

# Program

- 13.30-14.00: Opening and introduction
- 14.00-14.25: Discussion on the role of pioneers and capacity building of energy communities and cooperatives for just and inclusive heat transitions.
- 14.25-14.50: Discussion on the role of local initiatives and the need for supporting schemes that reward social value creation
- 14.50-15.00: Closing and suggestions for following up

# Part 1 - Problem identification

Starting question: How can energy communities contribute to social and environmental value creation?

We noticed: We don't have the EC yet due to lack of capacity to build these locally (with preferably social organisations)

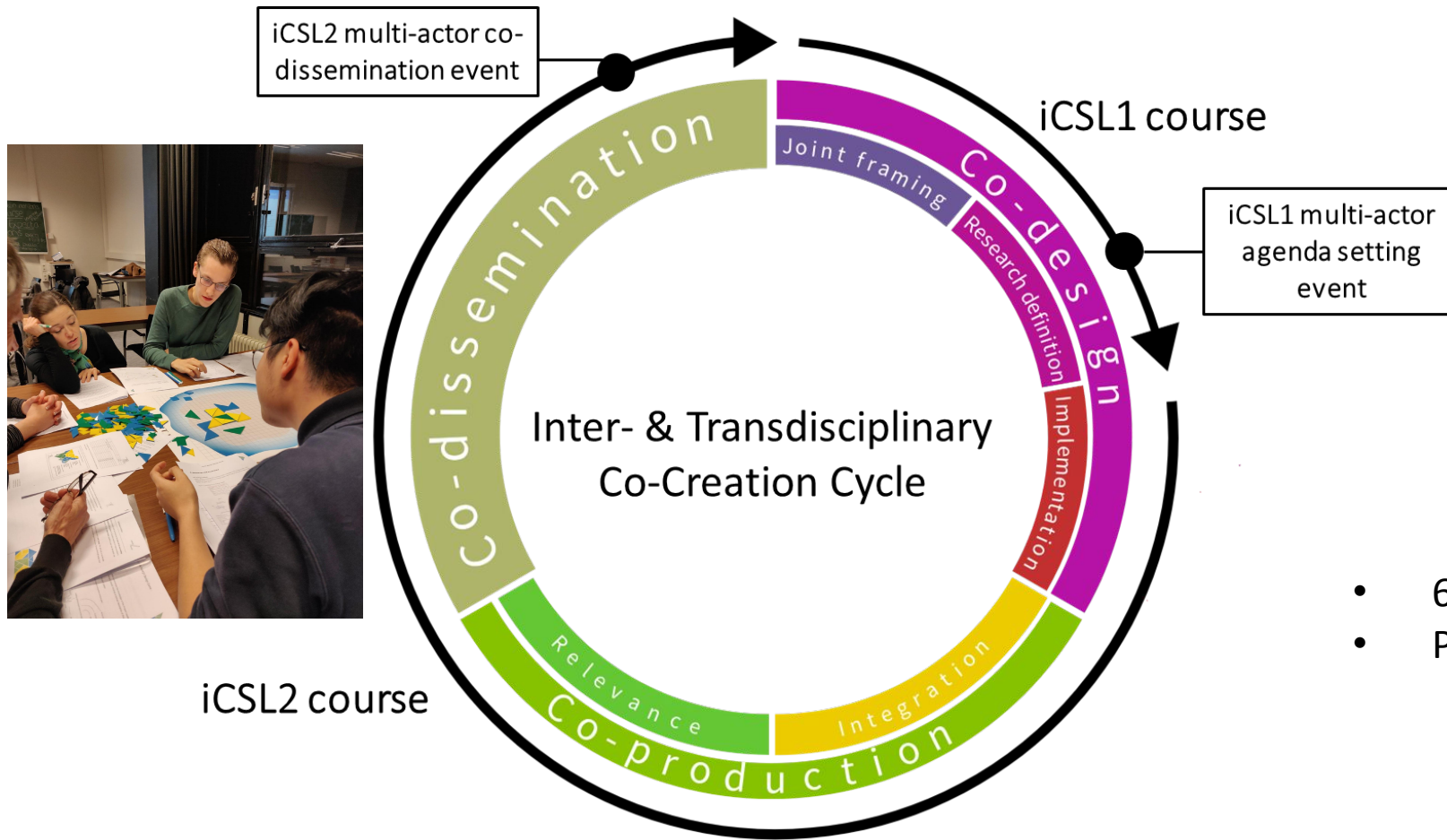
Question went to: How can we build capacity with neighborhood initiatives/cooperatives?

