



Kids & Family

Jonge Moeder
Training (JGT)
Centra
Homes

(Mental) Health

Work

Women
experiencing
domestic
violence

Moviera

Omgangsondersteuning
Noord Veluwe
(MD Veluwe)

Steunpunt Huuselijk Geweld

Social Work

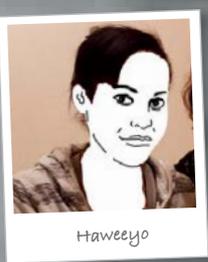
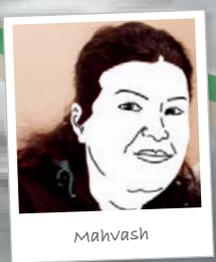
Money & Income

Courses & Training



Standing Up or Moving Forwards?

Woonbegeleiding
coöperatie)



18 stories from women
13 gaps
22 ideas to close them

short summary

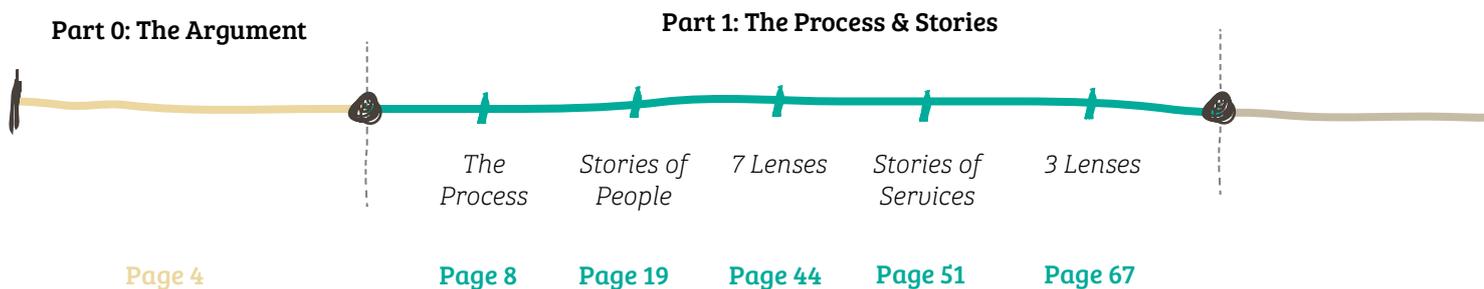
How can we support more women to stand on their own two feet? When they've just left an abusive relationship. For a shelter. That's surrounded by fences. To keep them safe? That's the question we started with, 3 months ago, as we got to know 18 women living at a domestic violence shelter in Apeldoorn. A mid-size city on the edge of the Bible Belt in the East of Holland.

But after more than 100 hours, 17 Big Macs, 10 pizzas, and more fries than we'd like to count, we're asking a different set of questions. We're questioning whether standing on your own two feet is a sufficient policy goal. Nearly all of the women we've met are still standing. Surprisingly, they haven't let the trauma or the uncertainty knock them down. And yet standing is not the same as moving forwards. Most of the women we've met remain lonely, left out, and on the margins. Despite having up to 8 services in their lives.

Working together with the women, we've come up with 20 points of change. Concrete ideas for utilizing women's natural resources. Their time, their skills, their know-how, plus all of their acquired experience. To re-orient existing shelter services and reshape social worker roles. To revise housing allocation policies and mobilize neighbors. To create new informal supports within and between families. And to change the feedback loops and commissioning processes that perpetuate the status quo.

We're looking for the bold, the courageous, the curious, and the skeptical who want to help us take these ideas from paper and into practice. Testing and tweaking and learning along the way.

Could this be you and your organization?



How to read this report

There's a lot to read here. To help you navigate your way through:



If you've only got 10 minutes, **browse the summary of our argument** on Page 4.



If you want to gain a feel for **the process**, start on page 8.



If you'd like to savor the meat of the report, head to the middle **stories** section on page 19.



If you'd like to skip to the spoiler, go to page 74 for our **analysis of the gaps**.



If you want to know what's come out of our on-the-ground work and where to next, head to the **Ideas** section on page 88.

Part 2: The Gaps

Part 3: Closing the Gaps

Part 4: Prototypes and Partners

Appendix

Closing the gaps

The Ideas

the argument

Sofia left her home. Without so much as a photograph. To escape her husband's berating and beatings. Her husband kept the house. With all the framed photographs.

Stefanie spends 4 hours a week re-living her past abuse. With her social worker, her psychologist, her creative therapist, and her domestic violence support group. "It's so irritating to always talk about the past. I want to live the future."

When **Anneke** escaped to the shelter, her husband of 44 years tried to escape with their money. She relied on the Foodbank to eat. But lost 20 kilos. "I was eating a lot of frozen foods, and feeling stressed."



Mahvash loves to cook family recipes from Iran. Persian rices with saffron and rose water. She also loves painting, sewing, collaging. She hasn't done any of that since moving to the shelter. She's got no energy. Her social workers tell her to focus on learning Dutch and finding a job. "They say arts and crafts are a hobby."

Christina and her daughter are leaving the shelter for a subsidized apartment. The apartment is far away from Christina's only friends. She worries about who will look after her daughter when she is sick.

Sofia, Stefanie, Christina, Anneke and Mahvash are 6 of the 16,000 women in Holland who leave abusive partners, parents-in-law, fathers, brothers, mothers. For the safety of a shelter. Another 285,000 people in Holland experience severe or repeated domestic violence each year.

A labyrinth of professional services is there to respond. You can call a phone number and speak to a social worker 24-hours a day. You can request that the police use their temporary restraining order powers. You can qualify for financial benefits and housing subsidies. You can ask for parenting support. You can receive a case manager. According to the University of London, out of all European countries, Holland has "been the most generous both in terms of benefits and the conditions under which individuals could claim."¹



For more stories, go to page 19



"I was eating a lot of frozen foods, and feeling stressed."

¹ <http://news.investors.com/ibd-editorials/122013-683808-netherlands-king-says-no-more-welfare-state-for-dutch.htm>

And yet, we've seen how the receipt of services does not always lead to justice, to hope, to connection, to nourishment, to doing what you love.

These are what the 20 points of change are all about.

For more ideas, go to page 88

Sparking change won't be easy.

We've met social workers, housing officers, client managers, case coordinators, and mid-level managers with a desire to help, but with confined remits. People like Wim. Who has worked as a housing officer for 10 years. His role is to make sure vulnerable groups get housed. Within 6 weeks. He's a bricks and mortar kind of guy. Building community, he tells us, is not the role of his organization. That's also what Danique told us. She's a social worker for Moviera. Her organization "deals with women's safety." "We're not here to help women have perfect lives." Where perfect means getting a house, in a community, that you want.



Part 0: The Argument

5

For more outcomes, go to page 74

So we're raising the question: Is it good enough? Is it good enough to be safe but isolated? Is it good enough to get therapy but have few opportunities? Is it good enough to have a house but no community? Is it good enough to have food but lose weight?

Often, we hear the argument that financial resources are scarce. It's better to secure the basics first: safety, shelter, sustenance. We've come to a different conclusion. Human resources are abundant. Provided they are identified, developed, and exchanged. Spending time with women in their apartments, and with social workers in their offices, we've seen a huge amount of redundant professional resources and underutilized people resources. In a policy climate on the cusp of big change. With Holland's decentralization come new remits, responsibilities, and reductions. How, then, can we not just downsize services? But upsize our resource bases?

That's why we're seeking out municipal councils, housing associations, community associations, immigration officers, benefits offices, and not-for-profits who want to explore how to develop and tap into women's resource bases. Like Mahvash's cooking. Like Anneke's programming skills, and world travel experience. Like Stefanie's motorcycle knowhow.

For more barriers, go to page 48

When we look at the barriers preventing Mahvash, Anneke, and Stefanie from using and developing their capacities, we hit some similar snags: weak social supports, little peer modeling, few opportunities to contribute, a lack of meaningful incentives, no real choice, poorly timed & dosed interventions, and an absence of information & feedback.

We think it will take more than bricks and mortar; calories; cash; therapies; and coordination of all the above to overcome these barriers. It will take facilitating neighbor-to-neighbor supports; catalyzing surprising connections between small business owners and neighbors; creating platforms for meaningful exchange; tweaking professional roles & contracts; reshaping housing & immigration practices; and measuring what really matters.

Wim and Danique are part of a broader system that narrowly constructs roles and defines professionalism by the ability to stay within the bounds. We want to be clear that our work doesn't question Wim and Danique. It questions the logic of the surrounding system. And most importantly explores what a different system logic could look like. A logic premised on enabling women in domestic violence situations to flourish, rather than to just get by. Our ambition is to find the partners and the champions to take some of the ideas you read here on paper and test them in reality.

We invite you to read the stories, join the debate, and sign-up to moving beyond all of these words to real experimentation.



the process

What you are reading is the product of 3 months of work. With 18 women and 22 service providers. Thanks to the support of the Federatie Opvang, and the openness of Moviera Apeldoorn.

The Federatie Opvang's job is to support the 36 women's shelters across Holland. And help them to adjust to an uncertain financial and policy context. Dollars are down. And the pressure is up. To get women into work and off long-term benefits.

Given the backdrop, the Federatie wanted to know how shelters could better enable women to stand on their own two feet. So they could participate in the workforce. And eventually be independent of social welfare.

Nearly all of the women at the shelter live on the margins of the current economic and political order. None of the women are working. 9 women have moved to Holland within the last 5 years.

We always start by situating our work in a particular place, and critiquing the assumptions behind the initial brief. We chose a Women's Shelter in Apeldoorn as our focal point. It's a shelter, with 20 apartments, hidden from street view. In a city of about 160,000 people. In the East of Holland and on the Edge of the Bible Belt. Where the West of Holland is known for its bigger cities, the East is known for its bigger churches. We wondered, given the nature of the social fabric in the East, if ideas like participation and independence might have a different meaning than what the dominant economic paradigm ascribes. Indeed, we wanted to get underneath the idea that a house, a job and enough money equals a good outcome for survivors of domestic violence.

Frances Piven and Richard Cloward, in their book *Regulating the poor*, argue that when it comes to social welfare policies, outcomes are most often defined in terms of the state. Not the recipients. Good social welfare policies, then, are those that reinforce work norms and perpetuate the existing economic and political order.

Nearly all of the women at the shelter live on the margins of the current economic and political order. None of the women are working. 9 women have moved to Holland within the last 5 years. If we started from their perspective and their resources - their time, know-how, and skills - what kind of social, economic, and political order might we create? How would we redefine what is good?





Our Context

We think it's a great time to poke the current paradigm. Because the dominant social, economic, and political order is already in flux:

| | From | To |
|------------------|---|--|
| Social | Domestic violence rooted in a feminist analysis of gender relations and power imbalances. | Domestic violence rooted in a professional analysis of safety and strengths. |
| Economic | Steady economic performance, high participation and generous welfare provision. | Weak economic performance, lower participation, and a rollback of welfare provision. |
| Political | Strong centralized control of social welfare. | Increasingly strong local control and joined-up neighborhood teams. |

It is all too easy to use a lot of big, abstract words to describe the changes. Words like **power and safety; participation and independence; decentralization and joined-up**. Trouble is, we all have different anchor points for these words. Mahvash's notion of independence is rooted in a Middle Eastern conception of family, whilst her social worker's notion of independence is rooted in Dutch conceptions of economic performance. So we've scoured some of the literature and government documents to try and get some sort of policy anchor for the words.



Power, Safety, Strengths

Domestic violence is the word that most obviously sets apart the population group with whom we are working. All women at the shelter have faced domestic violence. And yet the very definition of domestic violence reveals changes in how the Dutch state conceptualizes this “social problem.”

When domestic violence was first codified in policy, back in the 1980s, it was defined as: “One-sided use of physical and/or sexual force against the will of the woman by her male (ex) partner.”²

Today’s definition is gender neutral, and without anything explicit to say about women and power. “Domestic violence is as an act of violence that has been committed by a person from the family circle. It may include physical and sexual violence as well as mental violence such as threatening behavior or stalking.”

Such a definition lends itself to a descriptive check-list. Where violent acts can be identified, assessed, and managed by professionals. Albeit in a strengths-based way, meaning, “Professionals mobilize the internal strengths of clients and set them in the service of the goals and insights that they want to achieve.”³

1950s / 1960s Pathology

Domestic violence was not a recognizable public issue. It was seen as a private problem. An individual pathology.

1970s - 1980s Power

Domestic violence came into public view, thanks to the Feminist movement and the first women’s led safe houses in Amsterdam. The problem was described in terms of gender dynamics & power inequalities. A structural challenge.

Early 1990s Public Health

Domestic violence was re-cast as a mainstream, rather than gender-specific, issue. Incidences could be prevented. Perpetrators could be treated. A behavioral challenge.

Late 1990s Coordination

Domestic violence was conceptualized as a multi-disciplinary issue, perpetuated by service fragmentation and poor communication. An administrative challenge.

2000 Safety

Domestic violence was contextualized in terms of immigration and citizenship - particularly the integration of the new arrival Muslim population. Violence became seen as a security threat to individual citizens. A rights & responsibilities challenge.

2010 Strength

Domestic violence was re-conceptualized as a power issue. Not necessarily between men and women. But between “professionals” and “clients”. Professionals are to start with strengths, not weaknesses. A professional challenge.

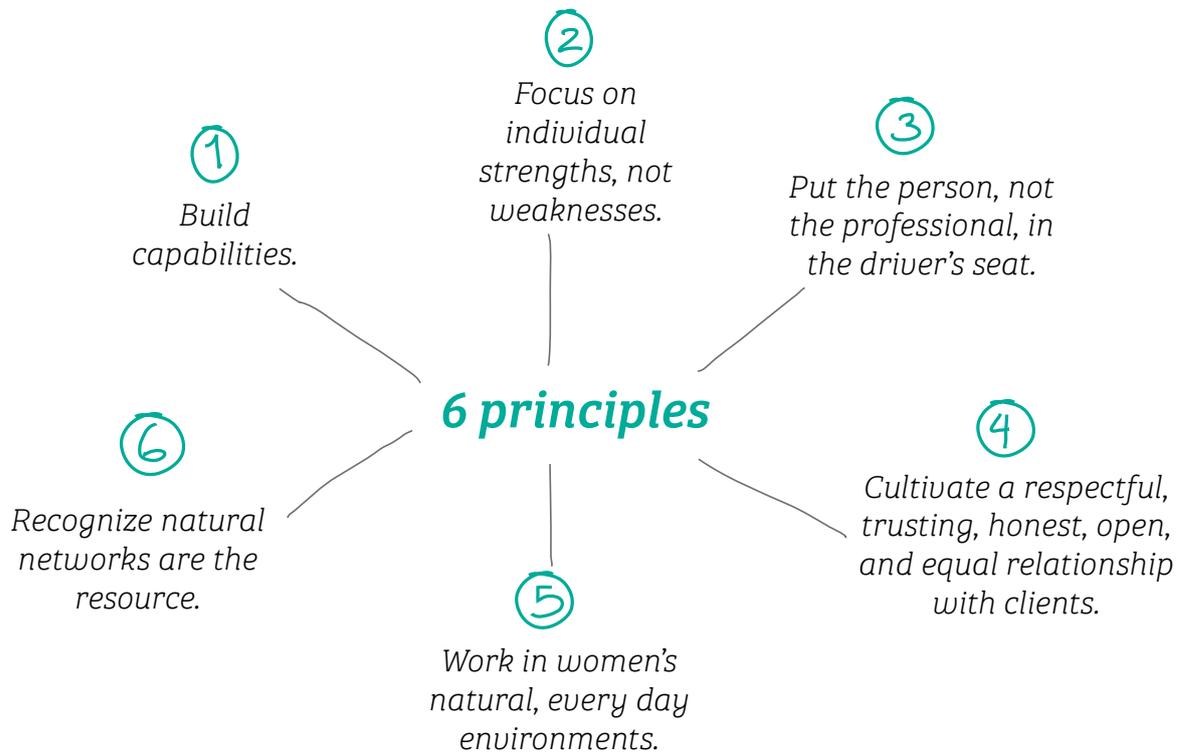
²Dutch Department of Social Affairs. (1984). *Bestrijding van seksueel geweld tegen vrouwen en meisjes [Combating sexual violence against women and girls]*. HTK 18542, nr. 2.

³http://www.opuang.nl/files/Folder_Krachtwerk_FO.pdf



In-between the power lens and the professional lens, the state has tried on a number of other domestic violence frames. Frames that we see influencing how women, professionals, and policymakers makes sense of the problem. Depending on when and where they grew-up, and their own education & training.

We've found that the strengths-based framing features prominently in professionals' vocabularies. Nearly every conversation we've had with a social worker or manager references "krachtwerk" - the Dutch word for a strengths-based approach. The idea is straightforward: build upon clients' capacities and natural networks. And yet firmly embedded in the idea are professional and client roles. Because strengths-based approaches come out of the field of social work. Which assumes social workers are part of the solution to social challenges like domestic violence. And which assumes social workers are trained professionals working 1:1 or in small groups with people who have identifiable and assessable needs. Indeed, these assumptions are reflected in the 6 principles behind krachtwerk. Published by the Federatie Opvang.





“All people who are able to will be expected to take responsibility for themselves and for the people around them.”

Social workers describe building strengths & capabilities. But strengths & capabilities to do what? Here’s

where we find a lot of the other political rhetoric co-mingling. Workers like Danique talk about capabilities to take care of kids, run a house, do paperwork, stay safe, and hold down a job. This is what King Willem Alexander spoke of when he introduced the Participation Society from the throne. In September 2013.

“All people who are able to will be expected to take responsibility for themselves and for the people around them.”⁴ He proceeded to argue, “People want to make their own choices, to arrange their own lives, and to take care of each other.” Practically, this has meant a cut in welfare provision and a growing focus on self-sufficiency. On individuals in the labor market, with income, able to look after their own friends and families. Independent from once generous benefits and state supports.

Participation, Independence

We're left wondering:
What happens when your family is estranged, when your kids have been removed, when your natural network has fallen away and been replaced with social workers, parenting support workers, client managers, and housing officers?

Decentralization, Joined-up

Not only has the Participation Society resulted in a cut in welfare provision, but also a re-distribution of resources & responsibilities. Around €10 billion worth of services will fall from central level authority to local level authority.

That’s what the Social Support Act of 2007 sets out: a shift to municipalities for home care, youth care, transport, and client supports. Supports that are ideally delivered by Social Community Teams (Sociale wijkteams). A new kind of “joined-up” administrative structure. That brings together the social workers, parenting support workers, client managers, housing officers, and all the other frontline practitioners under one roof, one budget, and one strengths-based approach.

Nico de Boer and Jos van der Lans, in their report *Burgerkracht in de wijk*, make a persuasive case for Social Community Teams.⁵ And honing in on every day citizens as the common unit of focus. And yet they also raise plenty of questions about the width of the teams, their generic versus specialist skill sets, the practical role of citizens, and where accountability lies. Is success measured in terms of the state’s wider participation and independence agenda? Or is it in terms of what citizens want?

We're left wondering:
Who sets outcomes? And, how do we intentionally test which neighborhood structures actually build informal supports and facilitate good outcomes? So that people aren't left with joined-up professionals, but few non-professionals in their lives?

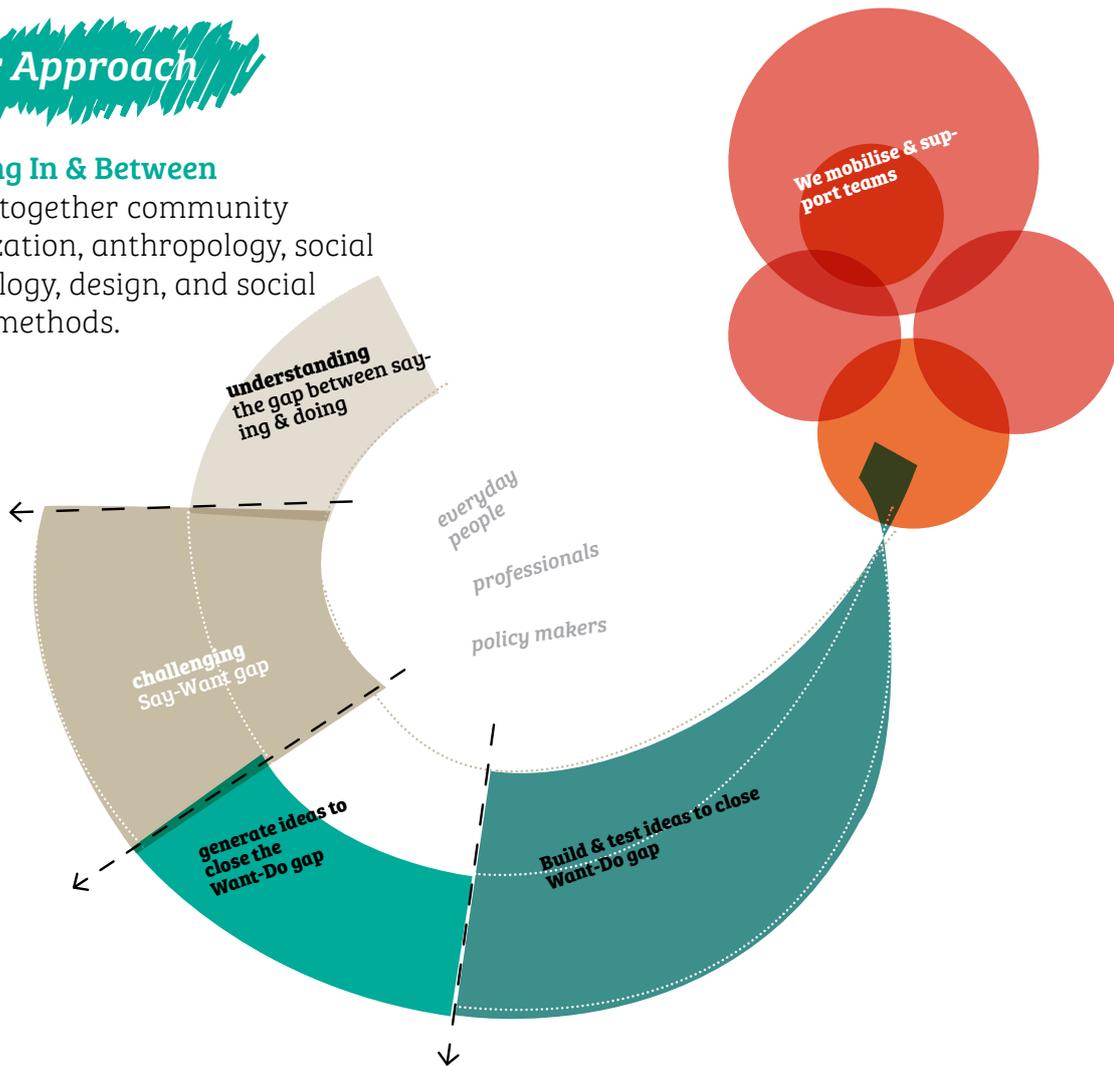
⁴<http://www.movisie.com/news/participation-society-are-women-carry-burden>

⁵<http://www.movisie.nl/publicaties/burgerkracht-wijk>

Our Approach

Working In & Between

brings together community mobilization, anthropology, social psychology, design, and social policy methods.



Our approach tries to dig beneath the big words, and the policy intent. By starting with people's everyday realities. It's an approach that's all about surfacing and closing the gaps between what people, professionals, and policymakers say, do, and want. We call the approach Working In & Between.

From community mobilization:

we take a focus on finding and engaging every day people. Particularly people living on the margins, who aren't likely to show up to an interview, participate in a focus group, or fill out a survey.

From anthropology:

we zero in on context. Because what people do, say and think cannot be separated from the language, culture, norms, and actual artifacts of their surrounding environments.

From social psychology:

we explore change. That for people to do, say, and think something different, we must shape their perceptions, motivations, goals, and resources.

From design:

we take a focus on making interactions real. In order to learn what prompts change, for whom, we must test new kinds of roles, experiences, and touchpoints. And keep iterating when things don't work.

From social policy:

we take a focus on systems and structures; politics and ethics. We see that new roles, experiences, and touchpoints cannot exist in a vacuum. They must be part of a broader philosophy and strategy.



