers on a regular basis, but in the longer-term, it should become part of the general cleaning process by the municipality. (i.e. the same way as the municipality empties the garbage bins in the neighborhood). Therefore, getting in touch with the municipality would be helpful.</p>
Programme Efficiency	<p>Input: Basic materials to construct and decorate the DIY butt bins, resident engagement, guidance and hosting by the community center de Kamerrade or community volunteers.</p> <p>Activities: Host a DIY bin-making workshop at Kamerrade with residents, and involve youth groups or schools to co-create designs. Promote these workshops in community centers and at schools. This can bring the old and young generation together in a joint initiative and strengthen connections in the neighborhood.</p> <p>Outputs: 10–20 personalized butt bins placed across the square, gardens, and parks, resulting in greater visibility of waste disposal infrastructure.</p>
Programme Effectiveness	<p>Intermediate Impact: Reduction in cigarette litter, and visible improvement of the streetscape by the presence of the colorful creative cigarette bins which add color and character to the neighborhood. Also, literature shows a positive link between cleaner neighborhoods - as well as neighborhood cleaning initiatives - and health outcomes of residents (Mattocks et al., 2019).</p> <p>Implementing DIY cigarette butt bins can lead to a noticeable reduction in cigarette litter, resulting in cleaner public spaces. A study by Keep Britain Tidy (2024) reported a 17% decrease in cigarette litter following a national behavior change campaign focused on throwing the cigarette butt in a bin. This highlights the importance of combining the co-creation of the bins with awareness initiatives to showcase the need to throw the cigarettes in such bins. An easy way to do this could be to design posters or flyers, letters to residents, or through stickers (see the next intervention).</p> <p>Long-Term Impact: Change in disposal behavior and attitude towards littering, and a more sustainable environment. Emptying the bins will be taken over by the municipality.</p>

Strengths	<p>This intervention is low-cost, creative and embedded in the ABCD approach. It builds on existing skills, materials, and relationships in the community and offers visible, tangible results in a short time.</p> <p>By engaging both younger and older residents, the initiative can bring generations together. As argued by Zhong et al. (2022): “Intergenerational communities are important for facilitating social interactions across different generations” (p.1). A key concern raised during the co-creation session was the lack of interaction with younger people, which this initiative aims to address.</p>
Potential obstacles + solutions	<p>Obstacle 1: Vandalism or neglect of the bins Solution: Involve residents in identifying locations which reinforces ownership. Occasional workshops can be held to repair bins, or maintenance can be integrated into existing events or school projects.</p> <p>Obstacle 2: Limited participation or uneven age representation Solution: One of the 11 key principles for designing public spaces in the report on Project for Public Spaces (2022) is to look for partners. In this case, it is important to actively reach out to schools, youth centers and elderly housing to ensure broad participation. At schools, this can immediately be combined with an educational campaign about the dangers of smoking.</p>

Figure 8: DIY Cigarette Bin

Source: Ballot Bin



Intervention 2b - Creative signage / stickers (Schoonmaak)	
Intervention (Desired Vision)	Residents of all ages co-create colorful stickers or signage promoting waste awareness and pride in the neighborhood. These signs are decorated with slogans, symbols, or playful reminders and are placed near playgrounds, benches and waste bins to catch attention and encourage better disposal behavior (figure 9). The intervention emphasizes intergenerational collaboration by involving both children and elderly residents, resonating with literature arguing that these intergenerational interactions could reduce conflict and tensions (Zhong et al., 2022). To ensure the intervention is environmentally friendly, materials such as biodegradable vinyl or recycled PET can be used for making the stickers.
Programme Efficiency	<p>Input: Simple craft materials, volunteers or staff from Kamerrade to help organize and facilitate sessions, and resident engagement.</p> <p>Activities: Organize sticker workshops with children/youth and elderly residents. Design, print, or laminate the signs. Identify high potential areas with residents and install the stickers/signs collaboratively.</p> <p>Outputs: Colorful unique stickers designed by residents themselves, made of environmentally friendly material. Also, the stickers can result in greater stimulation and visibility of waste disposal.</p>
Programme Effectiveness	<p>Intermediate Impact: Increased awareness about waste disposal and cleanliness among both youth and adults. In Schilderswijk, a similar initiative was implemented with positive effects on awareness of trash and a decrease in littering.</p> <p>Long-Term Impact: Shift in neighborhood norms around littering and waste disposal. According to sociological literature, repeated exposure to a norm can lead to the internalization of these norms (Van Tubergen, 2020). Thus, when residents are repeatedly exposed to anti-littering messages in their daily environment, they are more likely to internalize responsible behaviors, leading to a sustained reduction in litter. Also, there are environmental benefits due to the reduction of litter (Huffman et al., 1995). Finally, this intervention can lead to an improvement of the streetscape, creating a more visually pleasing environment with less litter.</p>
Strengths	<p>This intervention is low-cost and easily implementable, making it easy to organize using simple materials and local support. By involving both children and elderly residents, it promotes intergenerational collaboration and interaction, thereby strengthening community bonds (Zhong et al., 2022). We assume that playful, resident-made signage could attract more attention than standard formal signs, as its unusual appearance may spark curiosity among passersby and make them more likely to notice it.</p> <p>Furtherly, because participants are directly involved in the creation and placement of the stickers, the intervention fosters a sense of local pride and ownership. It aligns closely with the principles of the ABCD framework (Russell, 2020) by tapping into existing talents and creative energy within the community.</p>
Potential obstacles + solutions	<p>Obstacle 1: Limited lifespan One possible obstacle is that the stickers may wear out, be removed or lose visibility over time due to weather conditions or vandalism.</p> <p>Solution: To address this, the activity can be repeated periodically, such as during school projects, seasonal events or community clean-up days, ensuring that the signs remain fresh and visible.</p>