Consideration practice: The neighborhood cooperative to build the capacity we need finances (to hire people and expand working capital). To receive financing (the financing already exists), we need to demonstrate how we create value (in this case through building of self-organising capacity).

Consideration theory: THIS is where the research comes in, to help provide a framework to be able to demonstrate how NI/NC already do this and could continue doing this in the future (GH & Others) - thus receiving the financing.



**Interdisciplinary CSL:  
addressing challenges  
through transdisciplinary  
research, 2024**



- 6EC course
- P4-P6 (Feb-Jun)

# Community Service Learning?



GROENE HUB



ENERGIE LAB ZUIDOOST

Educational activities that contribute to issues and concerns expressed by societal actors

Community

Service

Learning

Societal actors that have an interest on, are affected by or affect an issue

**Activity** that enables students to achieve the learning requirements and **contributes** to the communities' issues and concerns

Competencies that students are expected to acquire

Contribution



Activities

Reciprocity



# How can renewable energy communities contribute to just and inclusive energy transitions?

iCSL team: Abby, Eduardo, Keye, Lise, Rosa

## Panelists

- Aman Walia (Groene Hub)
- Debora Tappi (HvA)
- Pauline Westendorp (02025)
- Johan de Jong (Weesp Duurzaam)
- Hans Hamstra (Weesp Duurzaam)

Context

**‘Een aardgasvrij Amsterdam in 2040 kost miljarden; wie betaalt dat?’**

**Energietransitie en energiearmoede:  
twee nijpende vraagstukken**

# Context

1. Renewable Energy Communities (RECs) are portrayed as solutions for more inclusive, just and equitable energy transitions [1]. This kind of (policy) narratives is being translated into instruments and subsidies to promote RECs [1,2]
2. Despite the relative potential for inclusion that they hold, REC can raise justice concerns in terms of inequities concerning access, capacity, and opportunity to engage in decision-making [3]
  - RECs: Elite's club for mainly whites, highly educated, middle class and men [3,4,5]
  - There is a risk of accentuating existing inequalities [3,6]



# Context

In places like Amsterdam Zuid-Oost, this potential often does not materialise because

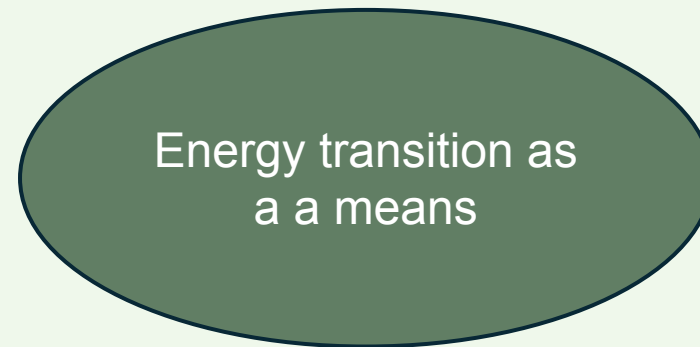
- there is lack of local champions that can pull these projects (and the skills required for that) [7]. A local champion is *“someone able to push for change and engage other citizens and promote their collaboration. Key characteristics are: Persuasive power, personal motivation and leadership skills, often in combination with technical interest and knowledge”* [7]
- There is also the low awareness and interest among designated REC actors in taking an active part in RECs [7]. This is also related to the lack of capabilities, lack of trust in institutions and government, structural inequalities, among other barriers that prevents or hinder meaningful engagement of local residents [8,9].