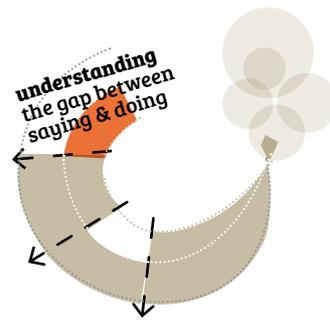
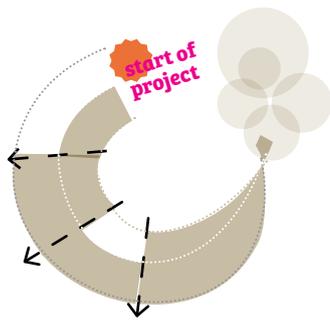
But our approach isn't simply a set of methods. It's also a set of values. About reducing outcome inequalities, and enabling many more people to flourish. Not just get by.

No doubt it all sounds a bit abstract and airy-fairy. So let's get practical. We've called this piece of work a Starter Project. Because we hope it's the start of much more. Since late November 2013, we've surfaced the every day realities of women and professionals, identified gaps, and co-developed ideas for closing those gaps. What we haven't yet done is try the ideas out in practice, revise, and try again. This is now our goal. To find partners and champions to take the work forward - from paper to **prototypes**.

3 months ago we wouldn't have predicted the ideas that emerged. You see, until we spend time with women on-the-ground, we just don't know what could be changed, and which organizations have a stake in the solutions. We think this is what 'bottom-up' truly means.

Prototypes are not pilots. In a prototype, we test ideas at a small-scale to find out what works, and rapidly iterate what doesn't work.

Have a look at what our Starter Project has looked like in pictures and captions.



Time

October 2013

November 2013

December 2013



1) We developed a proposal for the Federatie Opuang, questioned the brief, and decided on a starting place: Moviera Apeldoorn.

2) We walked the streets of Apeldoorn.

Cataloguing existing resources - from services to shops to street markets. How might a woman encounter these resources?



3) We met with social workers and managers of Moviera Apeldoorn.

To hear their perspective, and find out how they conceptualized the problem. We used a set of Problem and Opportunity cards to facilitate the conversation, with statements drawn from international literature and practice.



4) We invited women & children living in the shelter to a Sinterklaas festival: 5 booths with interactive activities. Like create your own popcorn brand and produce an animated short film. Our goal was to spark some sort of value exchange - and focus on making things rather than simply talking about things. This was our point of difference from how things are usually done.



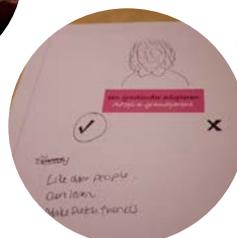
5) We introduced social workers and managers of Moviera Apeldoorn to ethnographic methods.

Using a set of flash cards, we drew out differences between case notes and stories; assessment & exploration; analysis and idea generation.



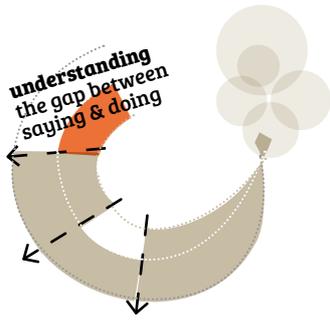
6) We had lunches and dinners with 18 women and their children.

In their homes. And used lots of visual prompting materials - along with photos from our own families - to explore women's motivations, aspirations, and day-to-day routines. We also got reactions to an incredibly early set of ideas.

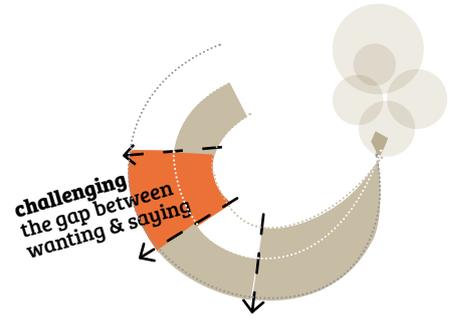


Stage in Working In & Between Approach

understanding the gap between saying & doing



challenging the gap between wanting & saying



Time

January 2014

February 2014



7) We spent the day with 7 women - going to church, to the Foodbank, grocery shopping, cooking, interacting with service providers, talking on the phone, watching TV, and sitting on the couch.



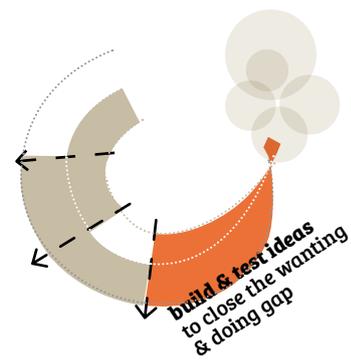
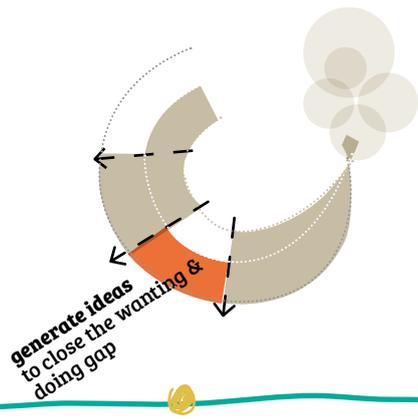
9) We transcribed our conversations, pulled out quotes, put together photo stories and returned to social workers & managers at Moviera. We asked for their reactions, and analysis. What patterns did they see?



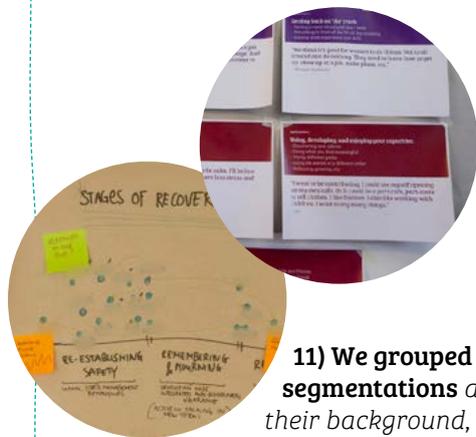
8) We met with 11 services, and talked with over 22 service providers, to get a feel for their motivations, aspirations, and day-to-day routines. We also collected touchpoints from these services - so the forms women fill out, the brochures & tools used, the case management systems, etc.



10) We wrote-up stories of the women we met. And have begun sharing back the stories to get feedback.



March 2014



11) We grouped women into segmentations according to their background, their desired outcomes, their resources, and the barriers they face. We grouped services by sector, size, role, usage, and perceived importance.



14) We're currently looking for partners & champions who want to help us prototype the emergent ideas, and figure out what really prompts change.

12) We drew out the gaps between where women are, and where they want to be. And generated 33 ideas to close the gaps, selecting 22 to showcase here.



13) We created a film and this report to tell the project story.

Our Team

We've written this report using the pronoun 'we.' We refers to our project team of 5.

We blend 5 different disciplines: sociology, social work, interaction design, community outreach, and communications. As well as different depths of experience.

We hail from 3 different cultures: American, Indonesian, and Dutch. That means we ask a lot of questions, don't take cultural conventions for granted, and draw on lots of international examples.

We come from 3 different organizations: InWithForward, Kennisland, and Moviera. InWithForward brings the Working In & Between approach, along with experience re-designing youth services, homeless services, aged care services, and family support programs in the US, Australia, and UK. Kennisland brings 10+ years of experience changing organizational cultures & professional practices here in The Netherlands. And Moviera brings in-depth understanding of domestic violence, and the service landscape in Apeldoorn.



Dr. Sarah Schulman

Sarah is the sociologist on the team, and one of the Partners of InWithForward. She loves figuring out what makes people and organizations tick. Having worked in 6 different

countries at a local and national level, Sarah brings a lot of international examples to the table. Along with a healthy dose of failure. That informs her thinking about how to prompt change within big systems.

Thijs is the coordinator on the team, and a staff member of Kennisland. He enjoys bringing stakeholders on board, and helping to craft core messages. Across different mediums. He grew up in the Netherlands,

lives in Amsterdam, with his partner and two kids. Being a father and balancing work and everything else has given him a bit of perspective on gender and family.



Thijs van Exel

Jonas and Yani are the interaction designers on the team, and the other two Partners of InWithForward. They really love making ideas visual and tangible - so they can be tested and improved. Jonas has applied design to public and private sector challenges - working in the UK and the Netherlands. Yani just finished up her Masters in Industrial Design Engineering at TU Delft, grew up in Indonesia, and has spent time in Singapore and the US.



Jonas Piet Muryani Kasdani



Carita Oosterbroek

Carita is the experienced social worker on the team. She works for Moviera Apeldoorn, and before that for Moveria

Oosterbeek. Carita likes reflecting on her own practice, and learning new tools & tricks. Right now, she's in a course to learn about the Systems Approach to therapy. When she's not reading about social work practice, she might be found hanging out with her two kids, and riding her bike.

The People

We've had the privilege of sharing Big Macs, American pizza, turkish kebabs, Surinamese curry, Persian rice, Dutch stamppot, chocolate chip cookies, apple pie, and tiramisu with 18 women and their children. All to try and step into their worlds. And see what they see.⁶



Anneke



Salima



Wabisa



Dana



Sofia



Christina



Skylia



Yessica



Saffia



Mahvash



Noa



Ivy



Stefanie



Effat



Haweeyo



Firouza



Vera



Trudie

***“In order to understand why people do what they do, we have to view the world through their eyes and understand how they make sense of things.”
Kurt Lewin***

⁶ We've changed women's names to protect their anonymity.



Live in the shelter



In transition



Left the shelter



Anneke

interfaces with:

(mental) health



Age 63, widow, painter, computer programmer, people-person.

Interfaces with: counsellor, art club, volunteer gardening.



Effat



Age 41, mom of 2 teenagers, Persian speaker, asylum seeker, children lover.

Interfaces with: social worker, mental health services, foodbank, lawyers, immigration, job services & benefits office

interfaces with:

social work food

(mental) health justice

money work immigration

interfaces with:

social work work money

courses immigration

Age 19, Somalian and a bit of Dutch speaker, asylum seeker, interested in trying everything

Interfaces with: social worker, immigration & language classes, jobs & benefits office



Haweeyo



interfaces with:

social work kids & family

money work

Age 30, mom of 3, 1 child in foster care, Amateur cook, American pop-culture guru, in new relationship

Interfaces with: social worker, Bureau Jeugdzorg (child protection), parenting services, debt manager, job services & benefits office.



Dana



Ivy

Age 26, mom of 1, Ghanian and a bit of Dutch speaker, loves fashion & hospitality.

Interfaces with: social worker, counsellor, lawyers, immigration & language classes, job & benefits office, Wisselwerk, Baptist church, sewing club, football club.

interfaces with:

social work work culture courses

immigration money justice

interfaces with:

social work work money

(mental) health justice

Age 24, pregnant, Dutch and Arabic speaker, loves interior design & shopping.

Interfaces with: social worker, midwife, lawyers, job & benefits office



Firouza



Skyla



Age 38, mom of 3 teenagers, Papiamento and Dutch speaker, loves exercise & fitness.

Interfaces with: 2 social workers, counsellor, jobs & benefits service, 2 parenting services, disability service, Jehovah Witness church, sports center.

interfaces with:

social work work culture money kids & family



Noa



Age 34, mom of 3, Dutch and Arabic speaker, loves helping people & talking

Interfaces with: social worker, jobs & benefits office.

interfaces with:

social work work money



Wabisa



Age 21, mom of 1, Arabic and a bit of Dutch speaker, likes making clothes.

Interfaces with: social worker, jobs & benefits office, immigration & language classes, lawyer, Foodbank, 2 volunteer organizations

interfaces with:

social work work money food
courses justice immigration



Mahvash



Age 37, mom of 2, Persian speaker, Asylum seeker, loves art & design.

Interfaces with: social worker, lawyers, immigration & language classes, job & benefits office, church.

interfaces with:

social work work culture courses
immigration money justice



Salima



Age 23, pregnant, Arabic and a bit of Dutch speaker, learning how to read & write.

Interfaces with: social worker, mid-wife, jobs & benefits office, immigration & language classes, lawyer, Foodbank.

interfaces with:

social work work money food
courses justice immigration

interfaces with:

social work work food
courses money justice immigration

Age 35, mom of 1, Spanish and a bit of Dutch speaker, doctor, dancer, zumba lover

Interfaces with: social worker, counsellor, foodbank, immigration & language classes, lawyers, job services & benefits office.



Christina

interfaces with:

social work justice

Age 38, mom of 3, 2 children with family guardians, Dutch speaker, wants to learn the law, in new relationship.

Interfaces with: social worker, lawyers, forensics, family guardian, care home for son.



Vera



Trudie

Age 42, mom of 2, Dutch speaker, likes helping friends & place-making.

Interfaces with: social worker, debt manager, jobs & benefits office

interfaces with:

social work work money



Stefanie



Age 19, Dutch and Persian speaker, loves fixing motorcycles & fashion.

Interfaces with: social worker, counsellor, art therapist, police, jobs & benefits office.

interfaces with:

social work work money
justice (mental) health



Yessica

Age 31, mom of 2, children in foster care, Dutch speaker, loves home decor, body art.

Interfaces with: social worker, jobs & benefits office, Bureau Jeugdzorg (child protection), drug & alcohol services

interfaces with:

social work kids & family
(mental) health work money



Sofia

Age 30, mom of 2, Afghani speaker, likes older people & caring, moved-in with parents after leaving shelter.

Interfaces with: social worker, benefits, mental health service.



interfaces with:

social work work money (mental) health



Saffia



Age 27, mom of 2, Dutch and Arabic speaker, loves cooking & hair dressing.

Interfaces with: 2 social workers, jobs & benefits office, Bureau Jeugdzorg (child protection), 2 parenting services, debt advisor, child health service.

interfaces with:

social work kids & family
money work



Live in the shelter



In transition



Left the shelter

We've selected five stories of women to share. Women with different backgrounds, perspectives, and resources around them.

Setting the scene:

The yellow roses in the corner are dead. The heat is on high. The dark red curtains are drawn. It's 6pm on a Sunday. Effat and her 14-year old daughter, Adeleh, haven't left the Shelter today. Where would they go? Everything is closed. Effat and Adeleh are a stark contrast to one another. Adeleh is bubbly and affable. Effat is quiet and withdrawn. Effat is clearly tired of telling story, recounting her past, sharing her pain. And she doesn't have to. It radiates from her narrow frame.



Four years ago, it was different. Effat lived with her husband, her son (now aged 12), Adeleh, and her parents in a shared apartment in Iran. They cooked together. They helped each other out. Then politics got in the way. Her husband, a professor, got into hot water. His life was in danger. They escaped to Holland. On asylum. And that's when things began to fall apart. Her husband wasn't the same. He was angry all the time. He yelled. He hit.



"I could not study at all because my parents were always fighting," Adeleh says. "I was always falling short of my dad's expectations. He was never proud of me." One night there was a particularly big fight. Effat had heard about Moviera from her friend. Who had also fled from Iran, only to find her marriage fall apart in Holland. She and Adeleh left that night. Her son stayed with her now ex-husband. The separation is particularly tough.

"Life is not any better yet," Effat says quietly in Persian. She can't yet communicate in Dutch. She continues, with Adeleh translating, "I cannot go to my family. That's what's hardest." Family dominates Effat's narrative. But there are no pictures. No artifacts. She could bring nothing. All she has are the memories in her head.



In Effat's words:

I WISH WE BROUGHT our family with us from Iran. That's what matters. We had to leave in a rush. There is no way to be in contact with our family there. We don't use social media or anything.

I MISS EVERYTHING about Iran. Here, after 9pm everything is closed. There is nothing to do. here, everything opens after 9pm. There are no weekends in Iran, just Friday is off. But on Fridays everybody gets together. There is community," reflects Adeleh.

A LOT OF TALKING. That's what characterizes Effat's days. She does 3 days a week to GGNet for mental health appointments and group therapy. Plus her hour each week with the social worker from the Shelter. Lately, because of stomach problems, Effat has regularly visited a doctor. She also goes to the pharmacy, and to meet with her lawyer. "Nothing seems to be solving my problems," she says.

GREAT EXPECTATIONS. "All of the services keep talking about things that I don't want to be talking about or that I cannot do," Effat says. "They just keep repeating things over and over." Like the lawyer. Who keeps asking for a piece of paper from Iran confirming she is married. But she cannot contact the authorities in Iran or the Iranian Embassy in Holland, on account of her asylum. She feels they do not understand this.

PLANS ARE A HEADACHE. That's what Effat says about all of the goal setting and planning. Thinking more than a week ahead creates a headache. "Some things are not in your power and control."

IT ADDS TOO MUCH STRESS to have to look for a house. We don't know this area. And it's quite stressful to go to new places for the first time."

YOU GET FINED when you don't do things for your benefits. I had to pay a 500 euro fine for not showing up to an appointment for my uitkering. The appointment fell on the Iranian New Year. And It was a very painful day. I just forgot the appointment. And now I am in debt."

SCHOOL AS STRUCTURE. School sets the rhythm of their lives. Adeleh gets out of bed at 6:45am and leaves by 7:45am for school. "It is better than the school I was at before because it's more international. At least there are kids from Brazil, Afghanistan, and all over. No one else from Iran though"

WEEKENDS ARE THE WORST. "Because it's very lonely here. Everyone leaves to visit their families or friends. And we have no family or friends to visit," Effat recounts. Both Effat and Adeleh get up a few later on the weekend (they share a bedroom so their schedules are linked). They watch TV. Whatever is on. MTV is Adeleh's favorite. They may visit the Aldi supermarket on Saturday.



NOTHING INTERESTS ME. I'm too tired for anything right now," Effat tells us, when we show her photos of different activities she could add to her week. "It's all too much right now." In Iran, Effat tells us she loved to read. All sorts of peoples. Here, she hasn't picked up a book. "There are no Persian books in the library."

I USED TO VOLUNTEER at my son's school, doings arts & crafts. That was nice. But that was before we came here to the shelter. Not anymore.

ONCE I HELPED A NEIGHBOR look up her new house on google maps. I am OK with computers," Effat tells us.

FAITH IS THE LAST THING THAT DIES. We are believers. We just can't find a church here with our language. That's what keeps us from going.

MOM'S COOKING IS LEKKER. I like anything she makes. She does rice and pastas with sauces. Food from home," Adeleh shares with us.

I WANT TO DEFEND PEOPLE. I can see myself as a lawyer in a courtroom. Like on TV," Adeleh says. Adeleh has never met a lawyer, but thinks its the job for her. To be a lawyer, she'll need to get into the higher level of education next year.

ONE FRIEND. There is one other woman here, at the shelter, from Iran. We knew each other before. She's the one who told me about the shelter. I go downstairs to her apartment sometimes. It's hard to engage with the other women because we don't speak the same language."

APELDOORN IS BETTER THAN A SMALL VILLAGE because if you are feeling really down, you can go out to the stores, and people mind their own business. People are not constantly talking about you or asking questions of you.

GGNET IS MY COMMUNITY right now. I go to a group about self-confidence. Many of us are in the same situations. It's good to know you are not alone.

IN A YEAR... I would like to be more satisfied with my self and having more fun. I guess my psychologist can help me to feel better. The biggest challenge are my past memories." Effat struggled to name what else could be helpful.

Setting the scene:

At first glance, it's an unlikely pairing. Stefanie is young. 19 years old. With long brown hair. Colorful bangles on her wrists. And impeccable makeup. Yessica has a more weathered look. Her blond hair is pulled back into a pony-tail, revealing black circles under her eyes and lines across her face.



There is a bottle of red wine in the corner, and 2 cups filled with a deep red liquid on the table. “That’s just juice,” Yessica is quick to tell me. The room is obscured in a good deal of smoke. From candles. And cigarettes. The stale cigarette smell mixes with the fruity smell from the air freshener Yessica has just picked up from the store. “I really like nice smelling things.”

We are in Yessica’s apartment. But it might as well be Stefanie’s. This is where Stefanie sleeps, and eats, and as she says later, cries. A lot. Stefanie and Yessica spend nearly all of their time together. They have tattoos to prove their bond. Just last week, Yessica got an ‘S’ painted on her wrist. Whilst Stefanie got a ‘Y’ painted on hers. When I ask why they get on so well, Yessica shrugs, “I don’t know. I have a big mouth and say what I think.” Stefanie steps in, “She’s like my mother. I see her as my mum.”

It’s been four weeks since Yessica’s role as mother underwent a major shift. Her two boys were removed from her care. And placed into separate foster homes. She sees them for two hours every other week. Yessica does not want to talk much about it all. Other than to say how unfair it is. That ‘they’ [the social workers] keep moving the goalposts. And that when she reached out for help, all they did was take my kids away.” The social workers describe a different chain of events. One where the physical safety of her boys was at risk, and little of their help seemed to be working.

Our presence and our questions understandably throw Yessica into high protective alert. She’s like a mama bear taking care of her young. Trying to keep us from hurting Stefanie. She texts and calls Stefanie from the other room to give her an out. But Stefanie keeps talking. Particularly about her experiences at the shelter. Because she is not sure her life is at all better now, here in Apeldoorn. She often wonders whether she should have left. Her family home. Where she suffered years of emotional, physical, and sexual abuse. At the hands of her father, and her brother. Because leaving has put her life at risk. And made her feel as if she has abandoned her mother.

Stefanie is code red. A distinction the shelter uses to indicate high safety risk. For the first few weeks at the shelter, Stefanie was advised not to leave the premises. She is anonymous. Services do not know her real name. Nor did many of the women at the



shelter. “Because I was told not to share anything about myself, women at the shelter started making up stories, talking behind my back. Every weekend, most of the women here go home to visit their parents. And I can’t.”

Stefanie’s story of abuse - at the hands of her biological family - stands in contrast to the stories of abuse of many of the other women. And yet the supports & services she receives are the same as the rest. Each week, she is prompted and prodded to talk about her past. To learn about the cycle of violence. And yet Stefanie just wants to be 19. To spend time with her boyfriend. To go to the hair salon. To ride her motorcycle. To go shopping. Robbed of her childhood, Stefanie describes being starved of her young adulthood too.

In Stefanie’s words:

IT’S SO IRRITATING. I hate it. To go to the psychologist and be asked about my past. To see my social worker [at Moviera] and be asked about my past. To go to creative therapy and draw how I’m feeling. And now to the domestic violence group [at Moviera] to talk about triggers in front of other women. That’s four hours a week of feeling crap. And coming home to cry, and feeling bad the rest of the day. I want to just talk about my future.

YOU DON’T FEEL GOOD after meeting with all of your workers. You just feel sad and think about what happened and go straight back into it all. Maybe they don’t realize that a one hour appointment can leave you feeling worse for the rest of the day.

HERE I AM JUST ANOTHER PERSON WHO NEEDS TO BE CHANGED. Everyone wants to change me. To get me to open up and deal with my past. I just want to spend time with friends. And maybe go back to school and do beauty. Or a course for caring with people.

ELISA DOES NOT HELP. That’s my social worker at Moviera. I want to do things on my own time, when I’m ready. But you aren’t allowed to just think quietly. You have to do things on their timeframe.

ART THERAPY IS BETTER than the rest of the talking, talking, talking. I made a poster with all the good features about myself. It’s on my door so I can look at it when I wake up. Yessica





interjects from across the room: “You sleep here every night! You don’t see the poster when you wake up!”

I CAN CRY FOR HOURS. But the workers are only here from 9 to 5. At least in Oosterbeek there were workers available 24-7. Here, the only person I can go to is Yessica. Most of the other women are constantly coming and going.

THE WOMEN STICK TO THEIR OWN KIND. I don’t talk to a lot of the other women here. The Moroccan women stick together, talk together. Most of the other women have kids. I want to listen to music and dance, and be a bit crazy.

SOMETIMES YOU JUST WANT A MOM around to tell you what to do, and ask you where you are going and when you will come back. Now nobody asks me.

I HAD A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP with my mom. And now I feel worried and guilty. I’ve left her with my father and my brother. She always supported me to reach my goals.

I AM NOT STABLE NOW to work or do much. The psychologist prescribed me 10mg of medication. It doesn’t do much except make me tired.

I USED TO HAVE A LIFE. I had two jobs. I was busy all the time. I worked in a daycare with kids, and at a shop selling motorcycles. I had my own motorcycle. But I’ve heard my dad sold it when he found out I left. Because I worked so hard I always had money. I could go shopping for nice things. Now I can’t do that at all.