Figure 9: Stickers



INTERVENTION 3

CONNECTIVITY

“THE RADE WALK”
AND
“CULTURE NIGHTS”

Connectivity is a key aspect of the experience of an area, and is more than just getting people from one point to another, but also entails getting them to connect with each other. With a tram stop, “The Rade” nearby and wheelchair accessible footpaths, bike paths, and gardens, transit and mobility are not of prime concern. However, during the co-creation sessions it became clear that aside from the elderly who live in the building or closeby, other residents in the neighborhood are unaware of the existence of the community center the Kamerrade and of its activities. The community center thus struggles to attract a large and more diverse population. There are also other community centers present in the neighborhood, serving other functions, like a center focused on children and families near the open playground.

Hence, our interventions focus on making the Kamerrade more relevant and important, connecting functions and spaces. Thereby, we adhere to one of the key functions of placemaking, which is strengthening the connection between people and the places they share (Project for Public Spaces, 2022). The interventions can be implemented between 0-2 months.

CURRENT SITUATION

CONNECTIVITY

Intervention 3a - Culture Night (Cultuuravond)	
Intervention (Desired Vision)	<p>During the second co-creation session, one resident shared a powerful experience of cooking a Turkish meal together with a Turkish couple at Kamerrade 10. This moment was described as a meaningful and joyful encounter that brought people of different backgrounds together. Inspired by this experience, the idea to introduce recurring ‘culture nights’ was developed. During these informal evenings, residents can share cooking practices and eat together and if there is interest, listen to music and stories from each other’s cultural backgrounds. Each night is hosted or co-hosted by residents of different origins and age groups. This intervention builds on the idea that cooking together and sharing food is a universal language and has the power to bring people together and strengthen community-building (Engelen, 2024; Roe & Buser, 2016).</p> <p>Especially in a diverse neighborhood such as the Marterrade, stimulating intercultural interaction can be helpful. This can reduce potential stereotypes or misperceptions individuals of different cultures hold towards each other, as well as enhancing mutual understanding and trust (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).</p>
Programme Efficiency	<p>Input: Use of existing infrastructure at Kamerrade 10 (kitchen, tables, shared spaces), budget for ingredients, coordination through Kamerrade, resident engagement. Funding by the municipality’s budget for connectivity (explained at the end of this chapter).</p> <p>Activities: Residents sign up to co-host an evening, and residents cook and eat together. The culture nights should be promoted through flyers in the neighborhood, local newspapers, at schools, and in other community centers. An example flyer can be found in Appendix F.</p> <p>Outputs: Monthly rotating culture nights (or other frequency depending on the turn-out), active involvement of 10-20 residents per evening, greater diversity in the attendees compared to current activities held at the Kamerrade.</p>
Programme Effectiveness	<p>Intermediate Impact: Offering attendees a warm and connected feeling due to a pleasant evening, facilitating the formation of new connections between residents who did not know each other, residents feel seen and valued for their skills, identity, and stories, greater participation from younger residents, newcomers, and culturally diverse groups.</p> <p>Long-Term Impact: Strengthened neighborhood bonds through shared experiences, and reduction in social fragmentation. Kamerrade 10 becomes a recognized hub for inclusive, resident-led cultural activities, aligning with the ABCD approach in which citizen-led activities and community ownership are key principles (Russell, 2020).</p>