# How can renewable energy communities contribute to just and inclusive energy transitions?

Citizens and civil society: they care for the environment, but they don't see how the sustainability agenda (top-down) can make their lives better off. They have been already left behind, energy transition will not change that.



Policy, STI arena: energy transition is a goal, participation is needed to not leave anyone behind. Participation is hard because sustainability is not a priority to those groups => déficit model



	Public lighting	Better insulation
Comfort & well-being	Jobs	Green spaces
Reduce inequalities	Affordability	
	Creation of economic & social value	

# How can renewable energy communities contribute to just and inclusive energy transitions?

Combination of technical interest and knowledge is necessary, but not sufficient

Setting up an energy community is resource intensive (time, capital)

- Initiation phase from idea to a first energy plan: **EUR 20.000** + in kind contribution (at least **40h/week**)

*How to create the necessary capacity (knowledge, skills) where they are not a given?*

# How can renewable energy communities contribute to just and inclusive energy transitions?

## Alles over Warmte

Snel naar fase



A rough estimation based on the 5+ frontrunner projects that are currently in developmental phase:

Initiation phase from idea to a first energy plan: EUR 20.000 + in kind contribution (at least 40h/week)

Developmental phase ERU 2 million

Combination of technical interest and knowledge is necessary, but not sufficient

Setting up an energy community is resource intensive (time, capital)



## Processtappen WAM!

FASEN	0 INTENTIE	I INITIATIEF VERKENNING	II UITGANGSPUNTEN HAALBAARHEID	III DEFINITIE ONTWERP	IV UITVOERING (2 FASEN)
WIE	STUURGROEP	REGIEGROEP	REGIEGROEP	REGIEGROEP	REGIEGROEP
ACTIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intentiefase wordt overgeslagen indien een buurt in het vijfjarig-werkpakket van de City Deal is opgenomen.</li> <li>• Bij particuliere buurt-initiatieven committeert de gemeente zich aan een initiatief mits zij voldoen aan bepaalde voorwaarden. De City Deal partners worden gevraagd om deel te nemen.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Het verzamelen en in kaart brengen van de statische en dynamische informatie over de buurt.</li> <li>• Starten van participatieproces om bewoners te informeren in samenwerking met partners.</li> <li>• Bepalen of afwijkende warmte-oplossingen voor (delen van) de buurt zijn te overwegen.</li> <li>• Alle gebouw- en woning-eigenaren krijgen de kans om mee te beslissen over de te onderzoeken warmte-oplossingen.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wanneer er gegronde redenen zijn om af te wijken van de voorkeursoplossing (i.e. voldoen aan de voorwaarden): het afwegen en onderzoeken van de afwijkende warmte-oplossingen.</li> <li>• Het organiseren van een informatiebijeenkomst voor gebouw-eigenaren en bewoners om de uitkomsten te delen.</li> <li>• De projectomschrijving voor het starten van de ontwerpfasen.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voorlopig ontwerp van de voorkeursoplossing.</li> <li>• Organiseren participatie-activiteiten over aanbieder warmteleverancier.</li> <li>• Keuzemoment gebouw-eigenaren.</li> <li>• Definitief ontwerp, inclusief wenstracé en afspraken over financiën.</li> </ul>	<p><b>FASE A</b> <i>Voorbereiding uitvoering</i> Definitief ontwerp (DO), aanbesteding, BLVC-plan, vergunningen, etc., gecoördineerd door de technische coördinator van het ingenieursbureau van de gemeente Amsterdam.</p> <p><b>FASE B</b> <i>Uitvoering</i> Werkaamheden ondergrond, OR en bebouwde omgeving en beheerplannen.</p>
EINDRESULTAAT	STARTBRIEF	PRINCIPENOTA AARDGASVRIJ	PROJECTNOTA AARDGASVRIJ	INVESTERINGSNOTA AARDGASVRIJ	DIVERSEN
OVEREENKOMST	STARTBESLUIT	PRINCIPEBESLUIT	PROJECTBESLUIT	UITVOERINGS- EN KREDIETBESLUIT	REALISATIE

# How can renewable energy communities contribute to just and inclusive energy transitions?

Challenges acknowledged in literature [7]

... there are other fundamental challenges that need to be considered / addressed



Solutions that focus only on those are likely to be ineffective in the context of Amsterdam Zuidoost, because...