THERE IS NOT ENOUGH money to do nice things for yourself. I would love to go to a fitness class or to the hair salon. But I can get 950 euros a month in benefits. 598 euros goes to rent. That leaves less than 300 euros a month for your phone, and food, and the train.

MY BOYFRIEND has stuck with me. Even though my brother has threatened to kill him. He has his own house about an hour from here. But I don’t want to move in with him. I want my own house first.

THIS PAST WEEKEND I was with my boyfriend at his house. It was so nice to be in a home. We stayed in the house all morning and lounged around. And then we walked his dog. Lots of people stopped to talk to us. A dog is a great way to meet people. I think you can make new friends with a dog.

I USED TO PLAY SOCCER. I was pretty good. But it’s too far to get to where they practice here in Apeldoorn. It’s like a 45 minute cycle. And the girls here are too rough.



I AM STRESSED BY being here, living in Apeldoorn, and my relationship with my family. I tried to call my mom for New Years. And my brother got a hold of my phone number and started texting me all of these threats. He said he knew where I was and he would kill me. I told the police. And they told me I needed to stop being in contact.

I COULD HELP GIRLS in my same situation. But I am not sure what I would tell them at this point. Maybe they shouldn't leave like I did? I have managed to survive. I guess I wasn't so strong four months ago. I wasn't living on my own like this.

Postscript:

Two weeks after spending the evening with Stefanie and Yessica, their close friendship ended. They had an explosive fight. About men, going out, trust. They are self-proclaimed "enemies" of each other now.



Setting the scene:

It's hard to believe that 4 years ago, Saffia didn't know how to cook. Her pantry is filled with aromatic rices, homemade pastas, dried mint, crushed chili peppers, and a box of rustic potatoes. When we first met, we brought along a Big Mac and 2 Happy Meals. Only to receive steaming hot plates of hand-rolled dolmas smothered in tomato sauce.

Over the past 4 years, Saffia has faced much more than cooking. She married the man behind the check-out stand at the local Lidl grocery store. Left her childhood home in the Netherlands. For her in-laws house in rural Turkey. Where she was treated as less than a servant: locked in the house and ordered to cook, to pray, to clean. She gave birth to two kids - Elly (age 4) and Mo (age 18 months), but was rarely allowed to be with them. One day, not long after Ramadan, she packed a suitcase and left. With her 2 children, as strangers, in tow. Back to the Netherlands. Where she found her way to a women's shelter. In Oosterbeek. Then to Apeldoorn. And now, to her own home. On the fourth floor of a six-story high rise building. In Veenendaal. Population: 63,000.

Saffia has lived in Veenendaal for all of 19 days. Move-in day is still a vividly exhausting experience. Saffia looks tired. We walk into the living room, pineapple in hand. The hardwood floors are cleanly swept. There's three brand new black leather couches. Purchased by family members for a bargain 100 euros. A TV sits in the corner. Two white Ikea shelves adorn the white walls. A sign reads: Happily Ever After.

3 hours later, the hardwood floors are covered in red and yellow marks. Bits of wrapping paper, orange peel, and uneaten apple are strewn about. Toys compete for space on the black leather couches. Little has held Elly's attention for longer than 3-minutes. She wants to be seen and heard. At all times. To be Saffia is to be in near constant demand. Night beckons. In three hours time, Saffia might have a moment for herself. But, first, she's got to scrub the floor and pick-up all the toys.





In Safa's words:

SLEEPLESS NIGHTS. "It's nice and quiet here. The kids are actually sleeping the whole night through. At the shelter, they could never sleep. They would be woken up by screaming next door, or banging on the door. I didn't realize how stressful it all was until I got here."

THE FISHBOWL. "That's what some of us called Apeldoorn. We were like the little fish. If you say something bad to your kid, then Bureau Jeugdzorg can now come after you. If your house was out of order when your maatschappelijk werker (social worker) came by, they'd come back to check if you've cleaned up."

GREEN VERSUS RED. "It was my idea to put colored paper on my door [at Apeldoorn]. There was so much gossip, and people knocking on my door. When it's green, you can knock and I'm available to chat. When it's red, I'm not. There can be so much negativity around the place."

IT WAS LIKE A HORROR MOVIE. "Oosterbeek was scary. Especially in the middle of the night. Trying to find the toilet and the light. There are all of these rumors about a woman who was killed by her husband. Some staff say it's true. Others say it is not. It doesn't help you feel relaxed."

EMMA. "The best thing about Oosterbeek was Emma. If there is one person I trust, it is her. I know I can turn my back and she won't kick me. When she listens, she is really listening. She has tears in her eyes as you tell your story. She never made me feel like I was the client and she was the professional. She felt like a friend. You could go have a cup of coffee with her. She would go out and have a cigarette with you. She puts her arm around you. The first three week in Apeldoorn [after Oosterbeek], I kept calling her. Most of the other workers except Emma build this wall around them and you have to break through. But you don't have the energy. I asked my maatschappelijk werker at Apeldoorn why she wasn't accessible. I didn't expect her to go to the movies with me. But I did expect her to be available. She told me 'I am a social worker and don't forget that.'"

€47.98 A WEEK. "Is barely enough to buy diapers and food. Maybe the maatschappelijk werkers would like to try living on that amount and see how far it goes with two kids?"

MAN WITH A VAN. "A volunteer helped move us from the shelter to our new apartment. They stopped at the front door. I did the rest."

19 DAYS & 6 NEW WORKERS. "On the second day I was here, I got a knock on the door. My new maatschappelijk werker [from Veenendaal] introduced herself. She said if I didn't like her, I would get someone else. I liked that she was so direct about that. I already feel I can trust her. I meet with her for an hour every

week.” Saffia also meets with a worker from Bureau Jeugdzorg for an hour each week; a volunteer from Home Start for an hour each week; and another maatschappelijk werker from a local parenting organization for an hour each week. All three are there to help with her children, particularly Elly’s behavior. Then there’s her client manager from Sociale Dienst, who she sees as “pushing” her into work. Plus another worker she can call about paperwork and debt.

LITTLE HELPS. “I don’t see a difference with Elly’s behavior. The organization we worked with before in Apeldoorn was helpful - more friendly and calming. But they don’t work in this area. To be honest, all the help is just too much. During the week, there is appointment after appointment, then the kids have a nap, then there’s another appointment, and in-between I have to do the shopping and the cleaning and everything else. It’s breaking me. Some times I feel like not opening the door.”

IT’S REPETITIVE. “I am ready to move on. If I could, I would rather my mother and my old friends come and help. Rather than services. My mother works during the week. I live too far away from my old friends.”

IT CAN BE LONELY. “Being alone with two children. We stick to ourselves.

I don’t want to get involved in all the politics and gossip out there.” Being alone with two children is no easy task. After three hours with Saffia, you feel the challenge of trying to keep two incredibly active kids occupied. Without any other means except yourself, some toys, and a TV.



ON WEEKENDS. “The only time we have for peace and quiet is on the weekend. My mother and her friend might come by. Or we go outside and feed the ducks. Or the playground near the station.

We don’t go to the playground in front of the apartment. There is too much gossip. If you are a single woman, from a cultural background, people here are constantly talking about you. Who is coming over? I try and avoid all of it.”

NIGHT OUT. “I’d go back to Apeldoorn. To the Turkish Disco. First, I’d get dressed up. And I would meet the nice owner and waiter that worked there.”

IF I COULD, I WOULD. “Have a relationship with my father. He refuses to acknowledge me. I broke the family’s honor - first by marrying someone who



he didn't approve of and then by coming back. Maybe there is a possibility in the future."

ONE DAY I WILL work as a hairstylist. I started the course many years ago. It's expensive to finish. I need the time. And care for the kids. It's not something I can think about now. Maybe when Mo is a bit older.

I'M INTERESTED IN giving a Koran class. With my own way of looking at things. Saffia also talks to us about trying dancing, knitting, playing the Turkish guitar, fashion design, a team sport. But there is no time, now. Too many appointments. And what would she do about the kids?

GOOD LIVING IS having a calm & relaxed house, time to look out for myself, having new friends, belonging to a group where we have similar interests, not being judged, standing my own ground, having a job with variation. If every day is the same, it is so boring.

Setting the scene:

It is the first apartment we've walked into that feels a bit like home. The wall behind the couch is covered in photos. Not old photos memorializing better times. But new photos celebrating current times. For so many of the women we've met, life has stood still since they arrived at the shelter. They came with no personal artifacts, and they will leave with no personal artifacts. Not for Dana She has a good group of girlfriends. She has a new

boyfriend. Adrie. And plenty of fresh memories. Of road trips with her two boys in her boyfriend's truck. Of going to amusement parks. And visiting her daughter, age 11, who lives with foster care parents.



Dana can only talk to her daughter every Wednesday, and see her once a month on Saturday. Her daughter isn't much of a talker. I watch as Dana tries calling 1, 2, 3 times. The line is busy.

Dana avidly watches the second-hand on the clock. Wondering if she'll miss this week's opportunity to be in touch. She's competing with her ex-husband. They have the same once-a-week time slot.

It's been like this for two years. After her daughter's ADHD worsened. She would climb out of the window in the middle of the night. And run away. Dana didn't know what to do. Foster care was supposed to be a temporary solution. But her daughter stopped running away. And Bureau Jeugdzorg kept adding months to the placement. Now, Dana isn't sure she'll ever get her daughter back. She feels misled and in the dark.

Dana's life certainly hasn't stood still for the past two years. She realized she had 'checked out' of parenting. Because of her 'emotionally abusive' relationship. Her ex-husband's constant berating and lying had left her "depressed" and unable to do much beside "watch TV and read books I could get lost in." Dana has two boys that need a lot of her attention. Her (now) 7-year old and her 4-year old also experience the effects of ADHD. Her oldest has a growth deficiency. He cannot eat gluten.

"I'm learning how to best respond to the boys," Dana tells me. Jos, a worker from Leger de Heils, drops by for an hour every other week to offer advice and guidance. Dana likes him a lot more than her former worker, who she found



Dana

to be judgmental and unhelpful. This week, Jos has brought along a big box. With fancy apple cider, and pesto, and crackers, and gourmet popcorn. It's an extra hamper from the employee Christmas event. Because he knows Dana likes to cook. They chat about the week. And the apartment Dana has just been offered from Moviera.

Dana is upset that it's an apartment, in a high-rise building, with only 2 bedrooms and a garden. But she acknowledges she has no other options. Jos asks about the logistics of moving. Dana recounts the conversation she has had with her worker at Moviera, Kelly. There is some confusion. Jos says, "This is where it gets tricky with who does what. I am here around parenting, but moving obviously effects the kids." After thirty minutes of talking, Jos recognizes he can do little more to help. "Why don't we go outside with the boys for a bit?" Jos sees his role as prompting Dana to do things she might not otherwise do. They bundle up and walk downstairs to the playground. Dana and Jos talk in the corner. Whilst the boys play on the slide.



Thirty minutes later, Jos has left and Dana and the boys have returned to their apartment to make stamppot. The potatoes are boiling. The onions are sizzling in butter. With a little gluten-free soy sauce. It's 5pm. Dinner is always around 5:30pm. During dinner, they crowd around the TV mounted to the wall. And watch train videos on YouTube. Her sons are enamored by trains. And extreme weather. After dinner, they pull books from the shelf with pictures of tornados and hurricanes. They've got a

big cardboard box filled with automobiles, trains, busses, and various toys. Bedtime is always around 7pm.

That leaves Dana with exactly one hour with her boyfriend. Before he must leave the shelter. At 8pm. He has spent the day with them - going shopping, picking the oldest son up from the special montessori school, peeling potatoes, and joking with Dana. They have a playful dynamic. Constantly teasing each other. There is a lot of rolled eyes, laughing, and smiling. And some moments of seriousness.

Adrie has spent an hour reading the brochure for the new school they will have to enroll the oldest son in, when Dana moves to the new apartment. That will be 4 schools and 4 houses in 8 months. From the home she shared with her ex-husband to Oosterbeek to Apeldoorn to Apeldoorn North. Dana



needs everything to set-up a new home. Floors, paint, furniture, kitchen appliances. It's a lot to think about. With one clear upside: Adrie can finally spend the night.

In Dana's words:

A LOT OF TALKING. That's what the first few weeks at Oosterbeek and Apeldoorn are about. They ask you everything. About your situation, and what you want. They try to get you to make all of these goals about your house, and money, and the kids. But then they don't help you that much. You do it yourself. But the goals are often for them.

GET OUT OF JAIL CARD. That's how it feels when you get out of the shelter for the weekend. I am very appreciative of the help I get, but I really don't like it here. It's so small with two boys. And there are so many rules. I got in trouble over the summer for having a kids pool in the playground. But, where else could I put it? When the gate shuts behind you, you can really feel you are in some sort of women's jail.

THEY LOOK AT YOU. The neighbors around the shelter. When I walk out the door, people give you a knowing glance. I don't want people to feel pity for me. It would be much better to feel part of this community, rather than hidden from view.

WOMEN COME AND GO from here. You don't get introduced to women that move here, or to the area when you first arrive. There's very little that happens here. Lots of gossip, though, and shaky friendships. I thought I was close friends with one of the women her, but last week she told me she couldn't be friends with me anymore. I miss her. We shared everything with each other.

HIM AGAINST ME. My ex-husband keeps on lying. He tells the judge I am the one who has hurt the kids by leaving. I put my own interests ahead of the kids. I hope the judge will help us to solve some of these problems. And see that he is hurting. And that I left in order to put my kids interests first.

I'D BE A LAWYER. Because I want to know everything. My lawyer is very expensive. And I don't understand everything that happens. It would be good to be an insider.

RECONNECTION. A few ways after I left my husband, I posted my new status on Facebook. Adrie was somebody I had dated many years back.



Before my husband. He was in shock about what happened. We talked for two weeks before seeing each other. And it just has gone so well. He loves my kids. And they love him. I'm really not sure I would have gotten through these past 8 months as well without him.

BROKEN CONNECTIONS. My dad will not accept that I left my husband. He assumes I was having an affair. He refuses to talk with me. He still sees my ex-husband, and my kids when they are with him. But he won't see me. My parents are divorced, and my mom is very accepting. I very much hope my dad will come around. It's difficult.

NOT SO FAST. Adrie has asked me to marry him. But not yet. I want my own home, and to settle my financial debts first. In two years, I hope things are much clearer. Then, perhaps we can consider marriage. I was in a bad relationship for ten years. I don't want to move too quickly. I've got to do things on my own too.

FINANCIAL RUIN. I had a financial advisor who ruined my life. I went way into debt. I went in to the program 8000 in debt, and came out with 23000 in debt. Every week, I sent the bills to them. Now, I have a court-appointed debt manager. If I do everything they say, they will wipe my slate clean in two years. But I am not in control. I hope they will approve me taking out a small loan from the Gemeente to cover my moving costs. Otherwise I don't know what I will do.



MOM FIRST. I see myself as a mom first and foremost. I don't think a full-time job will be for me. I'd like to start my own business so it can be on my timeframe. Adrie and I have talked about starting our own trucking business. We'd need significant capital to buy the truck. So that would have to be in the future.

I AM STRESSED BY needing to prove that I am a good mom, not a bad mom. And by having to set and achieve other people's goals, not mine. Like getting a full-time job. And taking a house I may not want. And dealing with the courts. And the debt manager. Money is very tight.

I'LL TAKE IT BECAUSE I HAVE TO. The apartment we were offered [from Moviera] has two bedrooms. It's on the fourth floor. Not what I wanted for two boys with ADHD. I wanted a garden where they could play on their own. And a community feel. That's not this place.

9 MOVES IN 10 YEARS. I'm tired of the constant transitions. And this next move will not be home either. I will keep looking for a house. Moving is always very expensive. And I don't have any furniture or kitchen appliances right now. I need to buy most things.

STITCHING AWAY. I have too many things going on in my head at night. So I started searching for distractions. My dad did embroidery for years. He made pillowcases and all sorts of things. So I'm now doing the same. I'm making a pillowcase with the actor from *Breaking Dawn*.

A GOOD FUTURE is one with my kids, with Adrie, and with my friends. It's being in a community a bit like that American show *Extreme Makeover* - where all of the neighbors pull together and help each other out. I would like to have that feel. That sense you are part of it all. Not separate. And I would love to have this trucking business. To run the financial side of it. And have the freedom to sometimes go along on trips.

IF I COULD I WOULD take a number of different courses. Like Rosetta Stone for English. And I would study financial accounting for the trucking business. But it's all too expensive to do.

OLD FRIENDS ARE THE BEST. I really rely and trust my old friends. Because my life right now is not how it is supposed to be. They understand that. If I try and make new friends, all they will hear is the shit in my life. And that's not fair to them.

ADOPT-A-GRANDPARENT is a great idea, especially for families who are strained or where there aren't grandparents. I really love older people. I used to work in aged care. We always hit it off. If we had adopted grandparents, we would go play games, take walks, visit animals. It could be very good for the kids.

I WOULD GIVE ANYTHING to travel across the United States. I want to stay in motels. And eat pancakes and steak and macaroni in cheese at roadside diners. I want my kids to experience this too. I've always just loved the United States: the TV, the films, the culture. I've never felt like I belonged in Holland. Since I was a little girl, I've felt this connection, this sense I have an American spirit. One day, I will be there.

WE CAN'T ALWAYS GET WHAT WE WANT. In this lifetime. Maybe the next?" Says Dana's social worker. After hearing her American dream. And discussing the cost. "Maybe you can take a trip to France or Luxembourg" he suggests. "I've been there. It's not at all America," Dana replies her shoulders slumped down and her head hanging a bit lower.



Setting the scene:

The signature at the bottom reads Anneke. The canvas erupts in bright red and orange swirls. "It's a new style of painting," the real live Anneke says. "I used to do landscapes." She points to staid scenes in blue and grey, hanging nearby. The change in style isn't an aesthetic choice. Nearly 18 months ago, Anneke left her husband of 44 years. In the middle of the night. Terrified he could kill her. His drinking had gone from bad to much worse. Leaving Anneke isolated, with few friends or neighbors willing to drop by.

Anneke was used to anything but an isolated life. She grew up in Australia. Lived in Switzerland. Traveled to the United States. On business. As an ICT Professional for companies like IBM in the days when computers were far from ubiquitous. "I've always liked computers, but I like people better!"



In 2005, she and her husband retired. And travelled Europe by camper van. "When I was working, I was meeting so many people, and your colleagues are like your surrogate family. I hadn't realized his drinking was so bad." By 2011, Anneke was ready to leave. She returned from a visit to an old elementary school friend in Australia, and began surreptitiously packing. Worried he would find out. Anneke reached out to her neighborhood policewoman, and to a social worker from the Council. They offered a good listening ear. But couldn't help her to make the decisive act.

One late night in August, Anneke acted. The next day, Anneke was at Oosterbeek, for five weeks of "analysis." Anneke wasn't always sure what they were analyzing. On September 19, Anneke was moved to her own unit at the Apeldoorn shelter. On April 4, she had the keys to an apartment in town, reserved for people 55 and older. On July 6, Anneke's husband passed away. From the drinking. Within days, Anneke had to decide whether to move back into their home. Finally, she didn't have much choice. Except it didn't really feel like home. The classical music CDs were still organized by composer, just the way her husband left them. Anneke's collection of World War II books still sat on the shelf. So much was the same. But everything was different.



Anneke is now cleaning out the front bedroom of the house. She hopes to take in a renter. The cleaning and organizing is keeping her busy. So too is an art club, going to the library, gardening, volunteering, and looking for a job. Anneke desperately wants to use her skills, and develop new ones. Plus, she could really use the money. Anneke finds not having money a barrier to many things - taking zumba classes, going out with new friends for dinner, traveling. But at age 63, Anneke isn't finding it easy to even get an interview. "I tell everyone I meet I'm looking for work. But so far nothing has come through."

It's clear Anneke loves meeting people and having company. She's set the table for our arrival. Wine goblets, plates, napkins. Although money is tight, Anneke has bought red wine and a fresh apple cake for us. There's a new bottle of sparkling water in the fridge. We talk for four hours. It's nearing 10:30pm when we leave. Anneke would still love to be talking. And so would we.

In Anneke's words:

IN THE LEAD-UP. "I wanted somebody to be with me when I told my husband I was leaving. The few friends we had stopped coming over. We weren't popular in the neighborhood. So I asked the social worker [from the council] and the policewoman if they could be with me. Both said it wasn't their role. I could call them once I left."

THE NIGHT I left my husband it was near midnight. I had been planning for months. I was so worried that if he found me, he would have killed me. I lowered my belongings out of the window. I'd been packing my car for a few days before - with all of my computers, my clothing, a basic radio. I had gone to the police station earlier in the day to ask if I could park my car in their lot, and sleep there. My appointment to check-in to the shelter at Moviera was the next morning. But then the police told me I couldn't stay in my car. So when I left my house that night, I just started driving. Funnily enough, a few hours later, the police stopped me. Saying I was driving too slow!

I was **GLAD TO GET OUT** of Oosterbeek. Even though I was used to adapting. When my family moved to Australia, we were housed in a camp. There would be fights between kids, just like there would be fights between women there. At the shelter, the strategy is that the women should be self-sufficient. Except that women are grouped together who just have different values and approaches, and women end up falling back into their same patterns of co-dependency.

CANNOT GO BACK. Once you've left Oosterbeek, you're not even allowed to visit. I know they need clothing and kids toys so sometimes I come by and drop a box off with the receptionist.



VERY, VERY DEPRESSING. That's how I would describe [the shelter] in Apeldoorn. It's a very, very lonely place to live. God, I don't know how we all managed. There is no daylight. The windows are darkened. It was ridiculous, the space. I told the social worker how depressing it was, and she said they couldn't do anything. There was also a lot less interaction between the women at Apeldoorn. Except for the mandatory meetings where they laid down the rules, which was a good thing.

PAPERWORK KEEPS YOU BUSY. At Apeldoorn, I was busy all day. On the internet, tracking my finances, trying to see if my husband was taking money from our joint account. Then trying to get the doctor to declare him unfit, which they wouldn't do. I went to GGNet, to Sociale Dienst, to the bank. Lots of appointments. To keep myself sane, I had to get out and go for a walk. I was fortunate in that I had brought a radio and some of my music CDs with me too. Thankfully, I had some friends I could go and visit outside of Apeldoorn. If I didn't, I'm not sure I would have survived it.

HELPING OUT. I also tried to help some of the other women at Apeldoorn. One time I went on the train with one of the women to her immigration appointment. It was in that prison near Schipol Airport, which was very creepy. That's not something you should let a woman face on her own. And it's not something the social workers can do because of their funding and tight schedules.

ONCE, JUST ONCE. Some of the women and the children [in the shelter] went out for the day. One of the guys from the technical service department of Moviera, and his mates, took us out in their four wheel drives to the forest. It was a one-off, special thing. Very nice. Then we had to go back to our prisons.

FROZEN FOODS AND NO SCALES. I went down from 80kgs to 65 kgs whilst living at the shelter. There are no scales in your room, no way of checking your health or your weight, which is actually a good way of getting a handle on how worried or stressed you are. I also wasn't eating properly. The food you get at the Voedselbank is pre-packaged frozen foods a lot of the time. Not a lot of fresh vegetables or fruits. When you're down, eating well is even more important, I think.



MORE ART THERAPY. I had four sessions with the art therapist in Apeldoorn. It works wonders. Within thirty minutes of working with clay, you are unleashing a lot of very deep, confronting, powerful memories. It's so much more efficient and direct than talk therapy. And it works not just for people who are artsy, like me, but really tough women. Of course, you need somebody well trained to be leading it. I would be up for taking some training in the future



EVELYN was great. I was very fortunate to have a social worker at the shelter that I liked. She helped keep my spirits up. In the 1:1 sessions, they try to give you more self-esteem. Of course, I was self-sufficient already. We met for an hour or so every week. The rest of the time you're on your own. And the weekends were much worse than the week days. The shops are shut on Sunday. It's incredibly lonely and quiet.

MAKING FRIENDS is not so easy. In October, friends told me they no longer wanted to be friends. It really took me by surprise. It hurt. Most of my friends live outside of Apeldoorn. A few weeks ago I met two women while volunteering that are my age, and we seem to have similar interests. I hope it will be a slow progression into becoming friends.