Strengths	<p>This intervention builds directly on a positive experience already present in the community and aligns with the ABCD approach, using existing talents, stories and traditions as a way to bring people together and celebrate diversity. ‘Culture nights’ provides a flexible format that can evolve over time depending on residents’ wishes, events and the seasons. For example, a summer BBQ outside, Iftar events or an Eid celebration after Ramadan. A key strength is that these intercultural cooking nights enhance residents’ knowledge about each other. Intergroup contact literature shows that this can be a mechanism that reduces prejudice and fosters mutual trust (Allport, 1954).</p>
Potential obstacles + solutions	<p>Obstacle 1: Logistical challenges (costs and coordination) Solution: Keep events low-budget and informal. An appeal can be made to the Municipality of The Hague’s budget for connectivity initiatives in Escamp to help fund this intervention. Moreover, the culture nights could also be held in a ‘potluck style’, meaning everyone attending tries to bring some ingredients from their home.</p> <p>Obstacle 2: Low turnout Solution: In order to attract as many people as possible from different backgrounds and ages, it is crucial that these nights are successfully promoted. This can be done by creating catchy flyers that are handed out throughout the neighborhood to residents’ homes, but they can also be distributed at schools and other public spaces that are frequently used such as supermarkets, sports facilities, and other community centers.</p>

Intervention 3b - The Rade Walk (De Rade Route)	
Intervention (Desired Vision)	<p>This intervention proposes an annual festival that connects various community centers and key public spaces across the Rade through a festive walking route. Residents walk from one community center to another, with small events, snacks, or creative activities organized at each stop. The route highlights both the cultural and natural assets of the neighborhood, while improving wayfinding and turning the community centers into recognizable landmark locations.</p> <p>The event is developed in collaboration with multiple community centers in the area, tapping into their existing visitor base and therefore attracting a large audience. This way, residents only familiar with other community centers are automatically introduced to the Kamerrade during the walk. Beyond being an enjoyable event, the aim is also to raise awareness of Kamerrade’s presence in the neighborhood and establish it as a welcoming, accessible community space.</p>
Programme Efficiency	<p>Input: Coordination between multiple community centers. Light funding for snacks, materials and music (can apply for subsidy by the municipality), and volunteers from the neighborhood. At the end of this chapter, more specifics about applying for subsidies will be given.</p> <p>Activities: Route planning connecting 3-4 key locations, co-organized programs at each stop (food, music and games). Visual wayfinding elements during the event such as chalk, flags or stickers. Promotion efforts through schools, flyers and social media/local newspaper.</p> <p>Outputs: 1 annual festival with an expected turnout of 100–300 residents. A lot of residents will then be introduced to the Kamerrade for the first time, and some of them might start visiting the Kamerrade on a regular basis. The collaboration and connection between community centers will also be enhanced.</p>
Programme Effectiveness	<p>Intermediate Impact: Participants connect with the Kamerade and other centers through a unique experience, strengthening bonds between residents. The community festival will foster a sense of social cohesion. As stated by Clarke and Jepson (2011) “community festivals are about participation, involvement, and the creation of a sense of identity and are important in contributing to the social well-being of a community” (p.8).</p> <p>Long-Term Impact: Kamerrade 10 becomes a familiar and recognized place in the neighborhood, increasing participation in future activities across multiple centers. Moreover, increased awareness of the community center might lead to more word-of-mouth promotion, which is a key success factor in branding within both the private and public sector (Eshuis & Klijn, 2012). Also, a stronger feeling of community and pride in the area can grow among residents.</p>

Strengths	<p>This intervention directly addresses spatial and social fragmentation by linking existing places in a festive way for all groups of residents. It uses what’s already working, such as the active user base of other centers and redirects attention to less known places like Kamerrade 10, which aligns with the ABCD framework by using existing assets. Moreover, as the co-creation sessions showed that residents do not know the Kamerrade, or solely go to their own community center, this is a way to strengthen mutual awareness and interactions.</p>
Potential obstacles + solutions	<p>Obstacle 1: Uneven participation or division among centers A risk could be that people just attend one of the centers or linger at one of the centers and do not finish the route.</p> <p>Solution: To address this, visitors will receive a snack and drink coupon at the starting point, which can only be redeemed at the next location, encouraging them to continue walking. In addition, volunteers will be present at each stop to guide the group to the next location. These volunteers take an active role, kindly encouraging the group to move along and leading the way to the next stop.</p>

