

Consultancy Report

Working towards a financially viable future
for the Social Garden in Sliedrecht.



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Source cover page illustrations

Logo “Moestuin Sliedrecht – samen doen” from <https://www.socialemoestuin.nl/index.htm>.

Picture taken by Wouter Barthmuss during the team’s visit to the Social Garden in Sliedrecht on 14-11-2022.

Executive summary

The Social Garden in Sliedrecht is a social initiative where people can work together in a vegetable garden. The organisation aims to provide activities, workshops and (food)products, and to create an accessible meeting place for the residents of Sliedrecht. The board of the Social Garden in Sliedrecht has called in the WUR Science Shop to answer its concerns about the continuation of its current activities. The Social Garden struggles with its financial resources as most of the funds are temporary. This project aimed to advise the Social Garden about options for a stable and sustainable future, by increasing the financial viability of the foundation. The present multidisciplinary Entrepreneurial Academic Consultancy Training (E-ACT) team has been inspired by this social initiative and aimed to provide sound academic and entrepreneurial advice to the board of the Social Garden on how to increase their financial inflow and how to reformulate the current business model or introduce new ones. Drawing from social sciences methods to gather information from relevant stakeholders, an assessment of the current value proposition and business model of the Social Garden were performed. These canvasses informed a SWOT analysis, and the link between the current weaknesses of the organisation and the opportunities available was made by providing two main recommendations: to reallocate the current resources available, and to measure and clearly communicate the social value brought by the Social Garden to different stakeholders and the residents of Sliedrecht through the provision of crucial social services.

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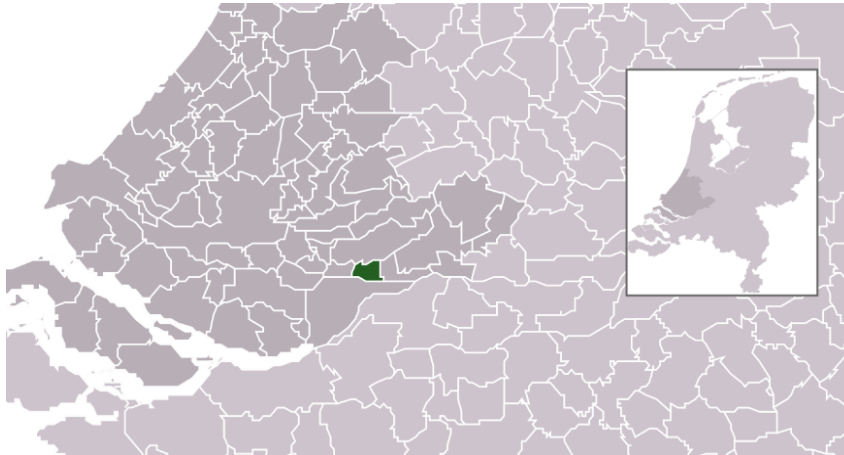
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Introduction

Background



Sliedrecht is a small municipality located in the province of Zuid-Holland, in the West of the Netherlands. It is home to around 25.000 inhabitants, and it covers about 13 square kilometres of land.

Figure 1: Location of the municipality of Sliedrecht in the Netherlands.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sliedrecht>

Founded in 2010, the “*Stichting Sociale Moestuin Sliedrecht*” (the Sliedrecht Social Vegetable Garden Foundation) strives to bring the residents of the municipality of Sliedrecht closer together through an “accessible, inspiring and healthy vegetable garden”, to provide education, and to support social target groups in their integration into society. Thus, the Social Garden carries out essential activities that support the community, providing social and health services through the collective management of 40.000 square meters in the centre of Sliedrecht. Its motto is “*samen doen*” (doing together).



Figure 2: Logo of the social garden in Sliedrecht.

<http://www.socialemoestuin.nl>

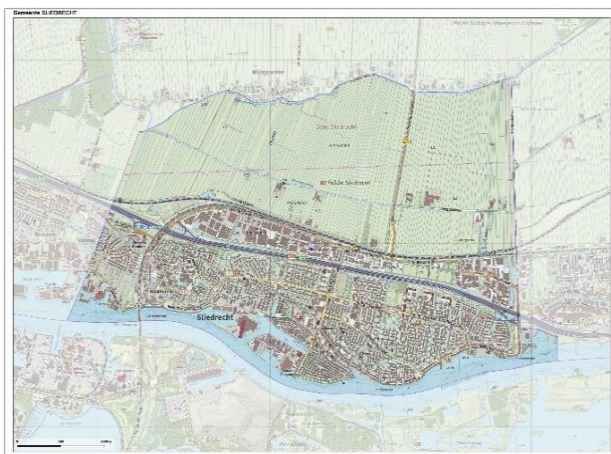


Figure 3: A map of the municipality of Sliedrecht

Source <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sliedrecht>

All residents of Sliedrecht can visit the Social Garden to learn about organic farming practices, meet others around a cup of coffee and tea, or buy fresh and affordable fruits and vegetables produced locally. As of now, the foundation relies financially mainly on the municipality subsidies, as well as on selling the fruits and vegetables produced, projects in collaboration with partners, and the support from companies or individuals donating to the Social Garden.

Commissioner

The Social Garden in Sliedrecht was founded in 2010 as an idea to bring the community of Sliedrecht together by growing vegetables on a plot of land that previously was only covered by weeds. Nowadays the Social Garden is running thanks to the dedication, time and energy of the voluntary board of the Social Garden, a team of paid employees, and participants of the work integration and language programmes.

The long-term goal of the Social Garden is to keep pursuing its social mission of creating a community, providing education, and bringing people back to the labour market, with the latter helping vulnerable people of the community such as people with working disabilities or with low financial resources. The Social Garden aims to do this through integration/language programs and various social activities offered to the residents of Sliedrecht, such as different workshops, the 'Groene Huiskamer', an educational school programme, food bank partnerships, and themed activities on festivities like Easter or Halloween. The board would also like to reach out more to the residents of Sliedrecht in terms of awareness of the Social Garden's existence and engagement with the activities offered.