I KEEP ON applying for jobs. But I am constantly turned down. Even for my old job as a software tester. But because I don't receive 'uitkering', I am not counted in the unemployment statistics. It's an old trick to keep their numbers down. I don't get any help looking for a job. And actually it's not the looking I need help with. I think I'm not getting work because of my age. I would go into something new, like caring. But these days you have to pay for the courses to get the certificates. And that is money I don't have.

IT HITS YOU LATER. When somebody dies there is so much to deal with. In the aftermath, a few months later, stuff hits you. You were so busy before, now you start to feel rocky. I couldn't afford therapy, but there is now a counsellor through my GP. I asked for an appointment. We've only had one session so far, but she's great, I really felt she knew what she was talking about. She makes statements that shows she grasps your situation. She told me not to go into a guilt trip.

EMAILING THE DEAD. I sent my husband an email the other day, saying I missed him, and I'm sorry everything happened the way it did. Then the next morning, I thought about it, and I wasn't sorry. So I wrote him another email that started, On the other hand. It was a way to release what I was feeling.

I DROP EVERYTHING when a friend calls on the phone. Sometimes I don't eat dinner until 11pm, if I'm on the phone. It can get so lonely here."

I AM STRESSED BY money, the cost of getting around, my savings, and the fact I'm not working. I have too much time for myself. I long to see friends in other countries, to date somebody, and to be part of the community more.



I'M FEELING GOOD ABOUT setting and achieving goals, learning new skills, and having faith. I'm a more spiritual person these days. I believe in different kinds of energy.

I WANT to lead my life, my way. To get up at 3am, if I choose, and work on my computer and on my art and hobbies. But I also would like a partner, again. I don't like living alone. I want to extend the network of people around me. And I want to work. I'm open for just about anything. Caring work, clerical work, retail work, even cleaning work. Anything. I would join a sports team or zumba, if it weren't so expensive. And I want to keep learning. There is plenty of stuff I had to un-learn. About myself, and my reactions. You think you deal with all of your issues and hang-ups, and you just keep peeling back another layer of my onion.

7 Lenses

No one story is exactly the same.

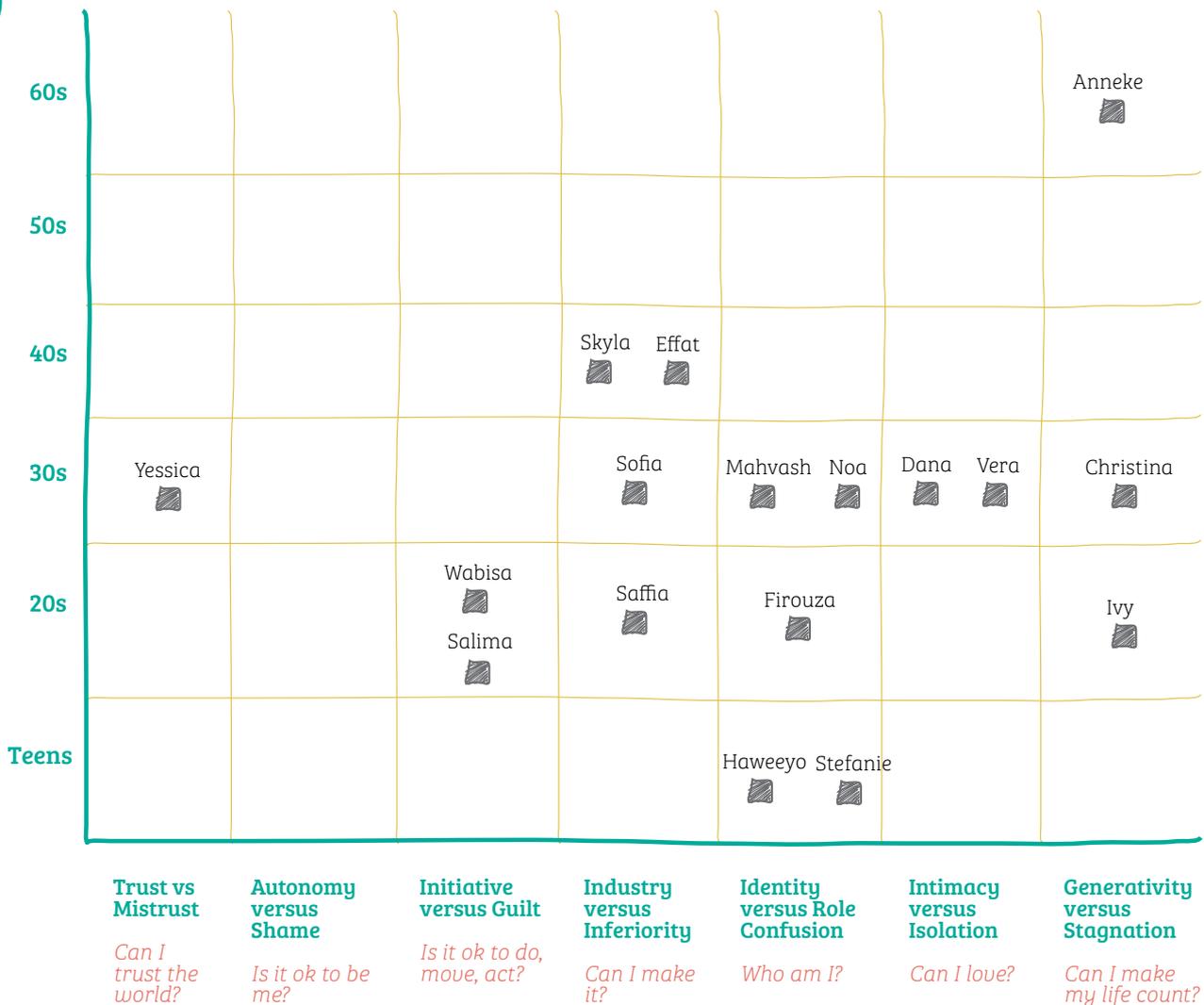
And yet Effat, Stefanie, Yessica, Saffia, Dana, Anneke and the 12 other women we've met are all too often lumped together into the same undifferentiated category: vulnerable client. It's a category that's defined from the service system's perspective. Not from the women's perspective. Of course not all categories are useless. If they are flexible - and can help us compare and contrast situations; identify what

seems to be helping and hindering certain women; and formulate grounded hunches & concrete ideas for what might attract, engage and prompt change for whom. We call these kind of categories, segmentations. **We've tried segmenting women according to their backgrounds, experiences, aspirations, resources, and barriers. Because we think these grouping tells us something important about the kinds of interventions that might work.**

By background

The 18 women we've spent time with range in age from 19 to 63. The numbers perhaps tell us less than their developmental stage. Here, we're drawing on and adapting Erik Erikson's work. What characterizes a developmental stage is a crisis. Between two competing forces.

Part 1: The Process
44





Stefanie and Haweeyo (age 19) are exploring their identity and their roles, for the first time, and without any familial safety net. Both survived abusive fathers. **They're asking: who am I and what can I be?**

Effat (age 41) is consumed by self-doubt, wobbling between feeling industrious and inferior. **She's asking: Can I actually make it in this world?**

Dana (age 30) and Vera (age 37) appear to be negotiating between intimacy and isolation, having left abusive ex-partners and entering into new relationships. **They're asking: what's it look like to love self and others?**

Anneke (age 63) seems to be teetering between generativity and stagnation, trying to reinvent herself after the loss of her long-term partner and a whole way of life. **She's asking: How can I make life matter?**

10 of the women we've met immigrated to Holland - from Afghanistan, Columbia, Curacao, Iran, Iraq, Ghana, Morocco, Somalia, and Turkey. These women have lived in Holland from between 1 to 10 years, and have varying levels of Dutch proficiency. We can group women by their 'official' Dutch language status - whether they've passed the required exams - or by how well they can make themselves understood. Time in Holland turns out to be a poor proxy for speaking Dutch.

Dutch Proficiency



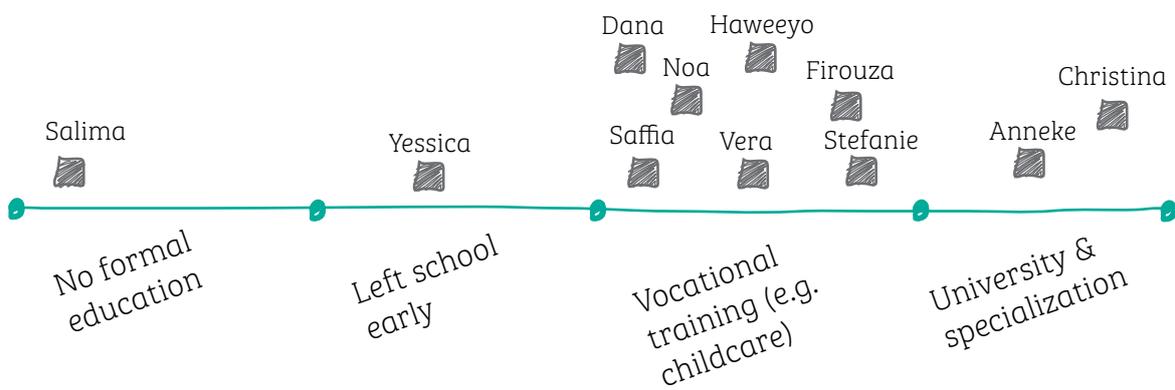
Women like Sofia describe the shame and stigma of not speaking the language. She's been here over 10 years, and sees learning Dutch as a lost cause. She's no longer eligible for subsidized language courses.

By experiences

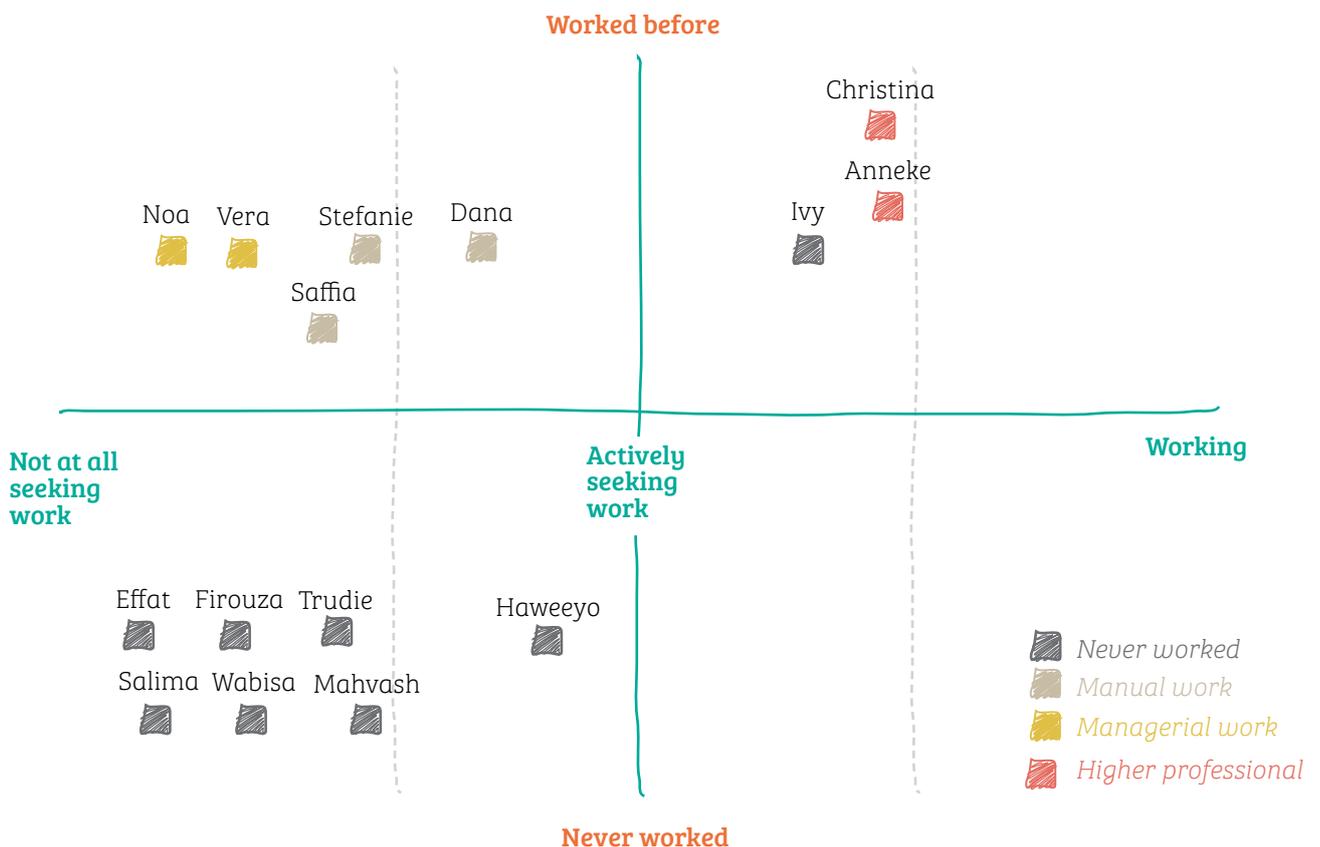
Not surprisingly, the 18 women we've met span the full spectrum of education levels and work experience. About half of the women have never held a job outside the house. Whilst 4 of the women have held professional & managerial roles. Those women without any prior exposure to the job market express the least amount of

interest in paid work. Only those women who conceptualize work as part of their core identity are actively seeking employment. And none of the women, at the time of our conversations, were in paid work. Only two women held volunteer positions - and these were women who had left the shelter over a year ago.

Education Level



Work experience and seeking for work





By aspirations

“A calm house.”

“Having real friends and not being so lonely”

“Going on long walks in the forest.”

“Being me, and sitting behind my PC at 3am if I want to.”

“Doing something fulfilling during the day.”

“Standing my ground and sorting my own shit out.”

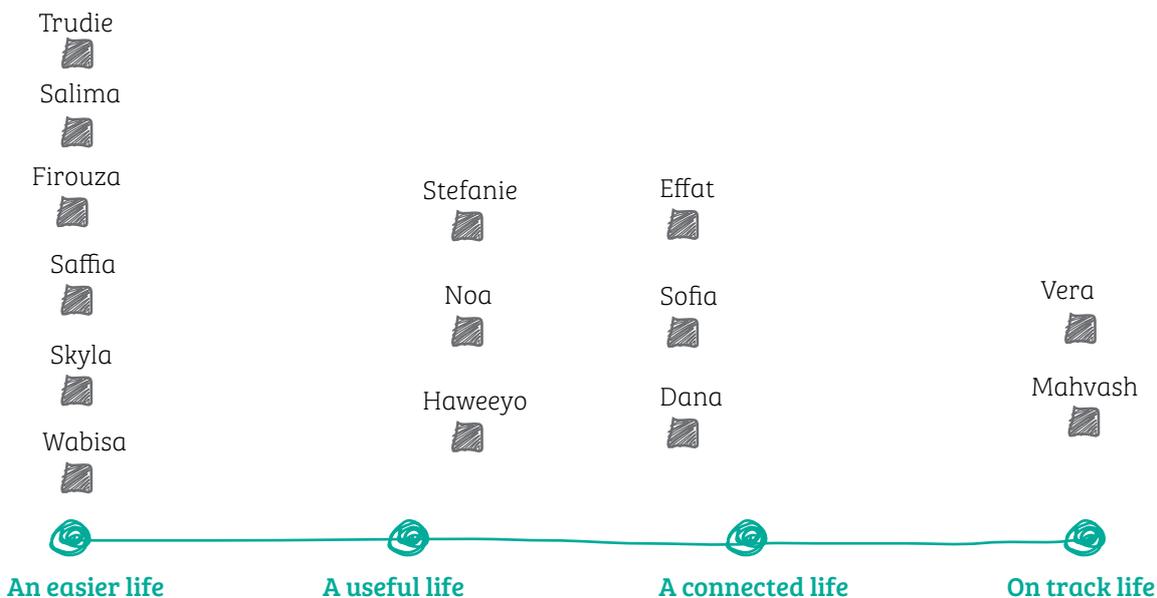
“Getting back in touch with my own mother, and being a good mother”

When women talked about their aspirations - in 12 months time - they described **four different futures:**

- (1) an easier life;
- (2) a useful life;
- (3) a connected life;
- (4) an on-track life.

7 or so women spoke in terms of an easier life: calmness, routines, time for self, having fun. 3 or so women spoke in terms of a useful life: exploring new things, finding passions, contributing, doing something worthwhile. Another 3 women zeroed in on a connected life: relationships with friends and family, fun times together. 2 women talked about getting back on some sort of track - finishing school, getting kids back from child protection. Whilst a number of women blended features of these different futures, a couple of women did not want to broach the future at all.

All the women who talked about a useful life had high exposure to different lifestyles - through travelling, books, film, and diverse groups of friends. Whilst all the women who talked about an easier life had low exposure to different lifestyles. Like Salima. Who grew-up in an isolated village in Morocco. With far fewer reference points.



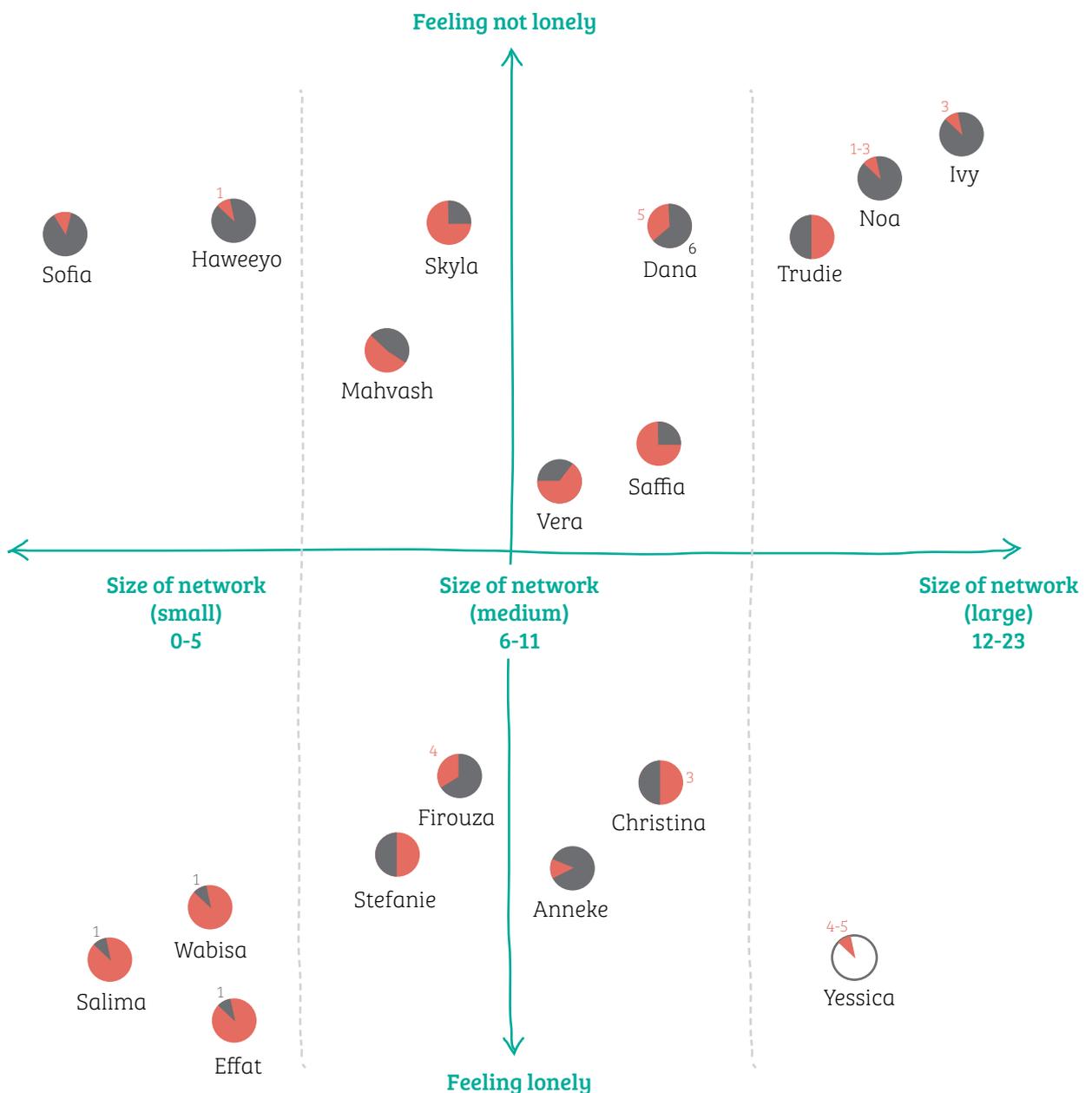
By resources & barriers

Isolation and loneliness were pretty dominant features of women's shelter experiences. Because leaving an abusive partner or family member also meant exiting an entire social network - friends, parents-in-law, neighbors. Indeed, most women's networks contained fewer than 6 people. Research indicates that "effective personal networks" are comprised of at least 6 people, and with a pretty diverse composition⁷. Including family, friends, neighborhoods, colleagues, and social services.

For 9 of the women, social service professionals make up over 50% of their personal network. For two women - Effat and Wabisa - they make-up almost the whole of their personal networks.

Social Network & Loneliness

- Formal network (professionals)
- Informal network (family and friends)



⁷Liliana Sousa. Building on personal networks when intervening with multi-problem poor families. Page 136.

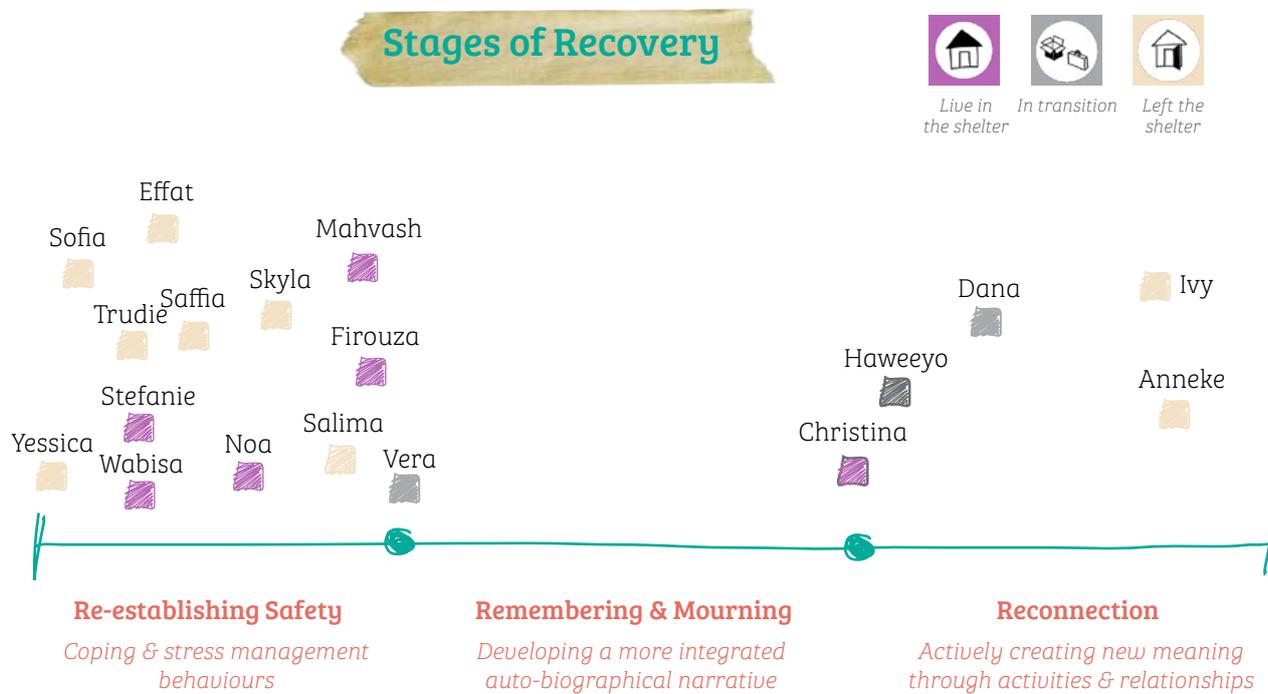
Rebuilding relationships is, according to some theories, one of the later phases of the trauma recovery process. Domestic violence is very much a trauma. Dr. Judith Herman outlines three phases of recovery:

- (1) Safety and Stabilization;
- (2) Remembrance and Mourning; and
- (3) Reconnection & Integration.⁸

During Safety and Stabilization, people who have experienced trauma are learning how to co-exist with all of the emotions they are experiencing. During Remembrance and Mourning, people create the space to grieve and make meaning

from what's happened. And in Reconnection & Integration, people are redefining themselves in the context of new relationships. They find the trauma is no longer defining them.