INTERVENTION 4

PLACEMAKING

“COMMUNAL GARDEN
AND
INTERACTIVE SEATING”

The Rade is a region of unevenly distributed greenery, limiting access to green in certain parts. From previous community engagements, it was revealed that local residents showed an inclination towards greening and biodiversity. A significant lack of seating areas is also observed, with previous attempts to improve this through art-based seating arrangements made around trees near the community center not being utilised or maintained due to impracticality of the design and placement. The 3rd and final co-creation session gave further insight into the current situation and possible challenges. Hands-on placemaking interventions carry merit in feasibility and engagement. The first spatial intervention (4a) is already built. The second one (4b) can be implemented in 2-4 months.

CURRENT SITUATION

PLACEMAKING

Intervention 4a - Raised Garden Table (Verhoogde Buurttuin)	
Intervention (Desired Vision)	Raised garden beds allowed residents to grow plants together, while also incorporating a unique feature that reflected the neighborhood. Building the table on the street increased visibility and enabled curious passersby to receive information and even participate (Figure 10). As observed during the third co-creation session, the garden table proved to be an accessible and inclusive, community-based green solution that fostered citizen engagement.
Programme Efficiency	<p>Input: Wood, paint, nails and other instruments to make the bed. Soil, plants, compost and gardening tools to make it a garden. Schroeder along with residents already built the table. Materials were donated by Haagwonen and all the tools and technical insights were contributed by Schroeder.</p> <p>Activities: Making the table (finished), and maintaining the table over time</p> <p>Outputs: Elevated communal garden table</p>
Programme Effectiveness	<p>Intermediate Impact: Community members consistently participate in the maintenance and use of the garden table. This ongoing engagement results in frequent interaction between neighbors, aligning with sociological literature arguing that repeated encounters can foster connections and build mutual trust (Thye et al., 2004; Van Tubergen, 2020).</p> <p>Long-Term Impact: As residents gained skills and confidence through making the table, they might become more likely to take initiative in other areas of community development.</p>
Strengths	<p>The elevated design ensures accessibility for individuals with limited mobility, aligning with key principles of design justice (Costanza-Chock, 2020). By making the design inclusive - also for disabled individuals or the elderly - the intervention fosters a stronger sense of connection to the neighborhood among a broader group of residents. By being out in the open, it invites passersby to stop, join in, or simply connect with others.</p> <p>What was once a neglected space becomes an active, meaningful place that people recognize as their own. When people see that it's cared for, they're more likely to respect and protect it. During our co-creation session, we saw that people of all ages got involved. The co-creative process builds trust, sparks conversations and lays the foundation for long-term community ownership.</p>

Potential obstacles + solutions	<p>Obstacle 1: Neglect The elevated community table is dependent on maintenance by people, therefore, when responsibility is unsure, the table can be neglected.</p> <p>Solution: Residents of the neighborhood can distribute responsibility. The artists living across the square were very excited about the table and other interventions. They, themselves, have also tried to improve the aesthetic of the neighborhood by making facade gardens. It would be possible to ask them whether they would want to take on responsibility for the maintenance. They could distribute tasks to other residents, but the artists would be the ones making sure the maintenance happens.</p> <p>Obstacle 2: Vandalism Many residents during the co-creation sessions repeatedly expressed their concern about vandalism in the neighborhood. They were unsure about if and how an elevated community garden would work. The table serves as an experiment to examine whether such implementation will work. If the experiment proves successful, there is an ability in upscaling and opportunities for more small-scale initiatives in the public square of Marterrade.</p> <p>Solution: Unfortunately, there are no specific, immediate ways to tackle vandalism as it is unsure if the vandalizers are residents of the neighborhood or not.</p> <p>Obstacle 3: Purpose Communicating the intended use, purpose, and outcomes of the table is important as there is a risk that the table becomes a spatial design element, rather than a placemaking strategy. Involving residents in making the table does not guarantee that all citizens know about the table and how to use it.</p> <p>Solution: Using the table in events, discussions, and other engagements can help promote its usage. Informing citizens through flyers, having a table “opening” event or regular gardening activities could be helpful.</p>
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Figure 10: Elevated Community Garden