- *How to build trust and activate citizens to take part in this venture? Who should do that?*

# Part 2 - Exploring (a solution) questions that need answering to get to a solution



Groene Hub and  
Community  
Organisations as Energy  
Transition Pioneers

# How can pioneers contribute to just and inclusive energy transitions?

Challenges acknowledged in the literature [7]

Fundamental challenges



What kind of solutions are responsive to both layers of the iceberg? What type of work is necessary?

**Groene Hub addresses these challenges by...**

- Creating social value
- Garnering community trust
- Offering a space for community members collaborate
- Understanding the lived experiences of community members



# What do potential pioneers look like?

## “Hard” Energy Community

- Technical and economic feasibility for production and distribution of energy
- Physical infrastructure
- Legal forms



## “Soft” Energy Community

- Energy citizenship (participation)
- Energy democracy (decision making)
  - Energy justice



# Groene Hub and Social Value Creation

## Energy justice

Reduction of energy poverty

Recognition of marginalised groups

Employment/job creation

Equality in access

Active political  
citizenship

## Energy Democracy

## Social capital

Social network

Identification with  
community

Community Trust

Community  
confidence  
Social cohesion

Participatory  
governance

Change in power structures

Shared ownership

Skill development

Knowledge  
development

## Community empowerment

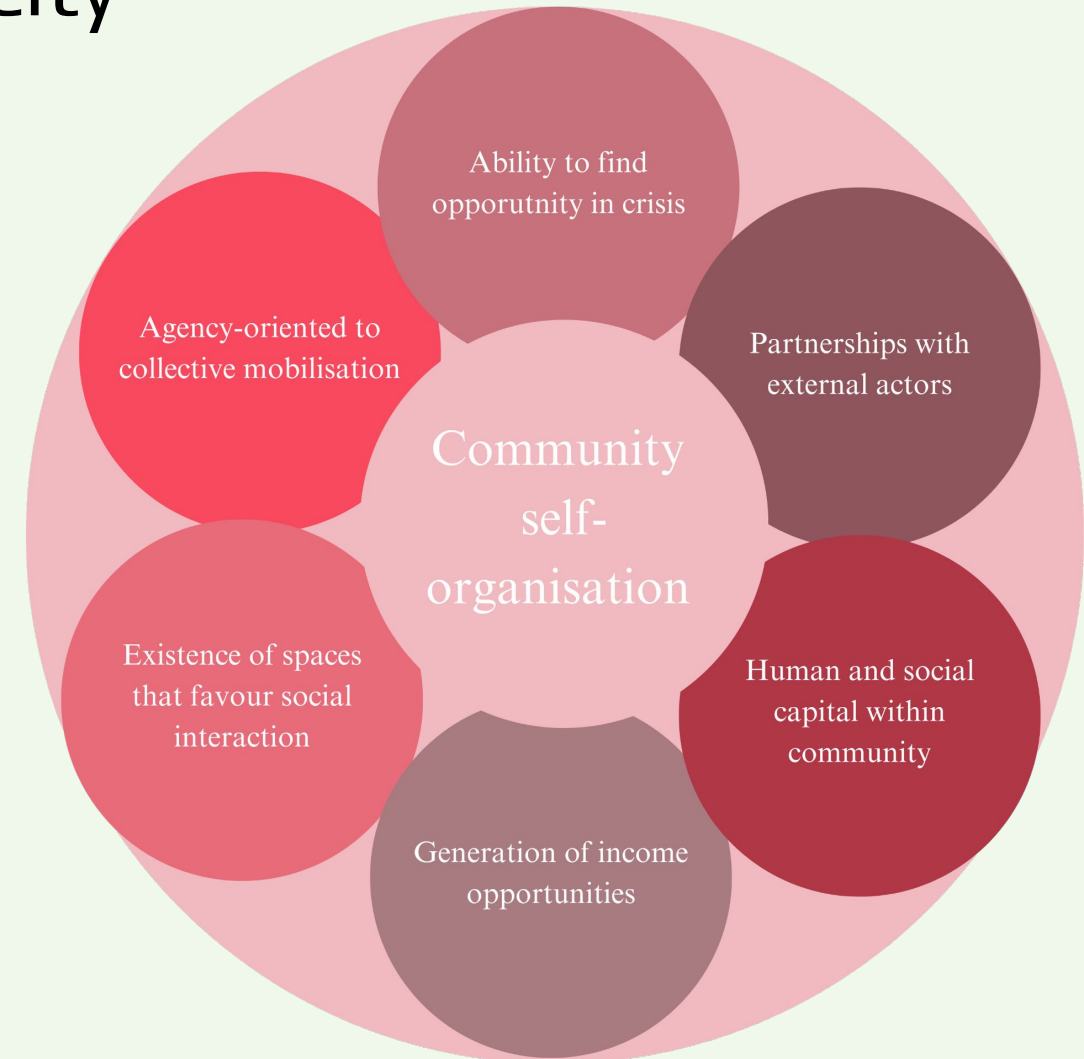
# Local social impact (Bielig et al., 2022)