Most of the women - 12 /18 - talk in terms linked to the Safety and Stabilization phase. 4 women seem to be in the Reconnection & Integration Phase. What we found most notable was that 7/12 of the women in that first stage, Safety & Stabilization, had already left the shelter. Like Saffia. Who is now living on her own. That's because availability of housing is what's dictating shelter departure.

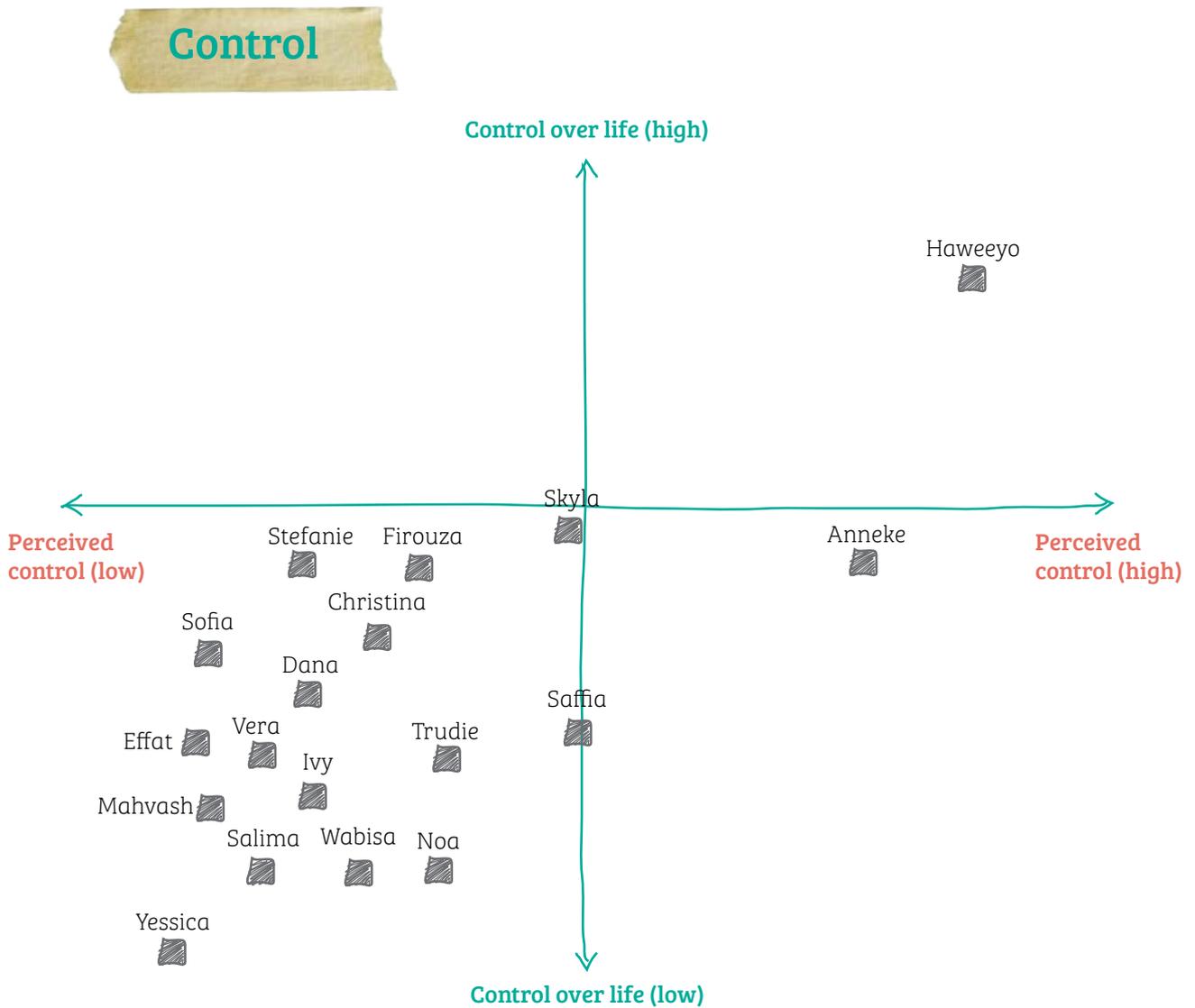


⁸<http://trauma-recovery.ca/recovery/phases-of-trauma-recovery/>

A lot of external forces seem to dictate what happens to women, when. Indeed, some women have very little **real control** over their situations. Housing associations offer them the very first house available. Immigration hasn't made a decision about their citizenship status. Child protection has placed their children into foster care, without a clear pathway for return. But, what about **perceived control**? Do women **feel** they could change their situations? Do they express confidence and competence?

The majority of women we've met - 15 out of 18 - describe waiting for government systems to make decisions about their lives. They express little confidence that they can shift the outcomes of those decisions - be it housing, debt, immigration, or benefits.

Haweeyo is an exception. She's got high perceived control and high actual control. Perhaps because she has *relatively* little service engagement in her life. And perhaps because she comes from a refugee camp in Somalia. Relative to that extreme context, she does feel able to forge her own path.



The Service System

“...The Self-Made Man: there is no such person. If we can stand on our own two feet, it is because others have raised us up. If, as adults, we can lay claim to competence and compassion, it only means that other human beings have been willing and enabled to commit their competence and compassion to us - through infancy, childhood, and adolescence, right up to this very moment”

- Urie Bronfenbrenner

There is no self-made woman either. Inherent to all of the women's stories is a polarity. Between the abusive family system they have physically left. And the new professional system they have entered. With social workers and client managers and rules and norms. "System" is another one of those abstract words. We like to think of a system as lots of different people interacting around some sort of common, adjacent, or competing interest. People who necessarily have different perspectives, roles, and incentives. To change women's experiences, then, we must also shift the systems around them. And to do that, we must first understand who makes up the system and what makes them tick. What are their stories?

We've had conversations with 22 frontline practitioners and managers across 11 different services. Services who work directly with the 18 women we've met.⁹ We've also identified a further 51 programs & services, operating in Apeldoorn, which interface with women, children, and families.

⁹ We've changed service provider's names so that the focus is on their role in the system, rather than on them as individuals.



Moviera

(Apeldoorn, Oosterbeek, Arnhem)

For
Women
experiencing
domestic violence

Service offer
Shelter & ambulant
care

Used by



Wisselwerk

(Apeldoorn)

For
People seeking
volunteer work;
Organizations
seeking volunteers

Service offer
Unpaid volunteer
opportunities

Used by



Foodbank

(Apeldoorn)

For
People with
qualifying low-
incomes

Service offer
Box of food once a
week

Used by



GGNet

(Apeldoorn)

For
People
experiencing
mental health
challenges

Service offer
1:1 therapy and
support groups

Used by



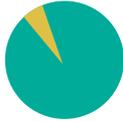
Werkplein Activerium

(Apeldoorn)

For
People seeking
work and state
benefits

Service offer
Benefits, training,
work trajectories

Used by



17/18
women



Verenigde Samenwerkende Woningcorporaties (VSW)

(Apeldoorn)

For
People seeking
social housing

Service offer
Placement in first
available house

Used by



11/18
women



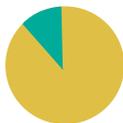
Aventus

(Apeldoorn)

For
People seeking
language &
vocational
qualifications

Service offer
Language courses
(subsidized by
Immigration)

Used by



2/18
women



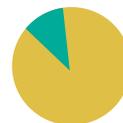
Leger de Heils

(Apeldoorn)

For
Families seeking
extra support

Service offer
Parenting support
worker

Used by



2/18
women



Bureau Jeugdzorg (Apeldoorn)

For
Families in crisis

Service offer
Voluntary support,
removal of kids, and
foster care placements

Used by



Foenix (Apeldoorn)

For
Women seeking work
experience

Service offer
Thrift store job
placement, debt
management

Used by



MD Veluwe (Apeldoorn)

For
Women in domestic
violence situations

Service offer
Domestic violence
hotline; case
management

Used by



We've selected **five stories** of practitioners to share. Across a range of sectors - domestic violence, government benefits, mental health, housing, and language training.

Danique



Danique has been a social worker for 6 years. She likes helping people, but there's only so much she can do.

Wouter



Wouter does what he says he will do: Placing women into homes within 6 weeks. As he sees it, his role is housing. Not community.

Nicolaas



Nicolaas knows a thing or two about getting people into a job. He's been doing it for 18 years, and is proud of his "customized" approach.

Marco



Marco stays calm in a crisis. Counseling suicidal clients. Helping them to "solve" their problems. He believes "all problems can be solved in Holland."

Rutger



Rutger used to be a volunteer, teaching immigrants Dutch. Now it's his full-time paid job. He's worried about job security.

**Danique****Setting the scene:**

It's another Monday morning. In an hour Danique will cross the courtyard that separates her office from the 20 apartments. To meet with Christina. One of her three clients. From the window, she can see that Christina, in hot pink sweatpants and running shoes, has just returned from dropping her daughter off at school. Danique logs into the client database. She types in Christina's name, and clicks on the record. On the left hand side is a listing of all their prior meetings and contact points. On Friday, Danique asked Christina to fill out the one-page housing application form. Today, at 10am, she will follow-up. Christina has been at the shelter for 4 weeks, and has only 8 weeks left on her shelter contract. As Danique sees it, "Christina doesn't really need our help. She says she has no safety concerns. Our job here at the shelter is to address safety."



Danique has worked at this shelter since she finished her social work training. She likes her colleagues and thinks they work hard for their clients. But, she recognizes, she hasn't seen a lot of other practice. "I visited one other shelter once for a training. They had a religious background." Nearly all of Danique's days are spent in the shelter - sitting at her desk or in a woman's apartment. Occasionally, she goes with a new client to visit an external service. But the shelter is increasingly emphasizing independence. "We want women to do things for themselves, and not rely so much on us. That's a good thing."

Over the past six years, Danique has seen a number of changes to the organization and to the policy context. Their roles are more narrow now - focussed on helping women learn about domestic violence, fill



out forms, and get a house. Accessing certain services - like language classes and psychotherapy - now involves more of an upfront cost. Christina, she says, would like 1:1 Dutch lessons. Group classes haven't worked for her. But that's no longer subsidized.

At 9:59am, we head over to Christina's house. Christina offers us tea. She and Danique launch into a conversation about housing. Christina points to google maps and asks Danique where her house might be located. She wants to find a house in Utrecht - nearby her friends, and her church. Danique repeatedly says that a house in Utrecht is not possible. Only in the Apeldoorn area. Christina pushes back: "What happens if I need somebody to look after my daughter?" Danique asks her how often somebody has looked after her daughter in the last few months. When Christina replies "once", Danique points out that being near friends is nice but probably not essential.

Christina moves on to another topic of conversation: courses. She says she would like to take a course, but that everything is too expensive. Danique doesn't ask what kind of course, but mentions that the shelter is offering a weekly class on domestic violence. And that it's free. Christina looks down. Danique continues: "It would be good for you to be around other women who have experienced domestic violence. Can I sign you up?" Christina reluctantly agrees.



At the end of the session, Danique writes down Christina's goals for the week: (1) researching housing and (2) signing-up for the domestic violence course. She asks Christina to sign a number of papers in Dutch. They make an appointment for the same time next week. Danique returns to her computer to write-up their session, and enter the agreed goals into the digital "Actieplan."

In her words:

IT'S PRETTY QUIET. I only have 3 clients right now because one of my clients just left the shelter. I meet with each client for about an hour a week. When the women don't speak Dutch it takes longer, maybe 90 minutes for a session. The rest of the time, I'm entering data into the database, helping women fill out paperwork, coordinating with the housing association, talking to lawyers on women's behalf, replying to emails, going to the weekly staff meeting, meeting with colleagues, etc.

A LOT OF THE PAPERWORK isn't useful for non-Dutch speakers like Christina. Then the paperwork is really just for me. For some of the Dutch women, I think the Actieplannen can be helpful. It gives them concrete goals to work on for the week.

I CAN'T HELP WITH THEIR DREAMS. Some women have very high expectations. They want to live in a beautiful house and in an area they really like. I'd like that too. My husband and I don't live in our dream home either. I understand their wishes, but they are just not realistic. Life isn't perfect.

THERE ARE CONSEQUENCES for our choices. That's what I try and tell women. There are consequences for choosing a partner who is mentally unstable or with a history of violence. There are consequences for not taking the house you've been offered. I can only try and educate them about these consequences.

THAT'S JUST THE WAY IT IS. When women go to Werkplein for benefits, they do have to follow the pathways they set out. If I didn't have a job, and went to Werkplein, the same would be true for me. There is no special treatment.

I DON'T KNOW how women do after the shelter. Unless they come back to the shelter, which does happen. I check-in with clients for 3 months after they leave, by telephone. I will be interested in what you find out when you reach out to women.

I'M A CREATIVE PERSON. I like to make things. I could use some of those skills more here at the shelter. A few weeks ago, we had a big staff party and I enjoyed cutting and pasting and putting things together.



Setting the scene:

Wouter's work starts when the filled out form lands on his desk. The form isn't long. It asks basic demographic questions: name, date of birth, number of children, phone number. That's all Wouter needs to begin his search. For an available house. So that a woman can leave the shelter. He's got 10 weeks to find something through one of the housing associations in the Apeldoorn area.



Once he's got something available, he'll get in touch with the woman's social worker. Sometimes he has pictures. Of the outside. Generally there's not much more information available. Until the woman gets the keys. By then, she's agreed to the place. Or dropped off the list. Demand is too high to give women much choice. Besides, for Wouter, making sure women have a roof over their heads is what's most important.

It's been a couple of years since his organization entered into an agreement with the shelter. The shelter guarantees the lease - putting it in their name for the first year, and if all goes well, transferring the lease to the woman's name a year later. This has reduced a lot of his headaches. In the past, 10 out of 16 women were evicted. Because they couldn't keep up with the rent.

Wouter thinks their coordinated approach works smoothly, and delivers houses in the required timeframe. Without their coordinated approach, women would have to wait years to get a home. Because its based on number of years living in the local area. And whilst Wouter has seen how housing associations work in the United Kingdom - where they are curators of community, not just landlords - he doesn't see that as his current role. Success is "women behaving as good tenants - they pay the rent on-time and are not a nuisance for neighbors."

In his own words:

IT MAY SOUND HARSH but the goal for women is to move out of the shelter quickly in order to create space for more women.

WOMEN DON'T GET A LOT OF CHOICE around housing. What's important is that they have a roof above their head, their life is getting back on track, and they are looking further down the road, perhaps for work.

WE CANNOT MEET WISHES very often. It's take it or leave it. Most women accept the house we offer them. Some women do refuse. Then they have to find something for themselves. Of course, it can take years to get social housing on their own.

A SOFT LANDING in the neighborhood is the responsibility of the women themselves. And it's the shelter's responsibility not to dump people there and make some contact with the neighbors perhaps.

IT'S WORKING WELL what we do, with the shelter, coordinating and getting women into housing. They guarantee the rental agreement for the first year. We hope to continue what we set-up after decentralization. Because we're quite proud about our relationship.”



Marco

Setting the scene:

To get to his office, Marco walks past a chain smoking woman, a man muttering to himself, and a wall of brochures announcing support groups of all kinds. For young people whose parents are

alcoholics. For people suffering from depression. Marco checks the roster. To see what calls have come in over night. He will see at least four clients today, back-to-back. Clients who are on the edge. In crisis. And too often, contemplating suicide. Effat is on his roster for today.

Every day is full-on. But Marco has got a rhythm. He's been at it for over 15 years. Picking up new techniques along the way - mostly through practice, rather than formal training. Marco finds that most of his job is about education. Helping people learn about their their brains and their behaviors - and to calmly come up with alternatives. In Holland, Marco says, there are always alternatives. Always a way around problems.

That's what Marco sees as his role: helping people through a particularly rough patch. His work with clients is short-term: anywhere from a single session to a couple of months. He's not sure what happens to client in the medium to long-term. Unless they show back up on his roster one day. What keeps Marco going is a clear boundary between work and the rest of his life. And getting out of his head - through sport and movement.

in his own words:

PEOPLE LIVE TOO LONG WITH THEIR PROBLEMS before they come and see us. Because they don't know how our mental health system really works.

70% OF WHAT WE DO IS PSYCH EDUCATION. 30% is cognitive behavioral therapy. Most of the women we see are suicidal, sometimes they are psychotic.

IN HOLLAND THERE IS A SOLUTION FOR MOST PROBLEMS. If you don't have a house, you can get one. If you don't have money, you can qualify. Of course, this isn't always true in places like Afghanistan and Africa. And the women we see come from many different cultures.

LANGUAGE IS HARD. We have translators who help us over the phone. But it's not just the words. It's the metaphors. I'm constantly trying to find the

best language for different cultures. I end up learning as I go along. There is no training for this kind-of stuff.

BIG SOCIAL NETWORKS ARE GOOD.

You need a big one to call upon when you have a problem. I'd say that's the biggest challenge facing the women. Well, facing all of our clients. They all have small networks. I can talk to them about where to meet people - and recommend they do sports or something, but that's all I can do really. The rest is up to them.

TRANSITIONS ARE HARD from very intensive therapy and then back into the community. You see people learn how to survive the therapeutic context, but cannot yet generalize beyond that.



Setting the scene

Nicholaas calls a three-digit number. 12 people in the waiting room look-up, and check their crumpled white pieces of paper. Christina stands up. He walks over and shakes her hand, introducing himself as a Client Manager. And leads her to a desk in a sea of look-alikes. 63 desks in all. On top of each desk is a black phone and computer. Little else clutters the space. The carpet is bright green.



There is no time for small talk. Nicholaas asks Christina to share her education and work history. She describes her medical training in Brazil. Nicholaas gently interrupts - what are her formal qualifications? Has she passed her Dutch language exam? Christina explains, in Dutch, that she took the group courses. But did not pass the test. Her instructors recommended 1:1 lessons. Nicholaas says that, unfortunately, 1:1 lessons are not possible. Only group lessons are subsidized.

What Nicholaas can offer, though, is experience in the staff canteen. Women with “special needs” work there- preparing food, washing dishes. Or he can enroll her in Trajectory 5 - the Moms in Control group. A program for single mothers. Christina falls quiet. She will think about it. What she really wants, she says, is to return to medicine. To be a doctor, and do something related to health or healing. Maybe sports medicine? Nicholaas recommends she think about one thing at a time. Language first. She leaves the meeting with the time for a follow-up meeting. Nothing on paper.

Nicholaas feels good with how the meeting has gone. He has been working with the council for 15+ years, and sees that they take a much more personalized approach these days. Where personalized means listening to what each person needs, and creating a trajectory with them. Nicholaas has 8 trajectories he can offer. Each is delivered by one of his work & training providers: the canteen, a thrift store, the young mothers training, group language courses, work for people with psychological challenges, volunteer work. Nicholaas has helped negotiate these contracts with the training providers. And he sees such partnerships as the way forwards.



In his words:

LANGUAGE FIRST. Before we can help women get work, they need to learn the language very well. After that, there are man more opportunities.

WE'RE HAPPY with how its all going and our customized approach to working with vulnerable clients. I think it's working well for people.

WE DON'T KNOW what happens once women get a job. We don't collect long-term data about job security or retention. We just know if people are attending the training programs they have signed-up for. We track their attendance.

I CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING that needs to change. We like our training providers.



Rutger

Setting the scene:

It looks less like a school. And more like a learning factory. A big box of a building.

Standing behind the train station. Groups of 18 years olds congregate by the front door, smoking. Inside, there are colorful mannequins lining the windows of the hair salon; cars with their hoods popped open in the garage; over-sized industrial printers in the graphic design studio. Rutger climbs the stairs to the second story of the building. There are no expensive props. Just classrooms with whiteboards, and a bank of computers that make up the Language Lab. Rutger knows every student. If not by name - by country. He points to students and loudly announces their nationality:

“That one is from Ethiopia. That one is from Afghanistan. That one is from Thailand.” It’s a visual bazaar. Women in dark burkas, floral patterned dresses, and Afghani shawls. Each with headphones on, trying to decipher Dutch.

Rutger has been teaching Dutch to immigrants for over 20 years now. He trained as an elementary school teacher, but after a year wiping noses, knew it wasn’t for him. That’s when he started volunteering to teach Dutch. A few years later he landed a full-time paid position at Aventus. Now he’s the intake coordinator. Meeting with every student. And figuring out if they should go in the level 1, 2, or 3 class. All the courses are in a group setting. All use a textbook. Rutger doesn’t like all that much - particularly for students with a history in formal education. Than it can be a bit “patronizing.” But Rutger tries to cater to the lowest denominator. Even though that’s not always enough.



Salima is one of his students. She can't read or write in her native language. Rutger says it would take 1.5-2 years to get her to the level to pass the exam. But that government won't pay for more than 6 months. Besides, when Salima gets placed in a house, and leaves the shelter, she may be too far from the school. That's a challenge Rutger often sees with women from the shelter: turnover.

Rutger is realistic about what he can and cannot do. Particularly with all the policy changes. Government will only pay for certain kinds of language courses now. That's mean there is a growing waiting list to take the courses. Plus, there are more private providers popping up. "It's easy to teach people to pass an exam, but can they really communicate in Dutch?" Rutger proudly takes us on a tour of the classrooms. Inside, 4 students are listening to a pre-recorded tape. They are learning how to read train timetables and understand the conductor's announcements. Out the window, just meters away, lies the real train station.



In his own words:

WE DO LANGUAGE, NOT INCLUSION. We're only a school so we run courses. There are other organizations who do cultural inclusion and things. Years ago we might have run an outside cultural activity with all of our different students. That's not what we do now.

WHAT I'D LIKE TO SEE CHANGED? More security and stability for my job.

WE NEVER GET COMPLAINTS from people with lower education. Only people with higher education complain. We had a highly educated student from Kenya, for instance. He had worked at the Ministry of Economic Affairs there. And I did notice that some of our teachers took a very paternalistic approach. Wagging their finger at him when he got something wrong. It did not work.

WE LEARN BY DOING and running our courses. There is no formal training in adult learning. That might be helpful for some of our instructors."

EVERY NOW AND THEN I hear from a former student. That's nice to get back in touch. In general, we don't have contact with students once they leave.

3 Lenses

Danique, Wouter, Marco, Nicolaas, Rutger have a lot in common. They want to help people. And they believe they are helping people. By focussing on what their organizations have an explicit remit to do:

*“We do housing,
not community.”*

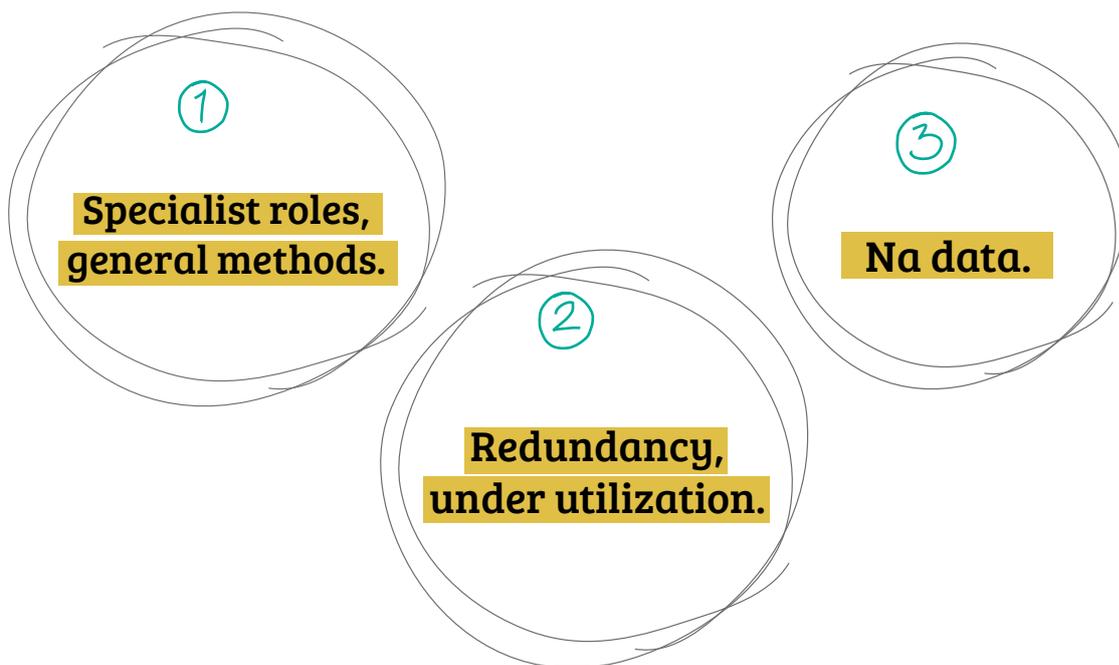
*“We do language, not
cultural inclusion.”*

“We do safety, not quality of life.”