Intervention 4b - Interactive Seating (De Buurtbank)	
Intervention (Desired Vision)	<p>To create more inclusive, welcoming and inviting public spaces, this intervention proposes a bench that residents can co-create together (see Figure 11). The bench will be placed in front of the Kamerrade and allows for social interaction between residents while also being an extension of the community centre. This aligns with the need expressed by residents to strengthen the connection between indoor and outdoor spaces (also emphasized by Nieuwveld et al., 2024), as well as reinforcing the Kamerrade as a social hub for the neighborhood.</p> <p>Currently, the existing colored benches around the trees at the square are not being used and are not inviting for social interaction as it is impossible to sit across people. In co-creation sessions, residents suggested semi-private spaces and the need for better social cohesion, especially with the elderly who feel lonely in the neighborhood and disconnected from the younger population.</p>
Programme Efficiency	<p>Input: Simple materials such as wooden palettes, screws, basic tools and resident participation. Guidance and materials provided by Schroeder where possible. Additional materials should be purchased by making use of subsidies and funding.</p> <p>Activities: Community workshops to build benches where residents collaboratively install benches and nearby planters. This workshop will be promoted by flyers in the neighborhood, calling in the local newspapers and asking local schools to join the program.</p> <p>Outputs: A lightweight bench that overlooks the Marterrade square, allowing residents to enjoy their surroundings and gives the opportunity to engage in conversations. The bench is an extension of the community center and increases social interaction.</p>
Programme Effectiveness	<p>Intermediate Impact: The bench will offer residents a place for relaxation and recreation. The shape of the bench allows people to sit across from each other which increases the opportunity to engage in conversation.</p> <p>Long-Term Impact: The seating area serves as an informal gathering point, which allows residents to engage with each other. Co-creation of the bench could improve usage and might lead to upscaling of the implementation as residents of the neighborhood gain knowledge of how to build benches in the process. The inner-garden at the Marterrade and the Rade suffer from a shortage of seating opportunities as well, when deemed successful, this can be upscaled for other locations too.</p>
Strengths	<p>This intervention is low-cost, customizable, and encourages both creative expression and social collaboration. By opting for interactive design, it gives an opportunity to sit, admire the artworks and chat with others. Using recycled or donated materials aligns with sustainability goals and mirrors the ABCD framework’s focusing on existing community assets (Russell, 2020).</p>

Potential obstacles + solutions	<p>Obstacle 1: Vandalism As the co-creation sessions pointed out, the neighborhood suffers from vandalism. However, the artworks have not been vandalized, so the bench will serve as an experiment to assess whether such interventions are sustainable. There is not much that can be done about vandalism, and therefore it is crucial to examine what will or will not be vandalized.</p> <p>Obstacle 2: Limited participation Mobilizing enough participants to build the bench will be a challenge, as the elderly might not be able to do it themselves because of (im)mobility issues.</p> <p>Solution: To ensure enough volunteers it is crucial to promote the activity through different channels that not only focus on the direct surroundings of Marterrade. Promoting the workshop in local newspapers and asking schoolchildren to assist, will raise awareness about the workshop and lead to more participants. The workshop will be a learning process for everyone.</p>
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Figure 11: Modular Interactive Seating



Feasibility of Proposed Interventions

“Feasibility” is multi-faceted in our perspective - resource friendly, financially viable, easy to implement, integrates into existing frameworks/systems, and unlocks opportunities for the neighborhood. Building on existing assets (physical and social) while using minimal and readily available resources, which citizens can lead with minimal effort.

The municipality of the Hague has elaborate subsidies for social initiatives and neighborhood development (see Table below). Our interventions have been designed to leverage these key assets and opportunities, provided they completely fulfill the requirements of the subsidies. Apart from being a key source of financing and providing more space for innovation in the neighborhood, building on existing policies and subsidies could lead to better relations with the municipality, fast tracked timelines, and increased likelihood of being realized.

The potential funding available depends on the applying party. Individual residents can apply for a subsidy, but associations (HaagWonen) organising activities on street, district, or neighborhood levels can also apply for funding - this allows flexibility and space for interventions to be solely citizen/resident led too. The application for subsidies can be done online, and for any questions or support required, contact can be sought with subsidies@denhaag.nl.