To further develop the organisation and embrace the growth of its projects, the Social Garden is trying to transition from a volunteer-based management to professionally run projects by relying on skilled paid workers, some of whom have been trained in the work integration programmes. However, the organisation of the Social Garden is currently running into a major struggle with the financial viability of the Social Garden, which negatively affects the accomplishment of its activities and mission. This financial challenge in turn negatively affects the organisation's structure, leading to a heavy workload for the voluntary board as the lack of funds does not cover a sufficient compensation for workers on essential tasks, thus being currently filled by voluntary work.

For that reason, the board of the Social Garden contacted the Science Shop of Wageningen University and Research, which collaborates with non-profit organizations looking for expert advice and research on the topics related to the education and research carried out at WUR. The science shop, working as an intermediate, turned to Wageningen Environmental Research (WEnR) to lead this project, and assigned the particular task to investigate new business models for the Social Garden, as part of the broader Science Shop project, to this consultancy team as part of the Academic Consultancy Training course.

Problem analysis

After several informative meetings with the commissioner, two visits to the Social Garden in Sliedrecht in which we interviewed many different internal and external stakeholders, and a careful analysis of the initial information provided, our consultancy team identified several issues endangering the proper functioning of the Social Garden and threatening its sustained provision of social services for the residents of Sliedrecht.

- **Financial resources:** As presented to our team, the current financial flows are not tailored to the needs of the garden. The reliance of the Social Garden on external funding has always been high, and it appears that the current business model is not able to provide enough resources for the organisation to continue with the newly reduced amount of government subsidies.
- **Local government support:** The municipality of Sliedrecht is adjusting their funding yearly. The Social Garden is financially dependent on those funds, so the support of the municipality is crucial. When the municipality decides to reduce the funds, this can potentially jeopardise its subsistence. In addition, there are recently approved plans of future urban development that will affect the Social Garden.
- **Community engagement:** After talking to multiple residents through street interviews, the consultancy team noticed that a significant amount of the residents of Sliedrecht is unaware of the benefits provided or activities organised by the Social Garden. Therefore, the community-building purpose of the Social Garden is based on debatable grounding without full support from the locals, which is also a major concern for the continuation of the activities.
- **Value proposition:** From a business point of view, there exist a problem of adequation between the target groups and the value proposition of the organisation. Namely, the needs of the people that the Social Garden aims to bring together (the residents of Sliedrecht) are not properly met by the current setting of activities or by the communication of the plethora of benefits the Social Garden can offer.
- **Volunteer work:** The Social Garden's main resource is the time people willingly spend on its management and development. For example, all the board members are working voluntarily. However, increasing the workload on tasks that rely on voluntary work from board members and volunteers is causing major organisational problems. The organisation's high dependency on people's motivation makes it vulnerable to any struggle that might appear, may it be inter-personal or financial.

Project problem definition and stakeholder analysis

Our consultancy team will focus on the main problem identified for the Social Garden, which is the struggle with the organisation's current and future financial viability. What is meant by this is that the Social Garden is not currently able to draw sufficient inflow of money from their practices, such as generating revenue from sales and receiving government funding, to maintain their current social initiative. This could be a risk for the continued existence of the Social Garden in the future and thus the Social Garden's ability to pursue its mission. Besides the financial viability, the awareness of and engagement in the Social Garden among the residents of Sliedrecht is also identified as an issue. In this project, the increase of engagement refers to 'getting more residents involved in the activities and services the garden provides'. Without proper identification of the group(s) of people that the Social Garden is hoping to attract, and an adequate communication and promotion towards these groups of people, the carrying out of activities with a relatively small group of volunteers and participants (engagement) would diminish the social impact.

The financial viability is a key issue because the Social Garden is dependent on a permanent inflow of financial resources in order for it to keep carrying out its activities and providing its services to the community. At this moment, the funds that the Social Garden receives are primarily temporary, as they are based on government subsidies that could come to an end. In addition, most sponsors (the 'Friends of Sliedrecht') are providing material supplies and not financial funds, as it can be more economically sound for a company, more visible and easier to be acknowledged (e.g., the free construction of a new building for the community by Kringloop Winkel of Sliedrecht) in contrast to providing funds to cover salary costs for example. Moreover, the Social Garden provides paid services to a social housing corporation (Tablis Wonen, an important partner of the Social Garden) which supplements and diversifies the revenues of the Social Garden. However, these activities are very labour intensive and time-consuming, and therefore a balance needs to be found with new business models that aim to make the Social Garden to be financially self-sufficient, more resilient, and more independent from external revenues.

The other main issue lies within the awareness and engagement among the Social Garden's target groups. As of now, the Social Garden seems to be struggling at making the residents of Sliedrecht familiar with the Social Garden, its social purpose, and the different activities offered on site and outside of the garden. At this moment the Social Garden is active on social media (Instagram, Twitter and Facebook), using Sliedrecht 24 (an online local news website) and sometimes appears in the local newspaper (Het Kompas), but without the expected outcome of making all the residents of Sliedrecht aware of the Social Garden and its activities. As a result, the sustained growth and diversification of the Social Garden projects are limited by the number of volunteers and the demand for activities that would be created during the interactions happening in the Social Garden's premises. The limited awareness among the community is also a problem because the Social Garden is initially intended for the community itself and the founders have at heart to improve social wellbeing of the local residents,

regardless of their socio-economic or health situations. Therefore, the lack of awareness is also impeding some potential beneficiaries of the social services to access those services from the Social Garden, such as free meals or low-cost vegetables, or help in individual-owned gardens elsewhere in Sliedrecht. Finally, the lack of awareness and engagement of the residents in Sliedrecht is partly hindering the strong position the Social Garden wants to showcase when engaging with local authorities, in order to put forward the great social impact it already has, and services rendered to the community are not properly acknowledged for in terms of public funding.

Stakeholder analysis

The main stakeholders who play a role in this project are the workers in the Social Garden (members of the board, project leader, volunteers’ coordinators, paid employees, volunteers, language and work integration programmes’ participants), the residents of Sliedrecht, the municipality of Sliedrecht, the environment (comprising the garden’s plot itself, but also green spaces in the locality), the educational institutions in Sliedrecht (local schools), the sponsors and friends of the Social Garden, the project partners (Tablis Wonen and Rotary/Lions club for example) and welfare & health organizations (such as the GGD for food education and sensitization programmes). The stakeholder diagram can be found below, which gives a clear overview.