**The broader social benefits that activities provide** at both individual and community levels. It encompasses **direct and indirect changes**—physical or perceptual—that create social value (Bielig et al., 2022).

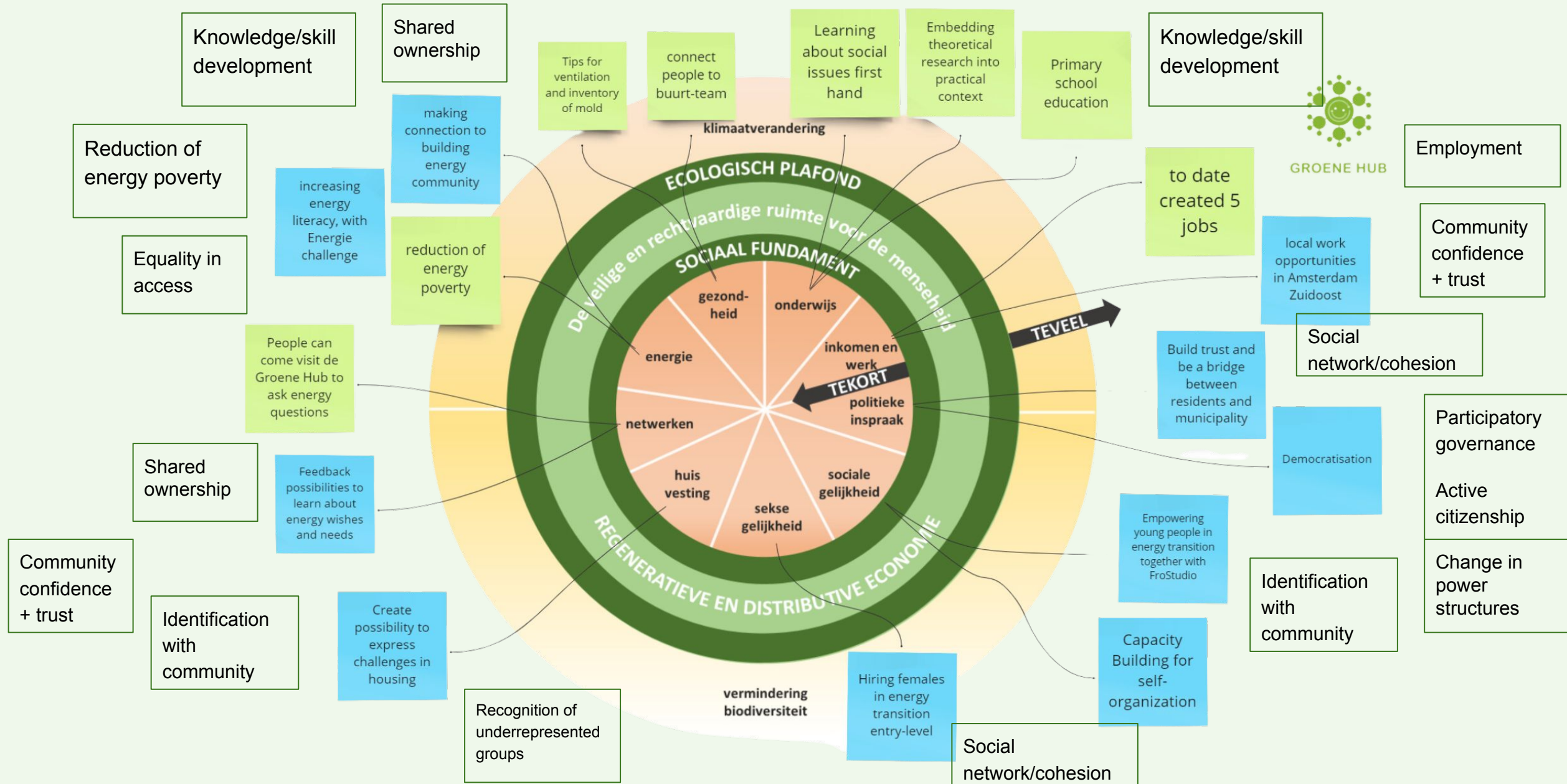
The significance of social impact **varies among different groups, individuals, or locations**, underscoring the challenge of replicating activities that lead to the same social change and impact (Vanclay, 2003).