Table - Potential subsidies

Subsidy (in Dutch)	Potential Funding	Interventions
Subsidie activiteit in uw stadsdeel aanvragen	Residents: max. €750 per activity Associations/Legal Entities - HaagWonen: neighborhood-level activities: max. €1500	All interventions. For design-based - if done as co-creation, they qualify
Subsidie Haags Vieren in de wijk aanvragen	Residents - max. €1,000 per celebration. HaagWonen - max. €5,000 per celebration <ul style="list-style-type: none">Up to 51 participants: max. € 1,00050 to 151 participants: max. € 2,500150+ participants: max. € 5,000	3a. The Rade Walk 3b. Culture Nights
Subsidie sociale initiatieven in de wijk aanvragen	Region-based budget allocation: Marterrade belongs to the ESCAMP region which has been allocated a fund of €75,000 for activities that improve social connection & cohesion.	All interventions. For design-based - if done as co-creation, they qualify
Subsidie cultuurparticipatie jong Den Haag aanvragen	Tailored to projects that will involve children (4-12 years) and youth (12-27 years). Citizen (18+): min. €2000, max. €5000 [for activities in 2025] HaagWonen: min. €5000, max. €30,000 [for activities done in 2025 and 2026]	1a. Boomspiegel 2a. DIY Cigarette Butt Bins 2b. Creative Signages 4a. Raised Garden Table Interventions done as co-creation sessions must be tailored to youth participation

Conclusion

Each of our community-driven and asset-based interventions play a role in improving the neighborhood, and do not exist in isolation. They influence and complement each other; for example: the interactive seating would enrich the experience of The Rade walk; boomspiegel and cigarette butt bins near the interactive seating arrangement; creative signages that lead to the cigarette bins; and many more possible use-cases. Our focus on ABCD and placemaking is reinstated here, as our interventions are geared towards implementation and transfer of power to the people of Marterrade.

Conclusion

CHAPTER 5

REFLECTIONS

Looking back on this project, it is clear that the process was just as valuable as the outcomes. We were challenged not only in the content we delivered but in how we worked together, communicated, and engaged with the residents of Marterrade. The experience was rich with lessons about co-creation, community-centered design, and interdisciplinary collaboration.

One of the core challenges we encountered was in explaining the Theory of Change, an approach that some of us had not worked with before. We struggled with the balance between how detailed or concise the explanations should be. Particularly, describing the cause-and-effect relationship between our interventions and their expected impacts was difficult. This was a crucial step, as the ToC provided a framework for aligning our interventions with the broader literature, ensuring our ideas had a grounded theoretical basis and that they were feasible. We had many good ideas, but explaining them with enough clarity and precision on paper was a challenge. However, in Assignment 4, we made significant progress in this area. The literature we consulted provided crucial insights and frameworks that helped clarify the connections between our actions and their potential effects. Ultimately, we ensured our ToC was grounded in diverse scientific literature.

The co-creation approach itself evolved over the course of the sessions. Initially, in the first session, we didn't know what to expect from either the residents or the process. This lack of clarity meant we had to be adaptable and open to learning as we went. By the second session, we were more prepared, having learned from the first session's challenges, and were able to refine our approach. By the third session, our approach felt natural and intuitive. We were able to be present in the moment, listening attentively and responding flexibly to the energy of the space. The interactive nature of the sessions made them lively and dynamic, but also chaotic and unpredictable, this spontaneity often led to the richest insights.

What stood out most in these sessions was the importance of actively listening to the residents. In our fast-paced society, there is often little time to truly listen to others, especially in the context of such a short-term project. However, by taking the time to actively listen, ask questions specific to each participant's story, and allow them to share their thoughts freely, we were able to gain rich insights that otherwise would have been missed. This listening created a space where residents felt recognized and heard, which not only helped us as students to better understand their needs but also fostered deeper connections. It was a powerful reminder of how essential it is for people, who could feel isolated, to feel understood. This served as a powerful reminder of how important it is to embed public spaces within the community and that everyone deserves to be acknowledged and understood. We learned that public spaces can become meaningful in fostering social interaction, if you allow the community to participate in designing them.

This project taught us to be flexible, open-minded, and to think outside the box. Most importantly, it taught us that true co-creation is not about our ideas, but about amplifying the voices of residents. We had to let go of what we assumed was "best" and instead explore what people actually wanted, even when that conflicted with our expert opinion. For example, one resident expressed a desire for asphalt even though this contradicts most greening strategies. This moment highlighted that our role was not to dictate what is "better" but to understand and respect the preferences of the community. Another example of this is the power of gardening as a social activity. However, for this to be effective resident participation is key. Without active engagement, green spaces could fall into neglect. Although we often analyze top-down approaches, for example in public administration, where decisions are made based on research and external knowledge, this experience emphasized the importance of a people-based approach. The residents are the experts on their own lives, and their input should drive the decision-making process.

For future interdisciplinary people-based approaches we would prioritize collective teamwork over individual task division, allowing for more integrated outcomes. We would work harder on interdisciplinary communication, making time to align our definitions, expectations, and understandings from the start. In such a mixed team, language and assumptions vary, and without clarity, collaboration becomes fragmented. This is not only helpful in explaining causal processes on a detailed level, but is also relevant for our own in-group communication. As proven by the assignment, communication really is key when working together with people from different disciplines while also communicating with participants.