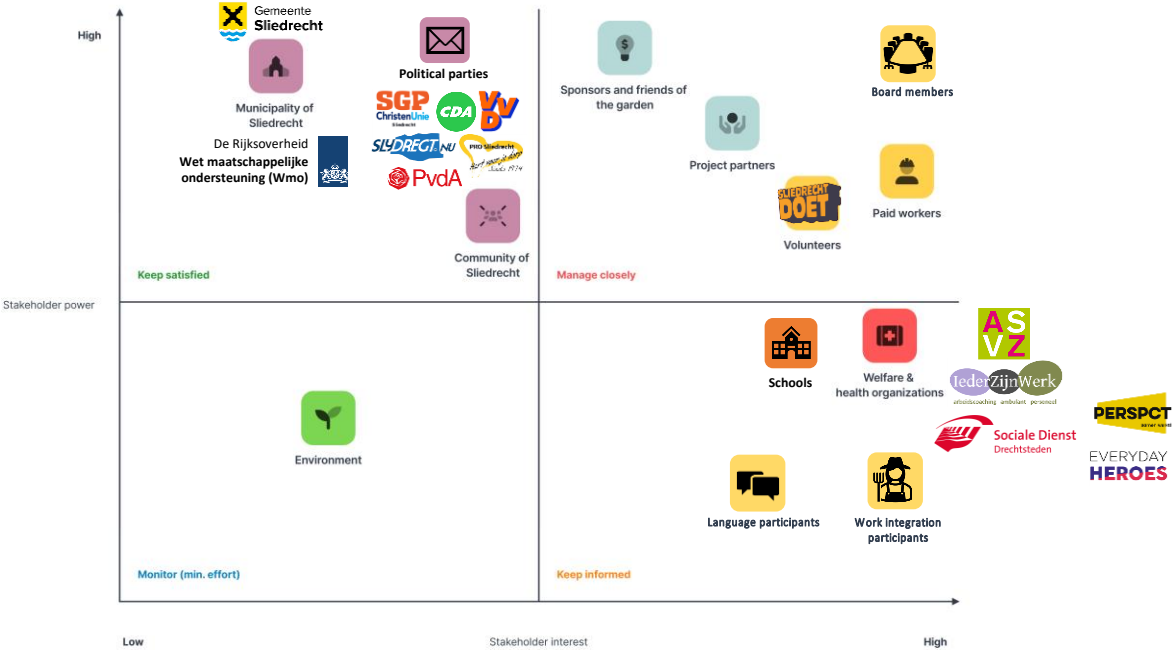


Figure 4: Stakeholders diagram

Integrative project purpose and research questions

Our team strives to give advice on attaining a stable and sustainable future for the Social Garden in Sliedrecht. The team wants to make sure the Social Garden can keep pursuing its social mission by increasing the financial viability of the Social Garden. Improving the financial viability can be done by introducing a new business model and/or reconfiguring the current business model. This will be done partly by analysing the target groups and finding out how to increase awareness and engagement among the residents of Sliedrecht. Improving the current business model will be done by analysing how to increase revenue streams or reduce unnecessary costs, as well as how to create more social value. Revenue streams could be funding, subsidies, sponsors, commercial collaborations and selling goods and/or services.

Improving the business model requires information on the current and potential new target groups. This information will enable the consultancy team to give appropriate advice on new ways of proposing value to the visitors or improve the current value propositions of the Social Garden. Value propositions include the goods and/or services the Social Garden can propose to all stakeholders, which can be both social and financial. It is vital for the improved business model of the Social Garden to raise awareness and engagement among the residents of Sliedrecht on the existence of the Social Garden and the value it proposes, to gain more traction from the local government, as well as to increase the number of volunteers and to better tailor the activities to the needs of the identified target groups.

Taking all the beforementioned reasoning into account, the following research questions have been formulated:

Research question	How to create financial viability for the Social Garden in Sliedrecht?
Sub- research question 1	What does the current business model of the Social Garden in Sliedrecht look like?
Sub- research question 2	What could an improved business model for the Social Garden in Sliedrecht look like?

Conceptual Framework

Multifunctionality of a social garden

Urban agriculture can be defined by the production and growing of food inside and around cities, including its processing and distribution, in a way that is economically, socially or environmentally integrated in the urban area (Mougeot, 2000). Therefore, it encompasses a multitude of different projects and initiatives, each one with different characteristics in terms of size or acreage, level and quantity of production and focus or involvement, either in the community or in financial revenue (Muller *et al.*, 2022). The Social Garden in Sliedrecht is theoretically based and built upon three of these different concepts or models of urban agriculture, namely: urban farm, community garden and care farm.



Figure 5. Different concepts or models of urban agriculture the Social Garden touches upon.

Regarding urban farming they share in common that urban farms directly sell to customers the products they grow, while also proposing different activities to close the gap between residents and farmers, as is the case of the Social Garden. The difference is that the focus of urban farming leans more on the economic activities, while a big part of the Social Garden is the community aspect of it, and their mission of bringing the citizens of Sliedrecht together. This is where community garden is more related to our case study, since the goal is the communal management of the garden, oftentimes initiated by residents or groups of neighbours, the Social Garden can be qualified as a social “grassroot” citizen initiative, in that it originated from the idea of a citizen of Sliedrecht. Focusing on the potential benefits for the participants of the initiative, and on the environmental, social and economic effects on the neighbourhood (Knapp *et al.*, 2016). The distinctive feature of the Social Garden with this model is that one of its core missions is providing care and social services to the residents of Sliedrecht, which puts the initiative more in line with care farms. Care farms combine urban agriculture with social and health care, and use these activities to obtain subsidies to financially support the organization. This is the case too for the Social Garden, which uses farming as a tool to provide these services, on top of inclusion and re-integration into the work force, by taking advantage of the beneficial effects they have on physical and mental health helping with rehabilitation, and increasing self-esteem, social skills or providing a sense of purpose (Hassink and Dijk, 2006).