*“We do therapy, not
social networking.”*

*“We do job acquisition,
not retention.”*

When we look across their stories, and at the wider service landscape of which they are a part, we see three themes:





Professional roles are defined in terms of one specific issue area. Danique addresses domestic violence. Wouter addresses housing. Nicolaas addresses work. Rutger addresses language. And yet within their practice, there is very little differentiation.

Danique uses the same session structure, forms, and *Actienplans* for all of her clients. Even though she recognizes it's not always useful. Nicolaas offers the same 8 trajectories to women - based on their Dutch proficiency, age, parenting, and mental health status. Rutger uses the same textbook and group-based teaching methodology for all of his students. Even though he knows it doesn't always work for the highly educated, and the not-at-all educated.



A social worker fills in the digital Actieplan after a weekly meeting with a woman living in the shelter.



A group of women taking a Dutch course, and learning via a textbook and a pre-recorded tape.

Danique, Wouter, Marco, Nicolaas and Rutger come from just 5 of the 50+ organizations with service offers for women in the Apeldoorn area. Less than 1/4 of these organizations are used by the 18 women we've met. More than half of these services are only accessible through another professional gatekeeper. And many of the organizations offer a variant of the same service: some sort of trained volunteer or professional to assist with a narrowly defined task. When we trace where the funding for these 50+ organizations come from, the majority flows from the local council. But, different parts of the council. So the Participation side, the Youth & Health side, the Cultural side. Adding up the number of staff working for these organizations, we get a rough number well above 5000. A whole professional economy exists with very few measurable outcomes.

To give a visual sense of all of these numbers, we've tried to roughly draw Apeldoorn's service landscape. We mapped



all the services we heard women talk about, along with all of the services we knew existed from brochures and web searches. **For each service, we roughly estimated their size, their source of funding, their usage by women at the shelter, their perceived importance (according to how many women talked about the service), and whether the service could be directly accessed or required a professional referral.**

Turn to the next page to see the service landscape.

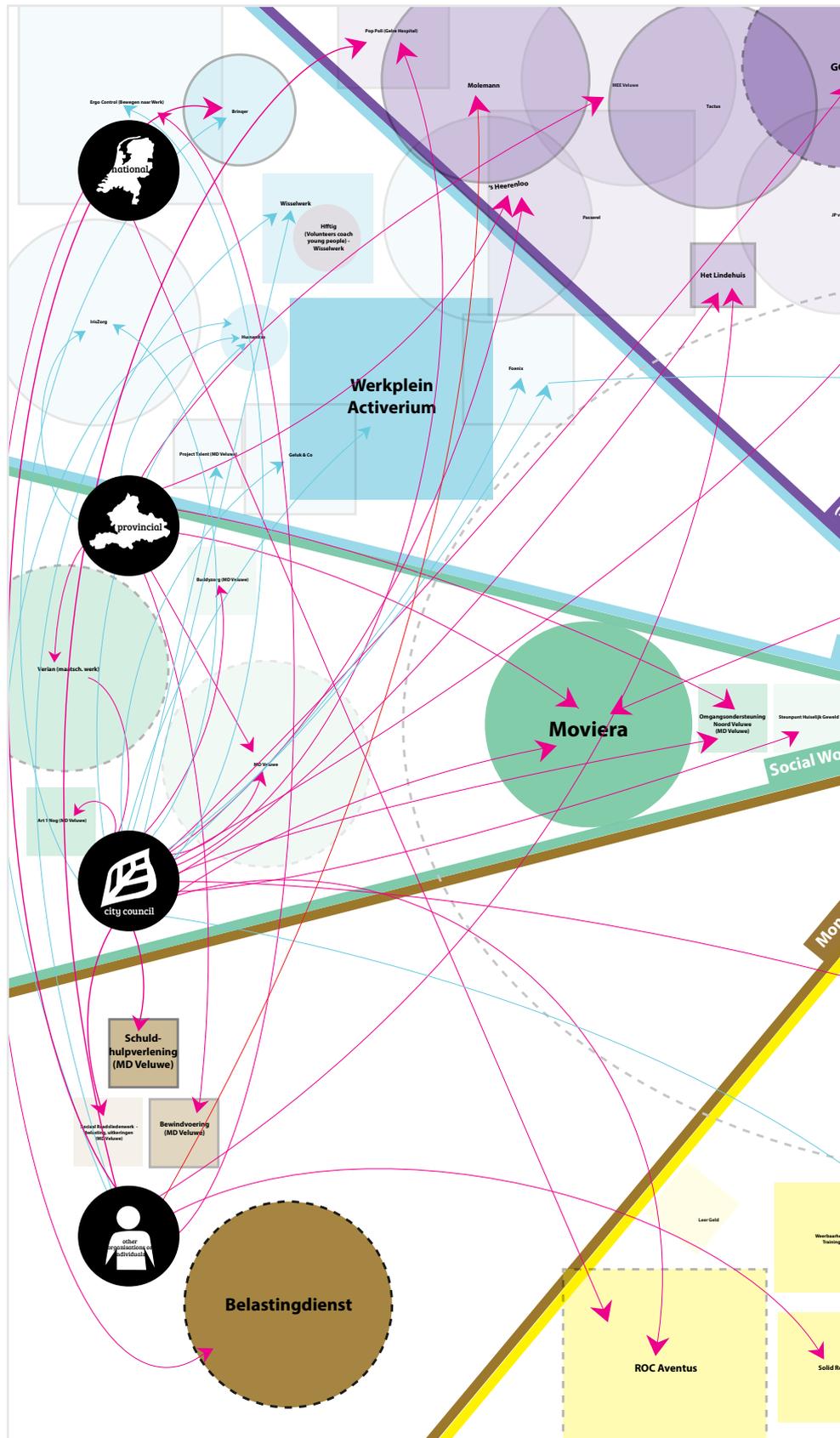
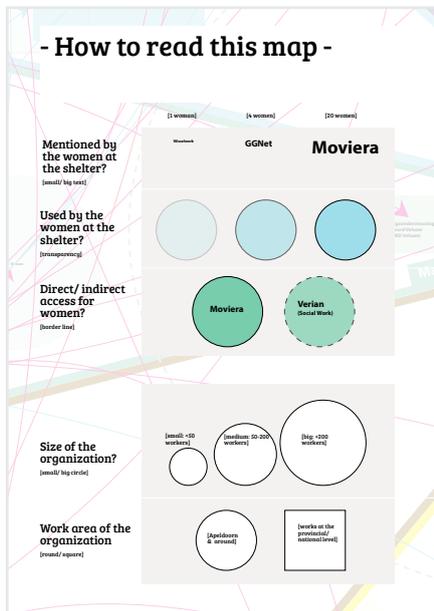


None of the organizations we met measure outcomes. Their contracts with the local council require them to track inputs and outputs. How many dollars they spend, and how many units of service they deliver. The professionals we spent time with had no sense of how their clients fare after they leave their service. Nor did they know what their clients thought of the service. They were incredibly curious. Many spend hours inputting data into databases, but that data is never returned in a synthesized format. Useful for incorporating into practice.

Indeed, there seem to be no feedback loops in place. No mechanisms for understanding patterns in service usage. No mechanisms for hearing directly from clients, or tapping into their know-how. "It's about time we got asked questions about our experience," Anneke told us when we met her for the first time. Nearly a year after leaving the shelter, Anneke was grateful for the help she received, but full of ideas about how to improve the nature of that help. Until we called, she had no platform for sharing those ideas.



A woman moving out of the shelter. Once a woman leaves a shelter, she may get 'ambulant' support in the community. But there is no mechanism to hear women's feedback about their service experience, or tap into their know-how.



Apeldoorn service landscape





the gaps

an empty space; a divergence or difference in attitude, perceptions, character, or development; a break or an opening.

Comparing stories of women with stories of services, 13 gaps or disconnects emerge. For us gaps are openings for change. They are not about naming, blaming, or shaming women or professionals. Quite the opposite. Gaps are the creative fodder. The raw material for generating new ideas.

We've identified 3 types of gaps:

1) Gaps around 'outcomes'

Differences between what the system 'wants' & what women 'want':

| | | |
|--------------|---|-----------------|
| Independence | – | Interdependence |
| Housing | – | Belonging |
| Safety | – | Stability |
| Credentials | – | Capability |

2) Gaps around behaviors

Differences between what the system 'says' and what the system 'does':

- | | | |
|------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Self-control | – | Social control |
| Empowering | – | Pathologizing |
| Personalized | – | Pre-set |
| Natural networks | – | Professional networks |

3) Gaps around activities

Differences between what the system 'does' and what women 'need':

- | | | |
|---------------|---|-----------------|
| Planning | – | Experiencing |
| Relationships | – | Friendship |
| Mind | – | Body |
| Redundancy | – | Differentiation |

Independence versus Interdependence

The system talks about a good outcome in terms of women standing on their own two feet. **Meaning women are managing their day-to-day affairs.** Paying their bills. Getting the kids to school on-time. Spending their time productively. Getting the services they need.

“Professionals tend to define independence in terms of self-care activities. So, independence is measured against skills in relation to performance of these activities.”

Solveig Magnus Reindal. (1999) Independence, Dependence, Interdependence. Disability & Society, 14:3, 353-367

Women talk about a good outcome in terms of **standing up and on the shoulders of friends and family members.** Meaning they are taking charge over their own lives. And not allowing people to make decisions for them. It's less about completing activities on their own, and much more about being able to dictate the terms of those activities. And, they are not doing everything on their own. They've got 'good' people around them.

“Standing on your own two feet is doing things with your kids so they are happy, having friends, having your own life.”



Ivy

Safety versus Stability

To be safe is to be protected from harm. Free from abuse. Since women enter the shelter escaping abuse, it makes sense that the system conceptualizes a good outcome in terms of that abuse. Social workers want women to understand what abuse is, and to gain new relational and communication skills. For women to be safe, then, they must behave differently.

Such a definition of safety draws heavy on psychological theories (from scholars like Abraham Maslow) about emotional security. Where insecure persons feel rejected; turn inward; and are troubled by low self-esteem and guilt, secure persons have a robust sense of self. Here, security is viewed in relation to self.

Housing versus Belonging

The availability of housing in many ways shapes women's recovery periods. They are in a holding pattern at the shelter, waiting for a placement. In a house they cannot choose. In a neighborhood they also cannot choose. But, connectedness is not the system's goal. A roof & four walls is the goal. Success is measured by securing an apartment for women within the agreed time frame.

Women don't just want a house. They want a home. A place they feel they can build a life. That means a place they relate to. Nearby their church. Or their mosque. Close enough to their network, if they have one. And where there's a possibility to meet and get to know others that understand them. That don't judge. Or gossip. But help out.

“I'd love a community like you see in some of those American reality TV shows. Where everyone pitches in to help each other. Here, our neighbors are not very tolerant. They like peace and quiet and don't understand I have 3 loud boys. I want to live in a place where we understand each other.”



Skyla

Many women have a broader conceptualization of safety. That's not simply about self. And the reduction of self-harm. But about circumstance. **To feel safe is also to have stability.** To feel rooted. And not constantly in transition. They move from the intake shelter to the placement shelter, and from the shelter to a house, often in a new community, where they must meet new professionals, navigate new rules, and enroll kids in new schools - frequently without any natural supports nearby.

“I'm so tired of moving. I want to feel settled.”



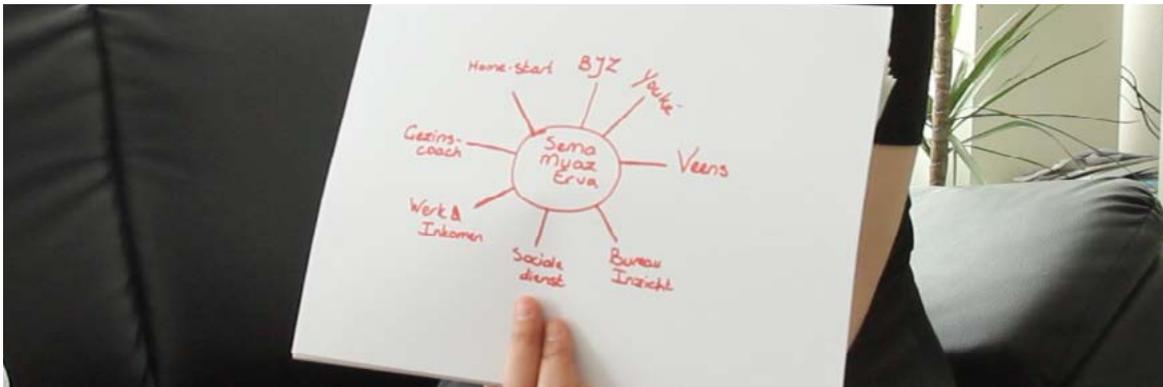
Dana

Credentials versus Capability

Not having the 'right' piece of paper is a big block. To staying in the country, to getting work, to navigating the system. A good outcome, then, for the system is **the acquisition of the appropriate credentials**. That means women pass their language tests, that they have a basic degree, that they have a record of showing up to work placements.

Women want the credentials. Or at least they understand that they are essential to living in Holland. **But more than the piece of paper, they want to be able to feel capable to speak the language and be perceived as capable to do what they love.** Be it arts & crafts, hospitality, or medicine. While a credential signifies they are capable to do what the system requires, it says little about whether they are capable to do the things that matter to them.

Self-control versus Social control



A woman who has left the shelter drew a map of eight different services she now juggles.

Professionals in the system talk a lot about starting with women's strengths. Core to a strengths-based approach is "seeing clients as the experts in their own lives" and "giving clients meaningful choice" so that *they* are effectively in the driver's seat.

As Rapp, Saleebey and Sullivan note in their article, *The future of strengths-base social work*, "Each stage of the progress from goal setting, resources to be acquired, the pace of the work together, assignment of responsibility emphasize the workers role in extending the list of choices, clarifying choices, and giving the clients the confidence and authority to direct the process."

None of the women feel in the driver's seat. And the reality is few of them are in the driver's seat. They are not in control over which shelter they end up at. They are not control over what house they will get. They are not in control over their immigration status. They are not in control over the legal process around their divorce. They are

not in control over if and when child protection will return their kids. Some of the women lost control upon entering the shelter. Because it was in seeking out help for domestic violence, that their other 'needs' were discovered. Requiring social workers, psychologists, family guardians, case coordinators. None of whom *they* choose.

Linda Gordon, a feminist scholar, observes the growing divide between *poor* women who have little choice but to use welfare services, like Shelters, and *wealthier* women whose income means they can "buy" their own support, free of the system's constraints. She writes, "...The growth of the state in the last 150 years has increased individual rights for prosperous women, but only subjected poor women to even greater control. Alternatively, women's historians represent social control as half of a bargain in which material benefits - welfare benefits, for example - are given to those controlled in exchange for the surrender of power or autonomy."

Empowering versus Pathologizing

The domestic violence service system describes violence in terms of power, relationships, and communication. It's framed as an interpersonal issue. One with strong intergenerational links. Social workers talk about building women's confidence to end the cycle of violence.

And yet the practice that many women experience is **less interpersonal and more personal**. Therapeutic versus experiential models are used. It's a way of working that fits within what author John McDonald calls a "pathologizing framework" where "women are expected to work on themselves - often over fairly short periods of time. Case management is used to identify the client's needs and then to coordinate services to meet those needs. Success is measured in terms of achievement of the individual clinical goals of the client (pg. 278)."¹⁰

¹⁰Neo-liberalism and the pathologizing of public issues: The displacement of feminist service models in domestic violence support services."

Personalized versus Pre-Set

Professionals like the idea of personalization. Of starting with what their client needs, and tailoring their service to fit them. And from what we've seen, professionals do begin many of their client interactions with open-ended questions like, "How can I help you this week?" They listen to what women say they need. They jot notes down in their folders.

In return, many women do open-up. They share what they want. To be a doctor. To learn arts & crafts. To take a course outside the shelter. What they get back is a standard response. They could take a group language course. They could enroll in the shelter's domestic violence course. They could take part in 1 of the 8 work trajectories already contracted by the municipal.

So while professionals start with open-ended questions, in reality, the opportunities available are pre-set. Professionals aren't in the business of making bespoke opportunities. Like connecting a woman with a local designer. They are in the business of brokering to all the stuff that already exists. And when the stuff that already exists lacks variation, it's pretty hard to live up to the personalization discourse.



Eight trajectories offered by Werkplein Activerium.

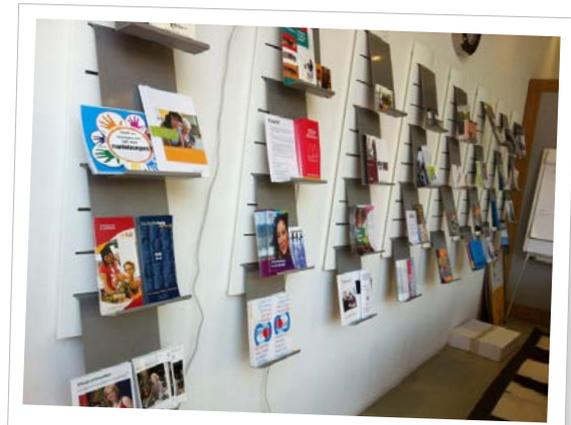
- 1. JONGE MOEDERTRAINING** zicht op je eigen toekomst. Voor jonge moeders tot 23 jaar.
- 2. TRAJECT JONGE MOEDERS IN CHARGE.** Dit traject richting scholing/werk kan in combinatie met de Jonge Moeder Training.
- 3. LUNCHROOM180 graden** - 4 dagen p/w onder begeleiding van Sodexo.
- 4. ROC opleiding BOL of BBL.** BOL is een dagopleiding en BBL is 4 dagen werk en 1 dag naar school.
- 5. KANSRIJK** - Sollicitatietraining en hulp bij het zoeken naar werk.
- 6. Mode & Co** - voor diegenen die een lange afstand tot de arbeidsmarkt hebben te denken valt aan psychische klachten, maar die dagbesteding nodig hebben kunnen we aanmelden bij Geluk & Co.
- 7. ERGO CONTROLE** - Bewegen naar Werk, voor vrouwen die psychische- en fysieke klachten hebben.
- 8. WISSELWERK:** de klant moet zelf actie ondernemen, je kunt hier voor een laag bedrag taalles volgen.

Natural Networks versus Professional Networks

The 6th principle of a strengths-based approach is to “Recognize natural networks are the resource.” Professionals do recognize the value of friends, family, neighbors. They prompt women to think about who they might call on for help and support.

Trouble is, most women have a shrinking natural network. Leaving an abusive relationship has also meant leaving friends, neighbors, and family behind. Many of the women are estranged from mothers, fathers, siblings. Or they are geographically separated, without any close-by instrumental help. And even those women who have retained much of their close-by network have little diversity in their network. Their ties are mostly bonding - meaning people who share their same background & values, without the leverage to bridge them to new opportunities or contexts.

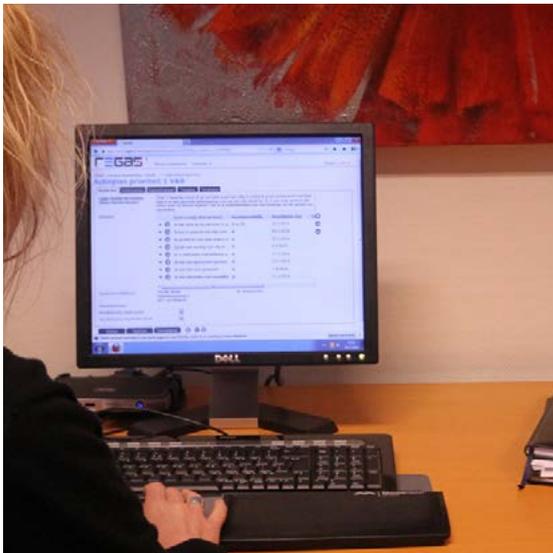
Professionals have few mechanisms with which to build or widen people’s networks. Instead, they inadvertently replace their natural ties



Wisselwerk connects volunteers with organizations in the community. It functions like a job agency - with tightly defined roles.

with professional ties. And even volunteer resources are treated like unpaid professionals. Attached to a particular task (paperwork, debt management, bike riding) rather than attached to a person. Rather than adding to their permanent network, these professionals and volunteers are tenuous and situational.

Planning versus Experiencing



A computer program used to track women's goals between sessions.

Targets, milestones, benchmarks. It’s no surprise that the system likes these words. Most interactions between professionals and women center around assessment of needs and planning. **To plan means to set a realistic goal and a timeframe.** Social workers at the shelter use a special computer program to track women’s goals between sessions.

And yet few women mention their goals in conversation - even when asked directly about what they want. **What far more women talk about is wanting to live the future.** Few do any activities other than meet with their workers to discuss paperwork and next steps. They are so busy getting prepared for what will be, they aren’t experiencing what is right now. The future isn’t just three or six months from now. The future is tomorrow.

Relationship versus Friendship

Women are lonely. The shelter is a foreign environment. Absent of some of their usual comforts - be it the people they usually see, the foods they like to eat, the photos & artifacts of their prior homes. They reach out to people they know will understand: other women living at the shelter. And form fast relationships. Bonding over the wait for housing, gripes over social workers and lawyers, and sharing common fears.

Yet few of these relationships seem to last. They are volatile - all too easily consumed by jealousy and mistrust. "Why did she get a house before me?" "Why is she doing better than me?" So many of the features of movies like Mean Girls rise to the surface. Gossip, alliances, bullying. In such a high-estrogen, high-octane setting, relationships can easily become short-term and transactional. Fitting for the moment. Rather than helping women transition to a new way of life for the long-term. "To maintain social relations it is essential to know how to be reciprocal," the academic Liliana Sousa notes. (Liliana Sousa, p174).

Interestingly, developmental psychology research on single-gender schools finds that children in mixed-gender environments - where both feminine and masculine interests are encouraged (from competitive sports to discussing emotions) - have better mental

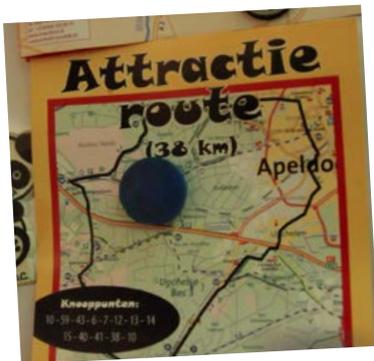
health outcomes. Perhaps shelters all too easily replicate a single-gender "school" environment, where traditional feminine roles come into play.¹¹

¹¹http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/post/the-case-against-single-sex-schooling/2012/06/03/gJQA75DNCV_blog.html



"It was my idea to put colored paper on my door [at Apeldoorn]. There was so much gossip, and people knocking on my door. When it's green, you can knock and I'm available to chat. When it's red, I'm not. There can be so much negativity around the place."

Mind versus Body



A map showing the walking route that one of the women likes to take.

Most days, women are prodded to think. To think about their past. To think about their relationships. To think about their goals. Their brains are always switched-on. Even when they are watching copious amounts of daytime TV to pass the time.

Women want to move. Nearly every woman feels unhealthy. They eat unhealthy, but cheaply. They may ride their bike to take their kids to school, but don't have the resources to join a gym, or take a dance class, or be part of a sports team. They express interest in taking walks outside, to clear their head, but never do. Without any external impetus, the shelter becomes their dominant context.