# Methodology - connection social impact and community self-organising capacity

- Well-organised communities mobilise resources to address challenges
  - Increased social impact
- Self-organisation strengthens social bonds and resilience (Moulaert & Mehmood, 2010)
- Community self-organisation (de Moraes et al., 2023)
  - Ability to find opportunity in crisis
  - Human and social capital within community
  - Partnerships with external actors



# Connecting research to practice



# Panel question

*How is this social value created?*

*How can this value be **captured** and **reported**?*

# Results according to framework



*“It is that social element, because It's not about the energy transition, But it's about the emotional hook behind it.” (R1)*

Social bonds



Necessity of shared spaces

Community responsive  
activities

Capability creation through  
activities

Human and  
social capital  
within  
community

Identification with crises

Combats loneliness

Engagement triggers

sense of urgency for  
collective problem-solving



## Benefits



Possibility for resource and  
funding opportunities

Form mutualistic relationship

## Challenges



Standardised solutions for  
local problems

Mismatch

## Partnerships with external actors

**Problem of funding and initiation costs. + local initiatives can do it better:**

*And then every time if the subsidy stops, you lose your career and you lose your framework again. And that is actually what we say: [...] **now stop appointing external experts in the municipality at a lot of money, while we already do that work.** (). [...] That costs €150,000, and we can do a lot with that.[...]. What we need, we don't need to pay that kind of money to get each other in there. **And we do that 10 times more effectively. Yes, because in the end they probably don't succeed.**" (R3)*

# Possible municipal support for the Groene Hub

# Overcoming Barriers to Municipal Support

Initiatives need resources to build local capabilities, foster community trust, and address social inequalities.

Misaligned values

Short term funding

Inadequate measures

# Enabling Social Value Creation



# Panel question

To what extent can existing supporting schemes and frameworks be used to bridge the gaps in supporting social value creation?

What else could be necessary to enable the creation of social value?

# Panel discussion



## *Questions (practice-oriented):*

- What kind of solutions are responsive to both layers of the iceberg?
- What are the options when there are not traditional “pioneers” or “champions”

## *Questions (research-oriented):*

- How is this social value created?
- How can this value be captured and reported?

## *Checking assumptions:*

- Does our interpretation of the state of energy communities in general seem accurate in the context of Ams ZO. Are there elements/challenges/opportunities we are missing?
- How can GH and other orgs be a “pioneer” given these assumptions?

## *Recommendations:*

- What can GH and similar organizations do moving forward?
- What further research or action is needed?

# References

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