Figure 6. Important definitions concerning finances

The main research question focuses on the **financial viability** (or stability, as these words seem to be used interchangeably) of the organisation at stake. This concept is defined by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in a working paper as a financial system's ability to "(a) facilitate both an efficient allocation of resources [...] and the effectiveness of other economic processes [...]; (b) to assess, price, allocate, and manage financial risks; (c) to maintain its ability to perform these key functions [...]" (Schinasi, 2004). The financial viability of the Social Garden is thus crucial to make the most efficient use of the limited resources and assessing its resources needs to achieve its social goals (see more on this in (Cohen & Reynolds, 2015)).

The financial viability and an appropriate management of resources are reflected in the **value** that is created by an enterprise, as defined in relation to profit in business terminology: "[...] the profit entrepreneurs make reflects the amount by which they have increased the value generated by the resources under their control. Entrepreneurs who make a loss, however, have reduced the value created by the resources under their control; that is, those resources could have produced more value elsewhere." (Entrepreneurship - Econlib, s.d.). Moreover, the concept of profit necessarily links those of value and **return**, as the OECD defines it: "Profits emerge as the excess of total revenue over the opportunity cost of producing the good. Thus, a firm earning zero economic profits is still earning a normal or competitive return."

The implicit goal set for the Social Garden, as a social non-profit organisation, to achieve financial viability is then to increase their social profit (increase the social value generated by an efficient use of their resources), while earning a normal or competitive economic return in order to continue performing its key social mission. Hence, the key aspects to assess there are the value created by the organisation, the people targeted by the products or services offered by the organisation, and the returns an organisation can expect for the value proposed. The target groups in the current project are the people the Social Garden, as a social enterprise, aims to attract and provide services to. This is analogous to 'customers' of an organisation, or 'beneficiaries' of a certain social policy. Therefore, the sub-research questions explored in this study are based on these separate parts that form a whole under what has been defined as the business model of an organisation.

Methodology

To carry out this consultancy project and thus answer the main research question on the financial viability of the Social Garden, two phases have been instrumental: the gathering of information and the analysis of this information. The information gathering consisted in reviewing literature on the possibilities for financial viability of similar initiatives, and eliciting expert knowledge on the issues faced by the Social Garden from its practitioners and from external point of views. Then, this information was processed using interviews coding and surveys analysis, and the results were plugged into business tools for analysis such as the Value Proposition Canvas, the Business Model Canvas, and the SWOT analysis. The addition of the entrepreneurial method of brainstorming to this analysis served to provide additional insights from our multidisciplinary backgrounds to finally provide recommendations that will be disseminated in the form of this report and a final presentation on the premises of the Social Garden in Sliedrecht.

Information gathering

The information gathering comprises the collection of information and qualitative data. This information was gathered from scientific literature and from stakeholders who could provide information. Information gathering was used to collect the information to analyse in a later stage. It was performed at the same time as the knowledge elicitation, namely the gathering of knowledge through direct contact with experts and stakeholders. The methods for these activities included scientific literature search, document request from stakeholders, interviews, and the dissemination of a survey.

Literature review

The first step was carrying out scientific literature search, which entailed exploring and collecting relevant literature retrieved from scientific databases and search engines (Google scholar, Scopus, etc.). We established the most relevant search terms and filtered the most appropriate and useful literature according to our needs, using peer-reviewed and up to date literature. The consultancy team also explored non-scientific literature, like for example, local newspaper articles, the webpage of municipality and from partners like Tablis Wonen, the website of the Social Garden or their social media accounts, etc. On top of this the consultancy team also gathered all the possible relevant documents from the Social Garden, including financial reports and other internal documents like board meeting summaries.

We used all this literature as a resource for background reading and to gain more knowledge, information, and inspiration on our project, in order to support our research and analysis and answer our entrepreneurial research questions. We also based our conceptual framework in the scientific literature previously gathered, to provide an informed understanding of the theoretical background we are building this report upon.

Interviews

Interviews were held with internal stakeholders of the Social Garden, external stakeholders, and academic experts of the topic of financial sustainability of a community garden. Internal stakeholders interviewed were paid workers of the garden, volunteers, and the board of the garden. External stakeholders interviewed were project partners and funding partners having collaborated with the Social Garden for a long period. Experts provided additional information of an academic nature with a completely external perspective since they were not an interested party of the Social Garden. These interviews gave this consultancy project vital information about the current state of the Social Garden, for instance, the current target groups and current business model, later analysed with business tools and integrated in final recommendations.

Internal stakeholders

It is first important to mention again that the Social Garden is a social initiative that relies mostly on people spending their time and energy in keeping the organisation going. Therefore, for the consultancy team to find financially sustainable sources of income for the Social Garden, the consultancy team had to inquire what the strengths and weaknesses of the Social Garden were to begin with. The objective was to gather information on the functioning of the Social Garden, on what the people that work in the Social Garden's value, and what could be possible and desirable to do to ensure a financial stability for the future of the organisation. The assumption was that the people that are within the daily struggles of the Social Garden would collectively reveal the values that the Social Garden provides but are not accounted or remunerated for.



Figure 7. Interview with an internal stakeholder during one of the visits to the garden. Picture taken by Gonzalo Ferreiro during the team's second visit to the Social Garden in Sliedrecht on 05-12-2022.

During the two visits at the Social Garden, the consultancy team seized the opportunity to talk to as many people working in the Social Garden ('internal stakeholders') as possible. The objective was to collect their insights on how the Social Garden was doing at the moment, their motivations for coming to work there, and their expectations on what the Social Garden could become. Before the visits to the Social Garden, three different groups of people that could be present in the Social Garden were identified, that could have different contributions, motivations, and expectations. These groups were the workers that are paid, the volunteers or working and language programmes participants, and the members of the board of the foundation. The consultancy team wanted to interview people from each of these groups to have a more complete view of the garden from the different actors engaging in it.