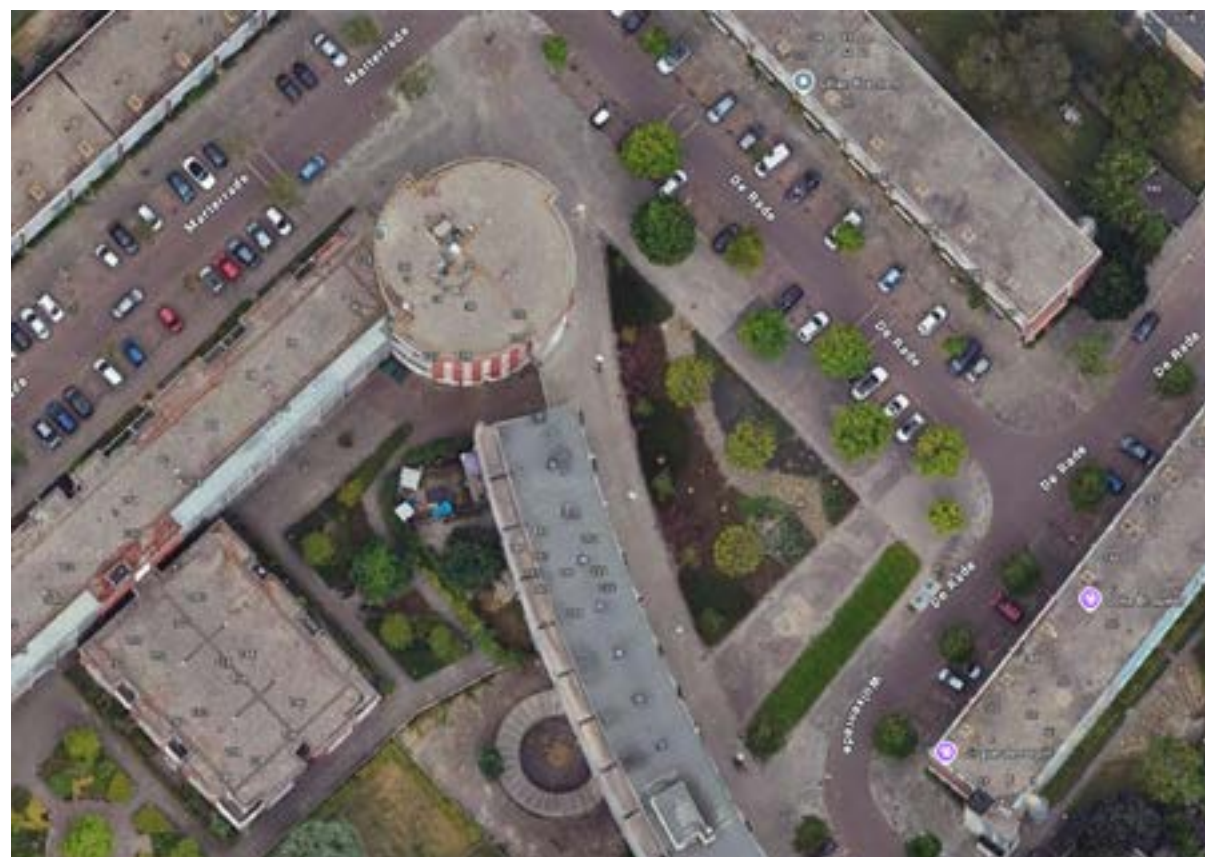
In conclusion, this project highlighted the importance of active listening, flexibility, and collaboration. The process reinforced that successful engagement is not about imposing ideas but about truly understanding the community's needs and co-creating solutions with them. By focusing on the residents, recognizing their expertise, and fostering open communication, we were able to create a more meaningful and impactful engagement process. As we continue to refine our strategies, we will carry these lessons forward, knowing that residents' voices and perspectives should always be at the heart of community-driven design.

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Appendix A :

Interactive map



Appendix B :

Pictures shown to residents in co-creation session 1

Guerilla gardening



Facade garden



Guiding interview questions on greening (co-creation session 1)

- Empathy mapping questions for greening initiatives:
- Do you like going outside?
 - Do you like gardening?
 - Would you join community gardening?
 - Where would the best place for this be?
 - Have you been to the inner garden at the Rade?
 - Do you like facade gardens?
 - Why do you feel more green is important?
 - Why do you want more green?
 - How do you utilize the green spaces?
 - What kind of greenery do you like? Trees, flowers etc.?
 - Should greening be sunny or more shade?