Redundancy versus Differentiation

Saffia has 3 parenting workers. Dana has 2 social workers and 2 debt managers. Wabisa has 3 separate volunteers signed-up to help her. Stefanie has 4 counsellors. **Many women experience quite a lot of service overlap and professional redundancy.** And this isn't just true at an individual level - but at a systemic level. Looking at the Apeldoorn service map we created, we see just how many organizations are contracted to provide a similar service - be it case coordination, debt management, social work, etc.

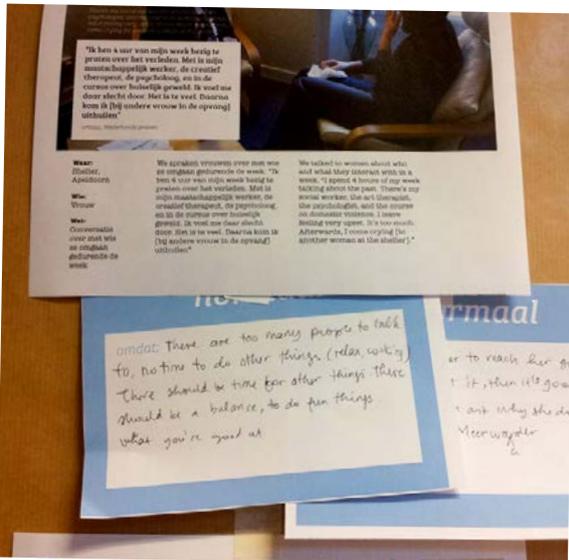
Redundancy is not, by itself, a bad thing. If those redundant resources are different enough to carry unique value. Yet most of the professional interactions are generic. They follow a similar sequence and script. They are not segmented for particular types of women - say by age, development, learning style, or interest. That

means that a girl like Stefanie, who is 19, receives the same service response as a woman like Effat, who is 41. Even though they are in different developmental.



Dana has two social workers, from two different organizations, with overlapping service and support.

Dosage versus Intensity



Social workers react to our research findings. About a woman overwhelmed by too much therapy. Workers comment that there should be a balance between talking about violence and doing fun things.

5 creative therapy sessions, 6 group sessions, 60 minute appointments with social workers once a week, 3 months of counseling. Every service women interact with has time bounds. No doubt based on available resources.

A growing body of research suggests that the amount and timing of social interventions matters. For effectiveness. Just like antibiotics must be taken at the right dosage and over the right amount of time so they work without building up resistance, the same principle seems to hold true for psycho-social treatments. And yet there is little intentionality about how much of a service a woman should receive, over what time period, and with what intensity. Stefanie feels her dosage is too high, whilst other women, like Sofia, feel they do not receive enough support & guidance. A systematic review of trauma-focused interventions for domestic violence survivors, for instance, finds that whilst 8-12 sessions are standard for cognitive behavioral therapies, many shelters reduce the number to fit their schedules (Warshaw and Sullivan, 2013). Without really knowing the impact on women's recovery.

closing the gaps

We'd argue there are three good reasons why we should work to close the gaps:

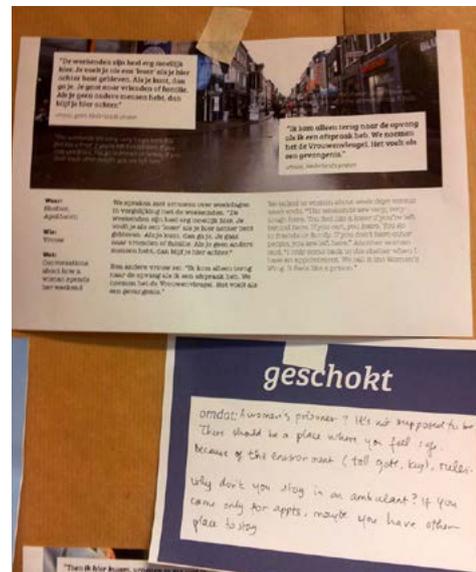
1) Too many women leaving shelters, still on the margins.

17 / 18 women we've met are appreciative of the help they've received. But, 0/18 women are where they want to be. And that includes women who have long left the shelter. Nearly all are lonely. Most feel disconnected from their communities. None are working. Only one woman has built a new **bridging** network for herself, enabled through her Baptist church. Indeed, for the vast majority of women we've met, their **lack** of connections, of belonging, of place serves as a real barrier to **actualizing** a different kind of life.



Anneke

"I am humbly grateful for the support from the dedicated social workers who at least kept me going.."



A woman describes how lonely and depressing her weekends are in the shelter.

2) Ineffective use of financial resources.



During an exhibition at Apeldoorn's City Council building, we showed our service landscape map and raised the question: why are there so many separate organizations? What's the value add?

It's not that women **lack** help. A huge web of services, programs, initiatives, and one-off projects exist. By our count, more than 60. It's that this **help** is underutilized. And oriented around outputs, rather than outcomes. Because no outcomes are measured, we simply don't know what works, for which women. That means that the council is commissioning services in the dark - without real leverage to improve them. Not surprisingly, it inadvertently commissions a lot of the **same** services. Which operate with the same professional underpinnings and therapeutic models - despite the very different needs of the women with whom we've met. Government could get much more bang for its buck if it **segmented** users - not by vulnerabilities - but by motivations & learning styles.

3) Underutilization of people resources.

Government would also get more bang for its buck, if it looked not just at bucks but at people. At the moment, government funders take a spend and ration approach. They have a discrete pot of money - less now than in the years before economic austerity - and with that money, buy services for those deemed most 'vulnerable.' Resources are rationed for those deemed eligible. And yet money is not the only kind of resource. There's people resource too. Anneke has gained all this grit & know-how over the past year living in the shelter, but has no where to channel it. Same with Ivy and Skyla, and all of the other women. Whether it's their translation skills, their love of cooking, their desire for community, each of these women has something of value. That's overlooked.



Of course, the big question is how? **How to close the gaps?** There is no *one* solution. Simply adding new programs and services to an already crowded landscape will do little to address the structural set-up and over-reliance on professionalized responses. Instead of coming up with singular new programs and services, then, we started by brainstorming the underpinning *mechanisms* for change. The missing ingredients of current services, programs, and policies that we hypothesize are preventing women from really moving towards where they want to be. Let alone towards where the state wants them to be - in a job, without reliance on benefits. Our hunch is that if we can re-design services, programs, and policies around these mechanisms, we can enable women to do much more than just scrape by.

| <i>Missing ingredients</i> | <i>What this means</i> |
|---|---|
| Control & Competence | Giving women legitimate choice, authority, and competence to choose the kind of help they receive: delivered by whom, using which approaches, in what settings, over what period. |
| Exposure & Modeling | Introducing women to alternative life directions and behaviors - by showing and not simply telling how to do things differently. |
| Reciprocity & Friendships | Enabling women to give back not just to receive help. Creating a basis for a two-way exchange. |
| Energy & Hope | Increasing women's physical & mental energy levels to take on challenges, and have fun things to look forward to. |
| Information & Feedback | Giving women access to information in formats they can understand, and providing timely & constructive feedback about what's changing and what's not. |
| Intensity & Practice | Varying the dosage of therapeutic interventions to fit the woman - and giving women opportunities to <i>practice</i> what they are learning in context. |
| Opportunities to contribute | Providing women with opportunities to recognize and use their know-how, experiences, and skills. |
| Opportunities to meet people | Putting women in safe settings where they can meet non-professionals and make bridging connections. |
| Opportunities to re-write personal narrative | Giving women new 'source' material to add to their narratives - and opportunities to reflect & integrate these new experiences into their sense of self. |
| Time, Money & Incentives | Offering women paid opportunities that fit within their lives and their abilities - and yield development not simply income. |

Whilst we think all women would benefit from these mechanisms, we'd like to test how the sequence and dosage would vary for different segments of women.



For women like Anneke, who have a clear sense of what they want plus a lot of consolidated internal resources, opportunities seem to be what's missing. These are the women who are the clearest 'resource' for the system. They are ready to give back.



For women like Dana, who have a clear sense of what they want but feel held back because of heavy system engagement (e.g child protection, debt management, open legal cases) we think control & competence along with information & feedback are particularly important mechanisms.



For women like Yessica, who are stuck in constant crisis mode with intensive system engagement, we think the priority should be giving back (some) control. As well as building their energy & hope; exposing them to alternative futures; and offering a high dosage of rightly-timed & chosen support. Our hunch is this would be far more effective than the current punitive approach.



For women like Stefanie, who are very much in exploratory mode but without familial support, we think exposure & modeling, along with opportunities to meet new people and to re-write their narratives might bring about better outcomes.



For women like Effat, who feel lost, alone, and unable to think about the future, we think energy & hope; exposure & modeling, reciprocity; and opportunities to meet new people are critical mechanisms for re-building a life in a new country & culture.

We've come up with specific ideas for how to put these mechanisms into practice. These ideas are not intended as stand-alone programs and services. But as a concrete form for testing and modeling how to develop program & service logics around the missing mechanisms. Across a range of sectors - from domestic violence to mental health to immigration to housing to employment & training.

That means we wouldn't just be testing the front-end interactions as described here, we would also be testing the behind-the-scenes systemic enablers. So everything from new commissioning procedures, hiring practices, performance management contracts, and systems to collect & track data. Taking a combination of the ideas you see here, and making them real, would enable us to learn how to reconfigure parts of the system so we reduce some of the ineffectual redundancies and tap into women's natural resources.

22 Points for Change

energy & hope
 "I always feel tired and I've lost 25 kilos"

control
 "I have no idea if I'll get my daughter back"

opps to meet people & contribute
 "I don't know anybody around here"
 "I haven't talked to my mum since I left my ex"

Women like Stefanie



Women like Yessica



Women like Dana



Women like Effat



Women like Anneke



| | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Schuif aan Body & Mind</p> | <p>Vrouwen recht-bank Gids</p> | <p>Hallo buurvrouw Vrouwen Coop Buurtkeus Famillie verblijf Family Tune-up</p> |
| <p>Schuif aan Body & Mind</p> | <p>Pause & Play Gids Scenario schets</p> | <p>Hallo buurvrouw Buurtkeus</p> |
| <p>Schuif aan* Body & Mind</p> | <p>Gids Vrouwen Coop Scenario schets</p> | <p>Time Tasters Schuif aan Buurtkeus</p> |
| <p>Schuif aan* Body & Mind</p> | <p>Vrouwen recht-bank Gids Scenario schets</p> | <p>Hallo buurvrouw Famillie verblijf Vrouwen Coop Buurtkeus Mens Company</p> |
| <p>Schuif aan Body & Mind Feel Good pakket</p> | <p>Gids*</p> | <p>Hallo buurvrouw* Vrouwen Coop* Buurtkeus</p> |

Work Families & Children Culture Food Social Work

reciprocity & friendships
 "My daughter's behavior is really exhausting and none of the workers are helping"

intensity & practice
 "I get really stressed when I think about the past. The only thing that helps is just watching TV"

competency
 "I've been here for 15 years and I feel ashamed I still can't speak Dutch"

exposure & modelling
 "I've never lived on my own or worked outside the house"

time, money, feedback
 "I don't have enough money to buy fresh food for my children. Let alone go to that Zumba class"

| | | | | |
|--|--|--------------------------|---|--|
| | Personal Sponsor Feel Good pakket | | Weekend Weg Tussenjaar | Documenteer |
| Good Guys | Famillie verblijf Personal Sponsor Feel Good pakket | | Weekend Weg | Documenteer |
| Good Guys Hallo buurvrouw | Feel Good pakket | | | Klusrvrouwen Documenteer Leencirkel* Weekend Weg |
| Good Guys | Feel Good pakket | Driemaal Dutch | Weekend Weg Time Tasters | Klusrvrouwen Documenteer Leencirkel |
| | | Personal Sponsor* | | Klusrvrouwen Documenteer* Leencirkel* Weekend Weg |

Courses **Health** **Money** **Neighborhood** **Justice** **Housing** **Government** * = resource

Schuif aan

New platform

community-wide meal prepared with ingredients from box



http://www.fitday.com/fitness-articles/20_HealthyDinner.jpg



http://us.ridwest.media.clients.ellingtoncms.com/img/photos/2013/11/22/112513_HolidayEatingFILE_1670.jpg?b3f6a5d7692ccc373d56e40c708e3fa67d9af9d



http://media.masslive.com/girlsjustwannahavefun_impact/photo/11842470-large.jpg

whilst making new friends

Food Bank turned into a hub for gardening, cooking, and sharing yummy home-cooked meals. For all community members. Using salvaged ingredients in creative ways. A place to meet new people, learn cooking skills, expand culinary interests. Ala Master Chef.

Addresses

Food Money Health

Stakeholders

Food Bank (Voedselbank), community gardens, restaurant associations, small businesses.

International example

This idea takes inspiration from Feasts on the Bridge - an annual community-wide meal on London Bridge. As well as Atlanta's Community Food Bank, which runs gardens, food clubs, and cooking classes for all. Not just those who qualify as poor or hungry.

We would test:

- How to de-stigmatize & attract whole community
- How to connect to private sector
- How to change restaurant zoning, health & safety



Body & Mind*

New platform



http://womennewsnetwork.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/511-AFGHANISTAN_womenathletesSoccerImageUSStateDeptNov2012.jpg

Women playing a team sport, that they learned about on the exercise platform.



<http://anasterion.popworkouts.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/ScissorKicks.jpg>

Women training as pilates instructors

A new platform where local yoga, pilates, meditation instructors-in-training offer courses to women, and where women can also train to be instructors. Exercise videos, walking routes, cycling destinations, and a program of team sports also on offer. So that for every hour of therapy, women have an equivalent hour of physical exercise. And can use the exercise to build their network.

Addresses

Health

Stakeholders

Mental health providers, exercise providers

International example

This idea takes inspiration from online exercise training programs like FitOrbit.com - with customized meal plans and exercise plans. These programs don't have a local, face-to-face component or a training focus.

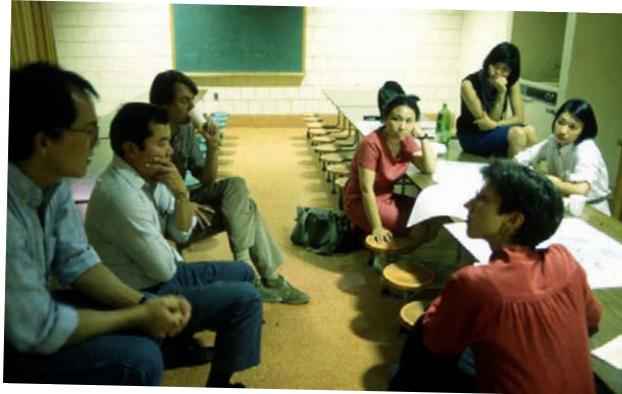
We would test:

- How to connect to local pilates/yoga/fitness schools
- How to incentivize exchange of classes
- How to address logistical barriers - timing, location, cultural issues



Vrouwen rechtbank

New institution



<http://davidfichter.net/images/1/Community-Meeting-Chinatoun.jpg>



Women supporting other women to share the impact of their abuse with their abusers' families

A restorative justice process led by women for women. Groups of women host conversations with abusers & their families. Using 'impact statements' from survivors to raise awareness and begin the healing process.

Addresses

Justice Healing

Rehabilitation

Stakeholders

Legal system

International example

This idea takes inspiration from Nari Adalat. A grassroots system of courts assisting women shut out of traditional justice systems. After a complaint is brought to a Nari Adalat court, its members — about 15 women - walk from house to house to conduct interviews and render judgements.

We're also weaving in principles from New Zealand's model of Restorative Justice. Where survivors and offenders meet face-to-face to discuss the harm caused.



We would test:

- How to link with formal judicial system
- How to incentivize family participation
- How to safeguard women's mental health & facilitate healing

Gids

Revised practice
(instead of analysis, diagnosis)



A woman reading stories of other women and deciding what supports fit her best



<http://www.worth-itprojects.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Worth-It-Projects-17.jpg>

A woman interviewing a 'social worker' and deciding what activities she wants to do.

A new set of service offers for women leaving domestic violence. Women choose the type and intensity of help that fits them. They log onto a website (a bit like a dating website), read profiles of social workers, psychologists, and volunteers, and 'hire' their own support team - using ratings & stories left by other women. They may 'taste test' different therapeutic styles and methods. And create their own recovery program of activities.

Facilitated by new hiring policies & contracts. Where professionals are hired as freelancers based on direct client feedback. And women who've been through domestic violence are also trained to offer support.

Addresses

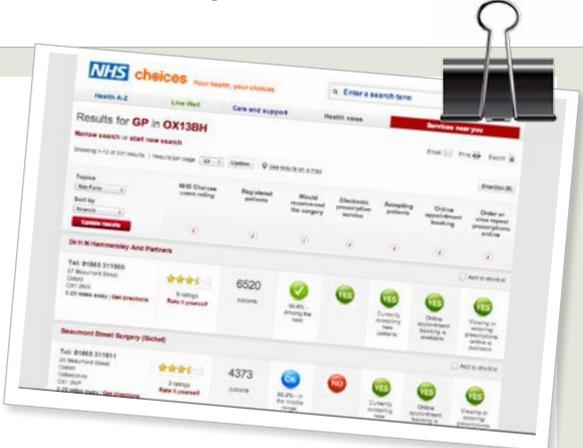
- Social Work
- Housing

Stakeholders

Mental health providers, shelter services

International example

This idea takes a bit of inspiration from health care websites - like NHS Choices - where consumers choose a health care providers that suits them. Based on ratings and reviews.



We would test:

- How to more flexibly hire social workers & counsellors
- How to give women access to stories & information to help them choose
- How to measure performance

Pause & Play

New practices, new rules



http://static2.wikia.nocookie.net/_cb20130109183234/dancemoms/images/c/c8/S03-E02_25-49.jpg



http://i.dailymail.co.uk/1/pix/2013/07/29/article-2380560-1BOCABB2000005DC-868_470x676.jpg

A woman meeting with her family sponsor - a cousin that agreed to receive training to intensively support her.

A new policy and service offer for women dealing with the removal of their children, and facing multiple challenges (e.g drug abuse). A 6-month 'service-free' zone. Where women choose one key supporter - which may be a professional or a trained-up friend or family member - to help them grieve and regroup. Without all of the meetings, the hassles, and constant reporting back of missteps.

Addresses

Social Work

Stakeholders

Service providers

International example

This idea draws on the concept of a Doula: a nonmedical person who helps a woman and her family before, during, and often, after the birth. How could we create a similar role for other transitions - like grieving & starting over?

We would test:

- How to re-define risk & create exceptions to confidentiality, mandated reporting, and punitive rules
- How to support the chosen 'supporters'
- How to vary the dosage, intensity, and settings



Scenario schets



<http://www.bis.gov/oooh/images/2145.jpg>



A woman creating 4 different scenarios based on the likely outcomes from her court case. These scenarios help her to prepare for what might happen next.

A new service for women facing extreme uncertainty - because of divorce, immigration, child protection. Rather than set goals, women work with trained experts to map out possible scenarios. Based on real probabilities. In order to help women see alternatives.

Addresses

Social Work

Stakeholders

Service providers

International example

Draws on the latest social science research. As captured in the book *The Antidote* by Oliver Burkeman. He suggests that planning in a climate of uncertainty does not work - and leads to poorer decision making. Instead, he advocates understanding the worst possible scenario, and working from there.

We would test:

- How to get child protection / debt / legal systems on board
- How to approximate probabilities of different events
- How to give women access to information in formats that make sense to them



Vrouwen Coop

New Institution



A woman taking-up the role of Greeter, welcoming new women to the 'house'.



A woman taking-up the role of Translator, helping non-Dutch speaking women communicate

A new kind of institution, with new roles. Where women create their own jobs at the shelter. Roles like 'Welcomers' 'Social Coordinators' or even ' Social Workers in Training.' By taking on these jobs, women could earn 'personal development' dollars to enable them to invest in their own learning and fun.

Addresses

Housing

Social network

Stakeholders

Liveable Model in Rotterdam?
Moviera could adopt

International example

Draws inspiration from university housing co-ops in the USA. Where students take on roles in exchange for lower room & board. Roles like Resident Assistant, and Resident Computer Nerd. Resident Assistants are fellow students who plan social events. Resident Computer Nerds are fellow students who help to troubleshoot and teach computer skills.

Draws ideas from Clink Prison Restaurants - a new social enterprise operating in prisons throughout the UK, where prisoners are trained to take on restaurant roles and operate a money-making venture for the public.

We would test

- How to re-think staff hiring and create space for women-led roles
- How to train & support women in their roles - particularly with high turnover
- How to give women their own budgets and opportunities to meaningfully use their earned resources



Hallo buurvrouw

New role
(backend system to do matching)



Women take on the role of Neighborhood Brokers, going door-to-door to meet people & enter their interests into a database



A woman getting introduced to two neighbors based on their shared love of the TV show 'Buffy, the Vampire Slayer'

A new role that introduces women to at least 3 people in the community with similar micro interests (a TV show they both like; a love of dogs; a passion for cooking Turkish food) Network Builders curate a local database with the interests of residents, and use that to match people together. They also help with those awkward first conversations.

Addresses

Neighborhood

Social network

Stakeholders

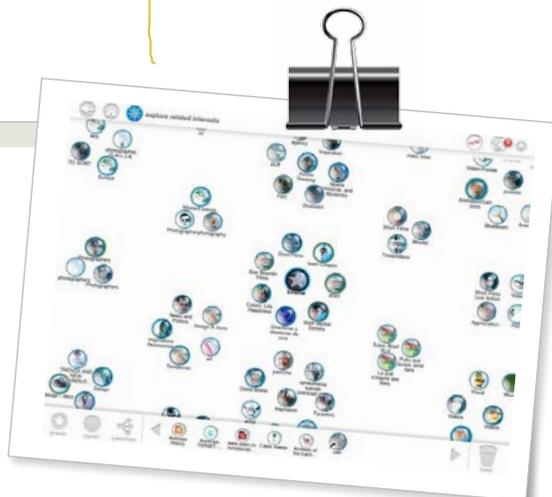
Housing associations, local neighborhood groups

International example

Draws inspiration for How About We - a dating portal which connects people around shared experiences. People are matched based on what they'd both like to do together.

We would test:

- How to design, train, support, and incentive the introducer role
- How to create micro-databases of neighbors interests
- How to re-think risk & safety, confidentiality, etc.



Buurtkeus

Revised Policy



Women choose their living neighborhood according to what they want and can contribute to the community



http://www.thecommunitymeal.com/resources/misc-photos/306620_277036252375452_1148963467_n%5B1%5D.jpg



<http://www.bnrr.nl/incoming/520664-1308/woning-huur-578.jpg/ALTERNATES/1/woning-huur-578.jpg>

Private properties are given subsidies and DV awareness training to give women more housing options.

A new policy and process for matching women to available housing. Addresses both the supply and demand side. Supply of houses increased by offering subsidy & domestic violence training to private landlords. Women choose housing based on what they could give to and get from the local neighborhood. Women can also swap houses with each other.

Addresses

Housing

Stakeholders

Letting agencies, tax office.

International example

Draws some small inspiration from Section 8 Housing in the USA. Where community-minded private landlords receive a direct subsidy from government to house low income folks who could otherwise not afford the property.

We would test:

- How to re-design housing matching processes
- How to incentivize private landlords - and change tax codes
- How to give women local opportunities to use their skills



Famillie verblijf

New role



Two families living together, supporting each other, and matched based on similar interests, parenting styles, and values

http://www.beechbrook.org/syncshow/uploaded_media/content/foster_care_and_adoption/Foster_Care_and_adoption-1309886947.jpg

A new role - Family Foster Carers. Where women and children leaving domestic violence are matched with a family, who have extra space in their home, who have been trained to support them. As an alternative to shelters.

Addresses

Housing

Social Work

Stakeholders

Volunteer organizations (Humanitas, Wisselwerk) Foster care organizations (Pachtus?)

International example



Draws inspiration from Family to Family, a neighborhood-based system of foster care. Where a whole neighborhood looks after young people & their parents.

We would test:

- How to find and support host families
- How to balance privacy with intensive support
- How to dis-aggregate shelter resources to resource alternative placements

Family Tune-up

New role

A family repairer reframes a cultural issue - and shares how she eased tensions with her mother



A new role to ease family tensions - particularly cultural tensions. Well respected members of the cultural community are recruited and trained to initiate dialogues within traditional families, and help women take the first small steps towards shared understanding.