The semi-structured interviews were approached as conversations with the workers present in the Social Garden. The consultancy team wanted to have both answers on specific aspects of the contribution of the people working in the Social Garden (namely, their role, motivation, and expectations), while leaving the freedom to give non-prompted answers that could enlighten our team's understanding of the social functioning and intrinsic values at play in the Social Garden. For that reason, the questions prepared for these interviews (see below) were a mix of open-ended and closed questions, the later having been based on the "Mom's test" in that they asked factually about specific situations in the recent past. The questions asked were the following:

- [Role, closed] What are you busy with right now?
- [Role, open] What else are you doing when you come here?
- [Role & Motivation, closed] How often do you come to the garden?
- [Role & Motivation, closed] How long have you been coming regularly for?
- [Motivation, open] Why are you volunteering at the garden?
- [Motivation, open] What do you like to do in the garden?
- [Motivation, closed] Have you ever talked about what you do in the garden to other people you know?
- [Expectations, open] Are there some things you would rather be doing?
- [Expectations, open] What other things would you like to do in the garden?

External stakeholders

The consultancy team decided to conduct individual interview with key partners of the Social Garden (see Stakeholder analysis) to gather their point of view on their collaboration with the Social Garden. The three questions that have been sent by email were the following, based on the "Mom's test" (factual, past, and specific account of the collaboration with the Social Garden) again:

- Why did you choose to cooperate with the Social Garden Sliedrecht? *Please give an account as precise as possible of the reasons that made you want to be involved with the Social Garden (the mission of the Social Garden, if they reached out to you or you*

reach out to the Social Garden, what you thought about the work and the value the Social Garden could bring...).

- What did you think the impact of your last cooperation was on the community of Sliedrecht or the people targeted by your action (residents, visitors of the Social Garden...)?
 - o Was the cooperation with the Social Garden relevant to the mission of your organisation?
 - o Was it effective (that is, did it lead to the results you expected)?
 - o What could have been done or how could it have worked better?
- On the basis of your past collaborations with the Social Garden, are you planning on continuing to work with the Social Garden? If so, would you like to cooperate in the same format or do you have new intentions and projects?

Unfortunately, most emails remained without answer, so it was decided to follow up by calling the organisations contacted by email. Thus, interviews were carried on with some of the key external stakeholders of the Social Garden, namely: a representative of Tablis Wonen, a social housing company operating buildings in the vicinity of the Social Garden; a representative from the Bonkelaarhuis, a social services organisation offering walk-in consultations with professionals to the residents of Sliedrecht on financial, legal, or parenting affairs; the project leader of the Groene Huiskamer, the common project between Tablis Wonen, the Bonkelaarhuis and the Social Garden; two donors/sponsors of the Social Garden that have helped the Social Garden by providing funds or material help; and the municipality of Sliedrecht, in particular the social services department which has been a close partner of the garden in terms of subsidies and support since the founding of the Social Garden.

Experts

During the whole duration of this project, the consultancy team interviewed and met with experts in order to elicit practical and academic knowledge and obtain valuable information regarding our project and our entrepreneurial research questions. These interviews and experts also provided us with further related literature and new contacts with other experts or institutions. We can distinguish two main groups of experts that were interviewed, that is, academic experts who provided information on urban agriculture and experts who gave insights on surveys development and interview methodology.

For the latter, an expert from Wageningen University and Research from the Department of Social Sciences specialized on Marketing and Consumer Behaviour, was interviewed. The objective behind this was to get insights and validate our approach in the development of the surveys aimed at measuring the awareness and engagement of the residents of Sliedrecht towards the Social Garden, and also the interviews with the different stakeholders.

While for what concerns the group of experts in urban agriculture, we interviewed three different experts. The first one was part of Wageningen Economic Research specialized in the area of Green Economy and Landuse. He was interviewed because his background, being a socio-environmentalist scientist with experience in environmental governance, was very interesting for gaining knowledge about the relationship between urban gardens and the governing bodies, like the municipality and the role it plays, but also about the interaction between humans and the environment, or in this case between citizens of Sliedrecht and the Social Garden.

The second interview was with an expert from Wageningen Plant Research, specifically focused on urban agriculture and its connection to social themes, participating in creating connections between agriculture and the city. He had extensive experience working on the relations between people and organizations, with hands-on knowledge on multiple urban farms on different municipalities. Among which Almere was one of the most relevant ones and interesting for this consultancy project for their successful initiative and their relationship with the municipality.

The last expert, also a member of Wageningen Plant Research, but specialized in Rural Development, similarly had a long history of participation on urban farms in Flevoland and particularly in Almere. He was interviewed as a recommendation from the previous expert for his practical knowledge on urban farming projects and their problems, which oftentimes are universal and could bring a lot of insight to our own case study. Apart from this last expert recommendation we also got suggested a LinkedIn group composed of scientists and experts on urban agriculture called Stadslandbouw Nederland (Urban Agriculture Netherlands) where we received answers from two members. These short interviews were meant to gather ideas for new funding opportunities and to possibly get answers for existing problems of the garden which are commonly present in multiple urban farms.

On top of these interviews with outside experts, we also had multiple meetings with our academic advisor. She is part of Wageningen Economic Research on the department of Green Economy and Landuse, with extensive experience in applied socio-economic research and expertise in stakeholder engagement and strengthening sustainable and inclusive development of agriculture. She provided relevant literature, suggested experts to interview, and gave feedback on different stages of this project. Her contribution was of paramount importance due to her work on policy support projects and societal initiatives related to nature and biodiversity in the Netherlands.

All these interviews were conducted following the same approach, an agenda with questions was produced to guide the meeting and establish relevant preconceived questions, with the

meetings following an open structure to elicit and discover un-prompted information that could have been missed or originally not considered relevant.