Guiding interview questions on connectivity and wayfinding (co-creation session 2)

- Do you visit the community centre Marterrade in this neighborhood?
- How do you go around the neighborhood?
- Do you have trouble getting to the community centre?
- Do you feel connected to the neighborhood?
-
- Are you aware of ongoing events in the community centre? How are you made aware of this?
- What kind of events or activities would attract you to visit the community centre?
- What would make it easier for you / help you to visit the community centre?
- Do you know anyone living inside or around the community centre?

Social ties

- Do you like your neighbors? What kind of relationship do you have?
- Who do you interact with (most) in the neighborhood?
- Who organizes neighborhood activities? By whom are you informed about them?
- What kind of activities would you like to see more of? And would you like to organize this?
- What would you like the contact with other residents to look like?

Safety

- What challenges do you face in public spaces?
- Who do you go to if there are problems in the neighborhood? Do you feel heard/supported?
- Do you feel safe on the streets at daytime and at nighttime?
- Do you suffer from nuisance – noise, waste?

Facilities

- Are there things you miss in the neighborhood?
- How satisfied are you with the healthcare facilities (dentist, doctor)?
- What mode of transport do you use? Car, bicycle, bus etc. - and how is the parking?
- What does your perfect neighborhood look like?

KAMERRADE KOOKT!

EEN AVOND VOL SMAKEN,
VERHALEN & MUZIEK



KAMERRADE 10

DÓÓR EN VÓÓR BEWONERS UIT DE BUURT

20 MEI VANAF 18:00 UUR



MAAK MARTERRADE MEE!

Van Stenen naar Stekjes !

Vervang stenen voor kleine stukjes groen voor een gezellige, groene en kleurrijke wijk!

Hoe?

Verwijder een tegel uit de grond, draai de tegel 90 graden en zet de tegel terug. Zo maak je een geveltuintje! Plant zaadjes, bloembollen of zelfs kruiden en geniet van het groen!



Boomspiegel

Zet plantjes rond de boom neer – dat fleurde de buurt meteen weer!

Plant zaadjes en bloemen rondom de boom! Zo komt er meer kleur, meer groen en meer vlinders!



1 VERGROENING

DIY Peukenbakken

Zelfgemaakte bakken voor sigarettenpeuken!

Een workshop waarin je zelf je eigen bakken kan maken die opgehangen worden in de wijk!

Weet jij een leuke stelling voor op de bak? Doe mee!



Schoonmaak Stickers

Samen plakken, samen aanpakken!

Maak je eigen stickers om de straten schoon te houden. De stickers wijzen naar de prullenbak of zijn een herinnering, want alleen samen houden we de Marterrade schoon!



2 SCHOONMAAK

Kamerrade Kookt

Een avond vol muziek, smaken en verhalen – door en voor bewoners uit de buurt. Laat je verrassen door wat onze wijk te bieden heeft! De avond wordt (mede)-georganiseerd door bewoners van verschillende afkomst en leeftijden. **Heb jij een gerecht dat iedereen moet proeven?**



De Rade Route

Wandel door de wijk en ontdek (live) muziek, heerlijk eten, gezellige kraampjes en verrassende activiteiten op elke hoek!

Waar? Marterrade en omgeving!

Meedoen? Iedere wandelaar krijgt een drankje! Of huur een kraampje en verkoop eten, drinken of leuke spullen!



3 VERBINDING

Verhoogde Buurttuin

Verhoogde plantenbakken op straat, ontworpen en onderhouden door de buurt.

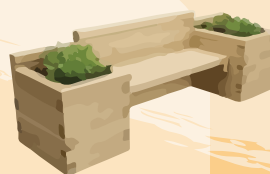
Deze tafel laat het bovenaanzicht van Marterrade 10 zien – in het klein én vol leven.

Help mee met het verzorgen van de planten en bloemen. **Houd samen met ons de buurt in bloei!**



De Buurtbank

Neem plaats op de bank en geniet van het prachtige plein, de kunst en de omgeving. Verbonden met de Kamerrade, een verlengstuk van het buurthuis, midden in de wijk.



4 RUIMTEVERBINDERS

Scan Me!

Nour Abdelfattah, Dani Abdoellakhan, Lalith Karthikeyan, Misha Midavoodi, Joan Wiersma

The MARTERRADE

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