Addresses

Social work

Families & children

Stakeholders

Cultural organizations

We would test:

- How to find, train & support family repairers with cultural fluidity
- How to engage the families of women - the value proposition
- How to integrate these supports within other therapeutic & judicial models

Time Tasters

New program



A woman trying her hand at baking for an afternoon. Tomorrow she will try aged care.

A new program for wome re-entering the job market or seeking a change. Women are paired with different sized and shaped experiences in the community (e.g at the bakery, the local theatre, accounting firm, bus company) to shape their aspirations and build their informal network.

Addresses

Participation

Social network

Stakeholders

Council, small business owners

International example

Draws inspiration from Loops, a prototype in London that members of InWithForward ran in 2008. Here, young people were connected to suprising experiences in the community to increase their sense of possibility. A new role of catalyst was created to find the experiences.

We woud test:

How to engage local businesses & create a value proposition

How to match women to the opportunities

How to integrate 'catalyzing' opportunities into Werkplein's workflow



Mens Company

Revised
program



*Men having a chat
(and later a beer)
about living life
in a new country,
without much
status & respect*

<http://lifaalliance.org/safeplace/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Mens-Support-Group-for-web.jpg>

A new policy & service offer for recently arrived migrant families - particularly men - to support their transition. Men get paired with a man from a similar culture who was in their same situation. And receive preventative support to manage the stress and the shame. Designed as a prophylactic against domestic violence.

Addresses

Families & children

Immigration

Stakeholders

Immigration,
mental health

We would test:

- How to integrate within Immigration process & existing volunteer supports?
- How to find, train & support men who've transitioned well to Dutch society?
- How to match 'new arrival' men & expand social network?

Good Guys

New role



Source: <http://www.njewishnews.com/njln.com/043009/njProtestersSayNJCourt.html>

A guy from the community matched with a single mom and her son, reading a bedtime story

A new program that recruits men in the community and upsills them to do fun activities with single moms and their kids. In order to model different behavior & male roles to kids.

Addresses

Families & children

Social network

Stakeholders

Volunteer organizations (Humanitas, Wisselwerk)

International example

Draws some inspiration from Big Brothers, Big Sisters - the United States' largest mentoring program for young people.

We would test:

- How to find and support male mentors?
- How to match mentors with families?
- How to build meaningful relationships?



Personal Sponsor

New role
(could be alternative to social worker)



A sponsor sharing how she got through a rough patch over coffee with a woman living at the shelter

Source: <http://www.seas.upenn.edu/images/awe/mentoring.jpg>

A new role. A woman who has been through the DV experience who offers personal coaching. Like an AA sponsor. Someone you can call day and night.

Addresses

Social Work

System navigation

Stakeholders

Volunteer organizations, Moviera

International example

Draws inspiration from the Sponsor Role of Alcoholics Anonymous. Research shows that being a sponsor has big benefits - helping to motivate the sponsor to stay sober and make good decisions.

We would test:

- How to find, train, & support women who've been through Domestic Violence?
- How to re-design credentialing & hiring processes?
- How to resource the role - when does it complement and when does it replace professional roles?



Feel Good pakket

New program



A lovely looking package arrives in the mail, containing a book of short stories, a film to watch, and flavored popcorn.

A new product & program. Women receive a package in the mail every week. With a 'diet' of films to watch, books to read (in their own language), music to listen to, and a few nice surprises. Used to spark reflection and conversation. Package adapted to fit different seasons, and transitional moments.

Addresses

Health

Stakeholders

Mental health providers, Moviera

International example

Draws inspiration from successful bibliotherapy programs in the UK - where people receive a 'curated' list of books & films to help gain life perspective. Research shows bibliotherapy can be effective at treating depression - by giving people a strong sense of validation, belonging, and motivation.

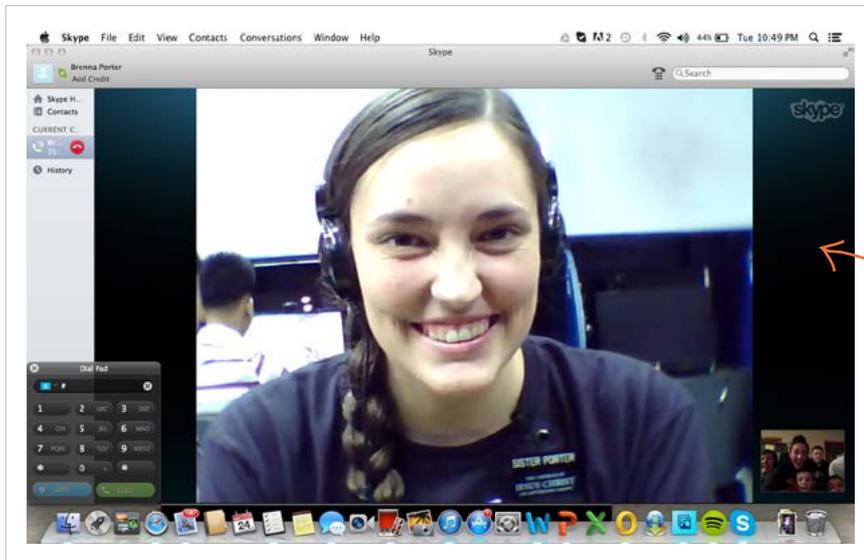
We would test:

- How to integrate into other mental health service offers?
- How to find & curate the most useful content?
- How to prompt women to reflect & get the most from the content?



Driemaal Dutch

New platform, program



A volunteer language coach practices Dutch with a woman Wednesday night at 10pm. Language practice happens on demand.

A new platform for learning Dutch - with a range of learning styles and modalities. Women choose a mix of different ways to learn and practice the language any time, on demand. Including virtual learning, TV content, podcasts, in-context learning, and small group practice.

Addresses

Language

Immigration

Stakeholders

Council, immigration, schools

International example

Draws inspiration from the Kahn Academy - a free online portal for learning that gives students a personalized learning dashboard, over 100,000 exercise problems, and 4000 micro lectures via video tutorials. To use anytime - day or night.

We would test:

- How to dis-aggregate 'language learning' budgets so money flows to students, not to institutions?
- How to shift testing requirements & focus on using Dutch in-context?
- How to create the right mix of content on the platform, and figure out students learning styles?



Weekend Weg

New platform, new roles



Source: <http://www.whitefishchamber.org/files/471.jpg>

A woman and her 2 kids visit Maastricht for the weekend, where they are matched with a local family. They go to a festival and have fun together!

An new platform that connects women & children to 'free' short breaks, hosted by families in different communities around Holland. Women can browse 'short stay' options and choose a host they'd like to meet or a community they'd like to sample. Designed to expand women's networks and community connections. And give women something to look forward to on the weekends - when they feel most alone.

Addresses

Social network

Communities

Stakeholders

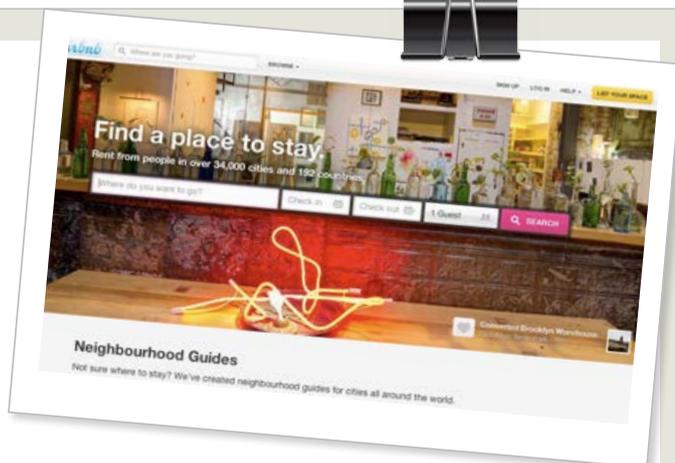
Volunteer organizations

International example

Inspired by Air B&B where travellers can find all different kinds of places to stay, and different personality hosts in thousands of cities around the world.

We would test:

- How to find and incentivize hosts?
- How to work with transport services to reduce costs?
- How to connect with local councils & housing associations so women could more easily 'move' to places where they build their network?



New program

Tussenjaar



Stefanie on a Sydney beach during her Year of Discovery. Instead of spending the year 'recovering' at a shelter, Stefanie meets a whole new network of friends & opens-up her mind to new possibilities

<http://www.youtolife.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Weekend-Away-by-Space-Odissey-Flickr.jpg>

New program that re-settles women escaping domestic violence in a totally new context for a year - like a Study Abroad program - so that they can explore themselves and live the future (rather than plan for it). Geared particularly for women with high 'safety' risks (code red).

Addresses

Shelter alternatives

Stakeholders

Education, Commercial Gap Year providers?

International example

Draws inspiration from the idea of Gap Years - where students take time off to travel, try on a new role, and discover themselves.

We would test:

- How to dis-aggregate shelter placements - so women can take the amount that would be spent on them in a shelter and use for gap years?
- How to set-up overseas placements with right level of support?
- How to enable women to transition back to Dutch society?



Documenteater

New role



A woman interviews another woman who recently left the shelter, and compiles her story. Information about her confidence level and her network goes into a database so that services can better target their supports.

A new paid role for women, and a new source of data for the Gemeente. Women collect stories of peers who have left the shelter, and track indicators they believe matters (e.g feeling lonely, new friendships). Data used to help make better resourcing, commissioning, hiring, and programmatic decisions.

Addresses

Money

Participation

Service

Stakeholders

Council, Moviera

International example

Draws inspiration from the Family Independence Initiative in Oakland, California where families are paid to be “researchers” and record data against 200+ indicators each week. This data is used by government and not-for-profits to better direct resources, and more effectively support families living in poverty.

We would test:

- How to collect data that's useful for women and for the system?
- How to use the data in commissioning decisions?
- How to re-think research & evaluation budgets to free up resources to pay women?



Klusvrouwen

New roles,
new rules!



A woman does the grocery shopping for a neighbor down the street. Later in the afternoon, she'll cook meals for busy families in her area. She receives a monthly payment for her efforts.

A new paid role for women. Women earn money by taking on small community jobs that fit between dropping off and picking up their kids from school. Activities like grocery shopping for older neighbors, cooking extra portions of food for busy families, translation skills, after-school care, mending clothes, etc. Payment could be monetary or in-kind.

Addresses

Money

Neighborhood

Participation

Stakeholders

Council, aged care providers

We would test:

- How to work with elder care providers, disability providers, and existing services to chunk work differently?
- How to create a local 'marketplace' of help?
- How to help women become 'freelancers' and take on these 'small jobs'?

Leencirkel

New program for context

A group of women set financial goals for the coming month and cultivate peer-to-peer accountability



A new program for saving money. Women join a small group and each contribute a small amount to the pot every month. Each month, a woman receives the pot of money.

Addresses

Money

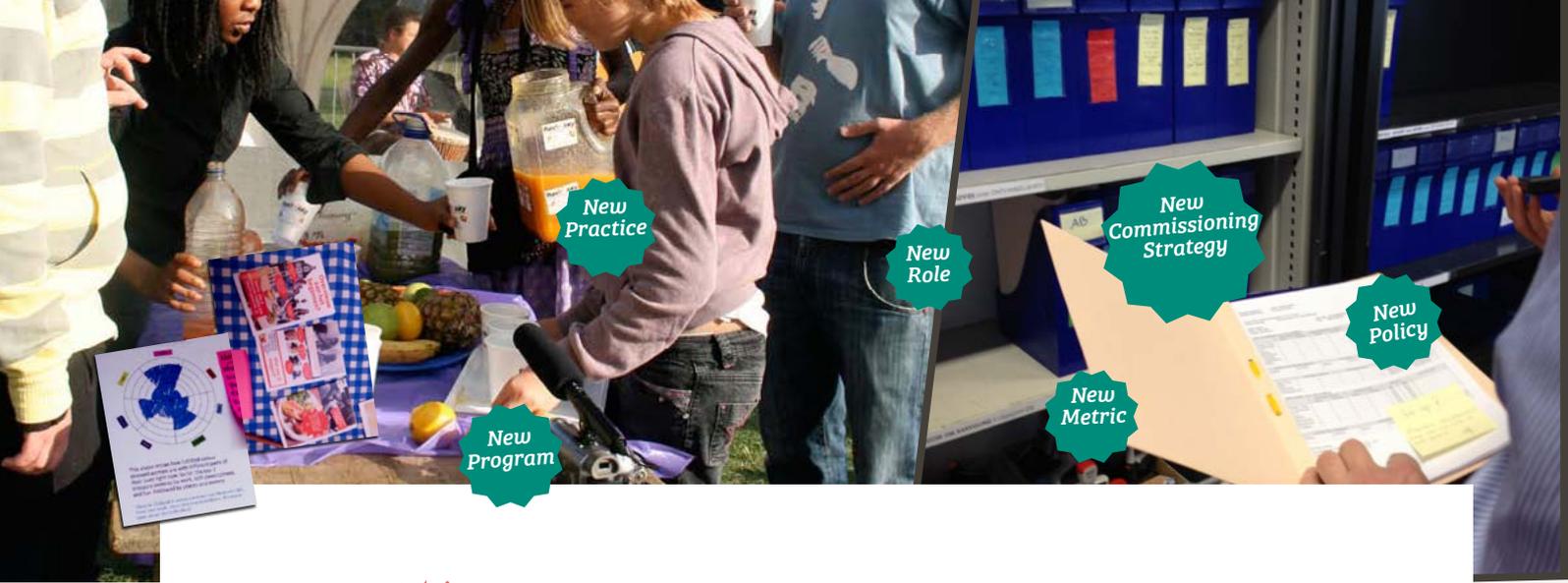
International example

Draws inspiration from Su-Sus Women's Savings Groups strong within immigrant communities in Mexico and the USA.

We would test:

- How to curate lending circles and build basis of trust?
- How to get financial institutions to recognize 'credit' ratings from lending circles?
- How to best support the lending circles & spread good practice?





prototypes

Prototypes are not pilots. A pilot is about validating if a new program, service, or policy works. A prototype is about learning how a new program, service, or policy could work. It's more experimental. There is no blueprint or plan to follow. You iterate as you go along, and intentionally hit system barriers in order to develop solutions and work-arounds.

It's not hard to come up with ideas. It's much harder to make ideas real, and figure out what actually creates change and for whom. This is what prototyping is all about. To prototype is to run a small version of a program, service, or policy in order to develop the practice as you go along, and work out some of the perversions and kinks.

Where pilots come from a public administration paradigm, prototypes come from a design paradigm. Designers 'manage' risk through small-scale experimentation- failing often and early before the stakes are too high. Public administrators, on the other hand, tend to 'manage' risk through planning - trying hard to avoid failure all together. But by avoiding failure, pilots also avoid sustained change.

Our ambition is to bring to life many of the ideas laid out here, and along the way, build a local movement for change.

This will mean forming a team - inclusive of women and system stakeholders - to make and test elements like:

Roles

- Job Descriptions
- Recruitment
- Hiring
- Contracting & Remuneration
- Learning & Development
- Work load
- Support
- Systems
- Performance Management

Programs / Services / Networks

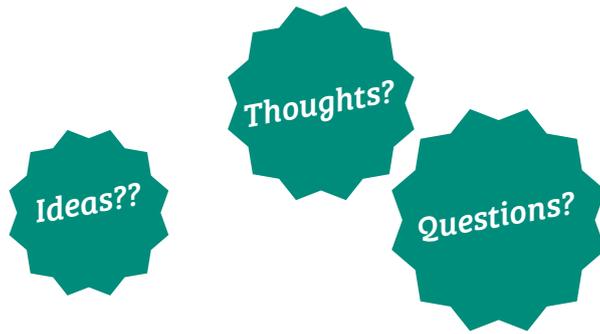
- Value Propositions
- Key Interactions
- Sequence & Settings
- Tools & Materials
- Metrics

Platforms / Processes

- Principles
- Quality standards
- Scripts
- Technologies

Policies

- Intent
- Theoretical Framework
- Language
- Format



We invite you to join us. And to give us feedback. What are your thoughts, ideas, questions?

We cannot prototype alone. We need partners from inside the existing service system, along with champions outside the existing service system. Who see the need for something different. Are open to learning. And curious to engage in a process that starts at the bottom with women, rather than at the top with policies & services. Could that be you and your organization? Which ideas would you like to see happen?

You might be:

- A local council
- A domestic violence organization
- A housing association
- A mental health organization
- An employment & training provider
- A Foodbank
- A school of social work
- A language school
- An immigrant support organization
- A volunteering organization
- A business association
- A foundation
- A government department

Partners will bring their readiness to engage, along with some tangible resources to the table. These might be financial resources, people resources, and/or political resources.

For each prototype, we will build a local team with designers, sociologists, women, and system stakeholders. The team will work full-time for three to six months to test the idea at a small-scale, to document the process, and to enroll more and more people in the learning. By the end of the initial prototyping period, we'll have a working model that can be locally embedded. Plus a movement of women mobilized to take the model forward. Because we believe women must be the ultimate owners of change.

partners

Reflections from a Social Worker

Carita's day job is as a social worker at Moviera, Apeldoorn. For the past 3 months, she's added lunches, dinners, shadowing, debriefing, and filming to her day-to-day schedule. All to be part of our team. Here she shares her personal reflections.

Aanleiding

Op mijn eerste werkdag in Apeldoorn maakte ik kennis met Sarah, Yani en Thijs. Drie mensen van InWithForward/Kennisland die in opdracht van Federatie Opvang etnografisch onderzoek gaan doen in Moviera.

InWithForward/Kennisland gaat onderzoeken hoe vrouwen die bij ons verblijven kunnen participeren in de maatschappij. Kan dit al vanuit de opvang? En wat is daar dan, vanuit het oogpunt van vrouwen, voor nodig? Wat helpt/ wat werkt?

Welke doelen hebben vrouwen op het moment dat zij naar Moviera komen? En welke wanneer zij in Moviera zijn? (Zijn er doelen bij die gaan over participatie?) En, hoe gaan zij deze doelen verwezenlijken? Hoe succesvol zijn zij? Wat helpt hen? Kunnen wij nieuwe ideeën ontwikkelen die hen verder helpen?

InWithForward/Kennisland heeft meer informatie boven tafel gekregen dan bij hun oorspronkelijke opdracht hoorde. Dat is een mooie toegift, een extra cadeau als het ware!

Mijn rol is die van 1^e aanspreekpunt en Sarah, Yani en Thijs helpen aan contacten voor hun onderzoek. Zij starten bij de vrouwen die in de opvang verblijven en vervolgens gaan zij in contact met alle partijen en instanties waar vrouwen mee te maken hebben. Drie energieke, positieve mensen die voortvarend te werk gaan en iedereen uitnodigen met hen mee te doen en te leren van hun bevindingen.

Verrassende start

Geen probleemdefinities, hypothesen en enquêtes, het beeld dat ik bij onderzoek had, maar een uitnodiging voor een gezamenlijke activiteit. Eerst iets samen doen. Eerst contact maken, van mens tot mens.

Daarna de vraag om bijvoorbeeld samen een maaltijd te nuttigen (een andere activiteit kon ook), in ruil voor het verhaal van vrouwen hoe zij hun situatie en hun verblijf in Moviera ervaren.

Ik heb geen idee wat het allemaal op zal leveren. Maar de wijze van kijken en nieuwsgierige vragen van InWithForward/Kennisland bevallen me.

Het onderzoek

Veel vrouwen kiezen voor een gezamenlijke maaltijd die vervolgens door InWithForward/Kennisland wordt geregeld. (Mc Donalds scoort erg hoog)

Het contact tussen onderzoekers en de vrouwen is hartelijk, spontaan en gebaseerd op interesse. De onderzoekers zijn mensen die werkelijk geïnteresseerd zijn in het verhaal van de vrouwen. Vrouwen willen graag hun verhaal vertellen, omdat zij het contact als prettig ervaren en graag over zichzelf willen vertellen. De onderzoekers hebben een foto van hun familie bij zich: "Kijk, dit is mijn familie, mijn vader en mijn moeder. Ik ben enig kind en geboren in Texas". En dit is de opstap van de onderzoekers om te vragen naar de familie van de vrouwen.

Ik ben verbaasd. Iets over jezelf vertellen? Het gaat toch om de vrouwen?

Het treft mij deze start van het contact. Ik zie vrouwen die niet in de rol van hulpvrager of 'het onderzoeksobject' zitten, maar in de rol van vrouw. De context die wij neerzetten: Jij bent

de cliënt die hulp nodig heeft en ik ben diegene die jou gaat helpen (lees: ben de deskundige); die context doet iets met vrouwen, het maakt hen kleiner.

En: ik zie dat Sarah en Yani iets over zichzelf vertellen, zonder aan 'zelfonthulling' te doen. Zij stellen wel degelijk de vrouwen centraal en blijven professioneel.

Schaduwen

InWithForward/Kennisland wil graag ook vanuit het oogpunt van de werkers kijken. Zo ook lopen zij o.a. een dag met mij mee om inzicht te krijgen wat het werk inhoudt. Sarah is een dag mijn schaduw. Een schaduw die geïnteresseerd is en nieuwsgierig vraagt: Why? Is it helpful? For what? For whom?

De vragen zijn interessant en activeren. Ik zou iedereen zo'n schaduw gunnen! InWithForward/Kennisland keek niet alleen door de ogen van mij naar het werk, maar het werkte ook vice versa: Ik keek ook door de ogen van een buitenstaander naar mijn werk. Hoe zinvol is dat?!

Resultaten

InWithForward/Kennisland is aan het einde gekomen van haar onderzoek en zal deze binnenkort presenteren. Sommige resultaten zijn opzienbarend, sommige teleurstellend, sommige verdrietig, sommige verbazen en sommige resultaten bevestigen.

Het lezen van de resultaten zal iedereen doen vanuit haar/zijn perspectief:

Welke bril heb jij op bij het lezen ervan?
Is het belangrijk dat de methodiek terug te lezen is in de resultaten?
Is het belangrijk dat de vrouwen tevreden zijn

over de hulpverlening?
Is het belangrijk dat je leest dat er grond en reden is om discussies aan te gaan over...?
Is het belangrijk dat?

Of

Is het behouden van je werk op dit moment misschien wel veel belangrijker dan de verdere ontwikkeling ervan?

Hoe dan ook, één ding is zeker: iedereen zal met een andere bril-op kijken naar de resultaten van het onderzoek van InWithForward/Kennisland.

Wat mij betreft is dit onderzoek een goede aanleiding en reden om in de organisatie door te praten over wat de resultaten kunnen betekenen voor het werk van alle dag.

Moviera is volop in ontwikkeling en het onderzoek en de resultaten kunnen daar een goede bijdrage aan leveren. Ik hoop dat dit zo gezien wordt.

Verder hoop ik dat iedereen aangestoken is door de vragen:

Why? Waarom doe ik wat ik doe?

Is it helpful? Helpt mijn actie om?

How? Hoe helpt het? Op welke manier helpt het?

For whom? Voor wie is het helpend? Voor de vrouwen? Mijzelf? Mijn collega's? Mijn medewerkers? De organisatie? De ketenpartners? De subsidiegever?

with thanks

This project would not have been possible without funding from the Federatie Opvang; the engagement of Moviera, Apeldoorn; and most of all, the willingness of the women and so many of their service providers to open-up and share their stories with us. We're incredibly grateful.



The women at the shelter:

| | | |
|----------|-----------|---------|
| Anneke | Dana | Mahvash |
| Ivy | Salima | Noa |
| Saffia | Wabisa | Haweeyo |
| Effa | Sofia | Firouza |
| Yessica | Christina | Vera |
| Stefanie | Skyla | Trudie |

Government, organizations and service providers:

| | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Moviera Apeldoorn | HVO Querido | Blijfgroep |
| Gemeente Apeldoorn | Riwis | Verenigde |
| Workplein | Felua Groep | Samenwerkende |
| Activerium | MinVWS | Woningcorporaties |
| Voedselbank Apeldoorn | Omnizorg | (VSW) |
| Foenix | Kadera | Aventus |
| Geluk & Co | De Passerel | Leger Des Heils |
| Wisselwerk | Stichting VSW | MD Veluwe |
| | Zwerfjongeren | |
| | GGNet | |

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We'd love to start a conversation with you about what you've read here.

- We can package-up the stories as a professional development experience for staff.

- We can facilitate dialogues & debates in your organization about the gaps & ideas.

- We can chat about our methods & how to take a prototype forward.

>> hello@inwithforward.com