Survey

An online survey has been developed to gain quantitative information of the engagement and awareness of the residents of Sliedrecht with the Social Garden, and to explore the characteristics of current and potential target groups. The survey was developed using the software Qualtrics by one of the members of our team experienced in consumer studies. The survey questions were either open, closed (multiple choice) or asked to be rated on a 5-point Likert-scale. The pathway questions differ for the respondents depending on which answers they filled in for particular questions. The questions asked were the following:

- What is your age? (closed)
- What is your gender? (closed)
- What is your current employment situation? (closed)
- What is your zip code? (open)
- Do you feel lonely often? (Likert)
- Do you feel involved in the community of Sliedrecht? (Likert)
- [start pathway] Do you know the Social Garden in Sliedrecht? (pathway, closed)
 - o [Yes] [start new pathway] Have you ever been to the Social Garden in Sliedrecht? (pathway, closed)
 - [Yes] What was the reason of your Visit? (pathway, closed, optional open)
 - [Yes] Have you ever bought vegetables in the Social Garden in Sliedrecht? (pathway, closed, optional open)
 - o [Yes] What is your opinion on the Social Garden in Sliedrecht? (open)
 - [Yes] Would you recommend the Social Garden in Sliedrecht? (pathway, likert)
 - o [No] Would you like to be more involved in the community in Sliedrecht? (pathway, likert)
 - o [No] Would you like to have more social activities? (pathway, likert)
 - o [No] Do you like working in a garden? (pathway, likert)
 - o [yes]
 - [No] Why have you never been in the Social Garden? (pathway, open)

The survey was then distributed among the members of Facebook groups called “helpende handen Sliedrecht” and “zoekhoek Sliedrecht”. These groups have been selected by being Facebook groups from residents of Sliedrecht that have a social purpose to begin with (community help). Other groups had been initially selected, but their private status meant that without admission to the group there was no possibility for distribution.

Information analysis

The qualitative and quantitative information collected was then processed to provide answers to the two sub-research questions developed in this study, and finally inform the recommendations provided in the framework of this consultancy project. Based on the previously defined business concepts, specific entrepreneurial methods have been put into practice such as the use of value proposition and business models canvas, a SWOT analysis, and brainstorming using the multi-disciplinary expertise of the consultancy team. This study being partly framed as an entrepreneurial project coupled with academic research, some freedom has been left in the process to “find clarity and focus among uncertainty and noise” (PREP course) and remain flexible in the methods developed and applied.

Interview coding and analysis

The coding of the interviews was done in two different ways for internal and external stakeholders. For the former, the discussions being rather short and to the point, codes identified corresponded with the question targets (see *Interviews, Internal stakeholders*): the role of the person in the garden, their motivation, and their expectations for the future of the Social Garden. Concerning the external stakeholders, interviews were carried more in depth to have a sense of the values seen in collaborating with the garden, the impact of previous collaborations, challenges of such collaborations and wishes for successful future collaborations. Once the coding was done for each individual interview, the results were pooled into coherent summaries that are presented in the section *Stakeholders insights* below.

Survey analysis

The survey was used in this research to measure awareness and engagement of the Social Garden among the residents of Sliedrecht. The analysis of the results was needed to extract the information provided within the responses of the survey. The survey was distributed and analysed in Qualtrics.com. The analysis was done without removing outliers, and with as little aggregation of data as possible due to the small sampling size. The analysis produced insights which were depicted in figures to show the results.

Value Proposition Canvas

The value proposition in this research are the services provided by the Social Garden and the social value its protagonists are aiming to deliver (why residents should use the services of the Social Garden). The use of this canvas was inspired by an additionally followed entrepreneurial course (PREP), which taught learnings on entrepreneurial mindset and target group identification. The canvas was used to map out stakeholder needs and wants in order to understand the stakeholder, and what value the Social Garden proposes to them. The data used in this canvas was collected via interviews with all possible stakeholders of the Social Garden. Because these stakeholders had various and complex customer segments, the decision to divide into an internal- and external value proposition canvas was applied. The canvas was illustrated in Canva, an online platform suitable to create such canvasses.

Business Model Canvas

The business model canvas in this research are the various parts of the Social Garden operating as a business: key partners, key activities, key resources, value proposition, customer relationships, channels, customer segments, cost structure, and revenue streams. The business model canvas is used to visualise what is important for the Social Garden and to visualise the building blocks for a business or in this case, social organisation. Visualizing important part of an organisation allows the reader to focus on and analyse specific parts of the organisation. The data used in the business model canvas are collected by interviewing stakeholders, and mainly the internal stakeholders (the board, project leader). The business model canvas was illustrated on workcanvas.com. There is a watermark found on the back of the illustration, and because the consultancy team did not want to enforce the Social Garden on unnecessary costs, the consultancy team decided to leave the illustration as is.

SWOT analysis

The SWOT analysis in this research depicts the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats according to the consultancy team. The results are based on information gathered from stakeholders, observations, and brainstorming. The SWOT analysis is used to depict what the Social Garden does well, what they don't do well, what future chances are and what to be aware of. The SWOT analysis is used for brainstorming and strategic planning. The SWOT analysis visualization is made in Canva.com.

Brainstorming



Figure 8. The academic consultancy team during one of the group work sessions.

Creative thinking group meetings were the first step of the creative process to answering the research questions. We used lateral thinking methods to encourage the creation of innovative ideas and problem solving, maximizing the interdisciplinary knowledge potential of our team. Some questions touched upon during these sessions were related to the applicability of

business concepts, the definition of the community garden, or the notion of financial viability. For example:

- Can we apply business concepts to an initiative that has at its core social purposes?
- Can an initiative that bridges the gaps in the social services provided by public institutions be self-sufficient financially or will it always depend on subsidies?
- If an organisation depends mostly on subsidies (i.e. most of its financial inflows are public funds), can it still be considered financially viable despite the risk and uncertainty of the long-term stability of these inflows?
- To what extent can an organisation be “financially viable” and “financially sustainable”?
- Can the reliance on volunteering be considered viable in the long term?

Results dissemination

As an academic consultancy project in the frame of a scientific help to a small-scale social organisation, this team has at heart to disseminate the results of this project as efficiently as possible. The main aim of this study is to provide applicable recommendations to the Social Garden in Sliedrecht. The dissemination will therefore include writing the present final consultancy report in details providing a sound analysis of the current and possible state of business of the Social Garden. In addition, to make the outcomes as clear and concise as possible, visuals (Value Proposition Canvas, Business Model Canvas, and SWOT analysis) have been featured in the study, and the recommendations attached will be communicated directly to the commissioner and some stakeholders invited in a final presentation of this project on the Social Garden premises.

Ethical considerations

Voluntary participation and informed consent

In methods involving gathering knowledge or opinions from people, involved or not in the Social Garden, the consultancy team explicitly introduced the project as a research study that would ultimately rely on these inputs to provide advice and recommendations to the Social Garden. The interviewees were then free to answer the questions asked or not, and no pressure was put on the interviewees to answer the questions.

Sampling

During the selection of people to interview and to survey, the consultancy team tried to reach as broadly as possible in the imparted time. The reason not to leave people out initially was to get as many insights as possible on the value brought by the Social Garden to diverse target groups involved in this initiative or not. However, some target groups and/or stakeholders have not been interviewed due to time constraints. For example, the participants of the Groene Huiskamer mornings were not interviewed because of the inability to go there on

Tuesday mornings, and no stakeholders in the form of primary schools were interviewed because of a misalignment in schedules.

Anonymity

All personal data was treated by default as anonymous. All interviewees have been linked to their role in the Social Garden and in this study, to provide for pooled analyses drawing from multiples experiences.

Confidentiality

The confidentiality of the information supplied by research subjects (the people interviewed and surveyed) has been guaranteed by the aggregation and agreed with the subjects themselves. Because this study can be sensitive for the Social Garden in terms of social clout and consequences, the products are regarded as confidential until rendered to the commissioner of this study.

Potential risks of research methods

The main risks associated with information gathering included a lack of relevant scientific literature and the possible reluctancy of stakeholders to provide information. This study circumvented this by using multiple sources and achieving data redundancy. Another risk could have been bias and incomplete information. The team took into consideration what the relation of the interviewee was to the garden and what benefits or disadvantages the interviewee could have to disclose information to the consultancy team when analysing the information provided. Moreover, sufficient time was allocated to initial discussions in order to gather all information needed in successive and complementary exchanges.

The main risks associated with the development of the interviews and survey were a lack of representation or bias(es), and a poor sample size. This study prevented this with thought-through interview guides, survey design and setting a minimum sample population. Moreover, a risk laid in the lack of time allocated to the field visits, because the preparation of interviews, the realization of interviews, and the time needed for the traveling to and back between Wageningen University and Sliedrecht were time-consuming activities, in already tightly time-bound research. When this risk was critical and whenever possible, the team switched to online interviews, and decided against organizing a stakeholder workshop for that reason.

Our team successfully interviewed three paid workers, eight work integration participants, and three language interns. The latter were most challenging for our team to interview because of the barrier of the language, as our team's language skills did not match with those of the interviewees, thus some questions were left out as being too difficult to understand or to answer for the trainees without a mastery of either Dutch or English. The open questions in particular were often misunderstood or answered rather shortly.

A risk associated to the information analysis could be wrong data processing practices that lead to erroneous results of the analysis. The present study prevented this risk by applying

established scientific and business methods of analyzing and processing the data. In addition, risks derived from the brainstorming sessions could be a lack of practicality of the direct outputs from these sessions, although the consultancy team avoided this in more tailoring the sessions to analytic meetings or activities. Also, the brainstorm sessions could be time-consuming as bringing a lot of discussions with it, but through proper time management this risk has been minimized.

Results

Sub- research question 1 – What is the current business model of the Social Garden in Sliedrecht?

Introduction

The present situation of the Social Garden will be outlined by the consultancy team in the first sub-research question. Both the internal and external projects, the projects that takes place onsite and outside the garden, will be elaborated in detail. After this, the income for activities and sales of products is being clarified. Even tough, the total income of activities and sales of products is accountable for a small part (see the financial inflows diagram) of the total financial inflow, it is essential while this part is one of the core objectives of the Social Garden. The last part, according the financial inflows deal with the gifts/donations and the other contributions. The structure of all parts contains of what is the situation right now for the Social Garden, why (the reason for the Social Garden), what is created (the value created by or for the Social Garden) and the return (what the Social Garden gets out of it). Furthermore, the insights of stakeholders, residents of Sliedrecht and experts are described. Additionally, the strengths and weaknesses regarding the Social Garden are discussed and the value proposition canvases for both the internal as well as the external stakeholders is developed. Eventually, this resulted in the current business model canvas (Appendix 2) that is created by the consultancy team after all the information was gathered.

Financial inflows

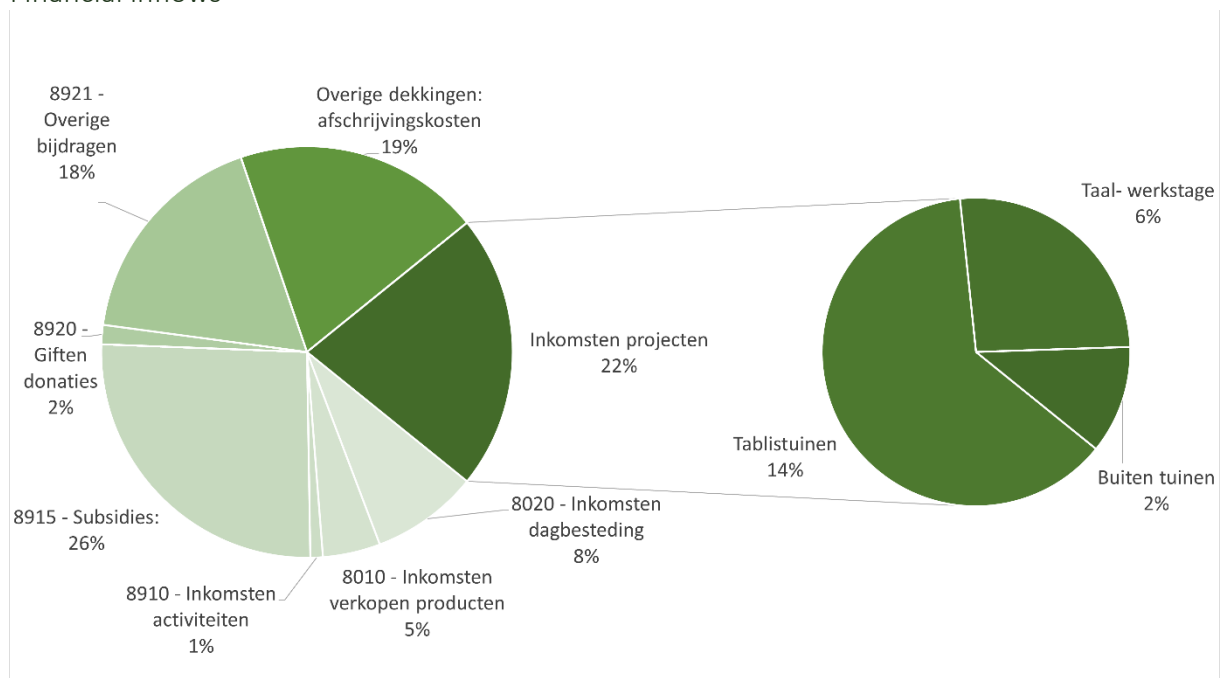


Figure 9: Financial inflows of the Social Garden, in percentages

The financial inflows are based at the core of the research project. The Social Garden has reached out to the WUR science shop because the financial inflows do not balance out the financial outflows. The financial inflows consist of four aspects: Internal projects, external projects, sales and activities, and sponsoring and donations. The financial inflows of the Social

Garden were delivered to the consultancy team in a financial report. The results are depicted in several figures. The percentages in the graphs are the percentage of the total factually received incomes. For this reason, revenues to be received or revenues budgeted on are not included.

Internal projects

Internal projects represented with around 40% of the total revenues of the Social Garden of Sliedrecht as of September 2022. Among these, the main projects providing financial resources to the garden are the work integration programme and the language internship programme presented in detail below. The majority of this sum is provided by the municipality of Sliedrecht from the social services budget to compensate the provision of a working place and the support and care for the integration programme participants. Moreover, other projects are in place and happening on the garden premises, especially the provision of a space for social workers to host consultation hours, and food and nature education programmes in collaboration with neighbouring schools.

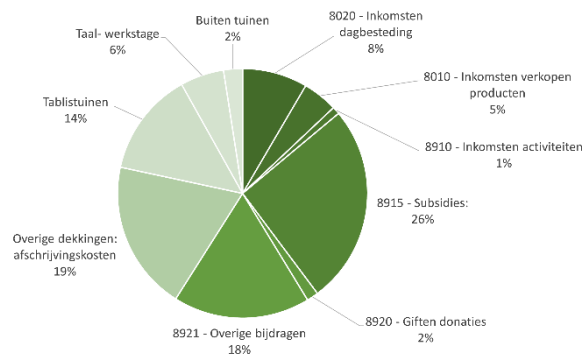


Figure 10: Current revenues in percentages

- Work integration programme and daycare

The Social Garden is recognized as an apprenticeship company since 2015. Thanks to the Regional Social Services (*Sociale Dienst Drechtsteden, SDD*), volunteers and people with a distance to the labour market can work in the garden under supervision. Through the municipality of Sliedrecht, the Social Garden is currently welcoming 11 programme participants with various degrees of working abilities, and the through the ASVZ, a social care provider, 3 people in day care. The garden also collaborates with social services specialized in mental health issues (GGZ). The participants that are assigned by the Sociale Dienst Drechtsteden to work in the garden, depending on their interests, are there for a duration of 2 or 3 years on average, for a number of weekly hours and days work adapted to their capacities.

The purpose of such a programme is to provide employment to people that otherwise would not have access to opportunities to be active, as well as to integrate them in a normal work environment, with clear working hours, tasks, and expectations. The Social Garden is also an opportunity for people that could not cope with the working system due to mental health problems to develop themselves and stay active in an accessible and low-stress environment.

The added value of working in the garden is the enabling environment providing people also with basic and/or new social skills. Participants interviewed valued the work integration programmes offering them to be active again, allowing them to regain freedom and autonomy in their daily tasks, and a sense of responsibility over their assigned work in the garden. The garden is often seen as a better option for reintegration activity, as the work is less repetitive and more appealing than working on a factory assembly line for example (cited by some volunteers). Moreover, creative activities, and the mere fact of working in a nature environment were cited as enjoyable factors for a work environment, helping some participants with mental health issues. Finally, people working in the garden enjoy coming to the Moestuin to be outside and with people, working with nature, and also sharing coffee or tea with other volunteers, talking with visitors of the garden and their colleagues.

For the care services and social values, the garden receives subsidies from local and regional social services. Depending on the administrative category the work integration programme participants fall into, different daily compensations are provided to the Social Garden. The municipality of Sliedrecht is subsidising eleven participants for an amount of 3000€ per year per person. Other participants are part of day-care programmes from the government (WLZ) or the municipality (WMO) and for that the garden is compensated around 10.000€ to 15.000€/year per person by the day care providers ASVZ and Ieder Zijn Werk. This financial resource is the biggest source of revenues for the Social Garden amounting to around 34% of the total revenues planned in 2022.

- Language internship programme

Since 2015, the Social Garden welcomes participants to a language internship programme, as part of the social services of the Drechtsteden region. The duration of the work placement is of 3 months, which can be prolonged. Thus, the average language work internship in the Social Garden is 6 to 9 months. During the placement, trainees work weekly between 8 and 24 hours in the garden, where they can exchange with other workers and coordinators in Dutch. For three half-days per week the trainees follow language lessons, either by a teacher hired by the regional social services, or by other volunteers able to teach language classes or reading comprehension. The regional programme is expected to come to an end in the near future, and will be replaced by a national integration programme that will probably foster a more classic approach of language courses and enforcing a language level to be attained. As of September 2022, the subsidies received from the regional social services for the language internships represented 6% of the total revenue of the Social Garden. The Social Garden currently has 3 language internship trainees.

The value of this language programme for the international trainees is both an increased mastery of the Dutch language, but also an integration in the Dutch way of living and working environment, with examples of duos going grocery shopping together. Trainees interviewed enjoy the opportunity to learn the language, practice with people in the garden, but also to

be working outside, and sharing community moments around warm coffee or tea. Some of the Dutch workers interviewed shared their enjoyment of being able to teach their language, and meeting people from around the world. However, the level of proficiency in the Dutch language varies widely between volunteers, which sometimes makes the coordination difficult.

- Groene Huiskamer

The Bonkelaarhuis is a social help centre where residents of Sliedrecht in need of financial, legal, parenting and relationship advice can come and are able to work on their issues. Trained professionals are available to provide support and assistance, such as youth professionals, social services, and parenting coaches. Together with Tablis Wonen (social housing company) and the Social Garden, the Bonkelaarhuis set up a weekly social meet-up in the garden named the “*Groene Huiskamer*” (the Green Livingroom).

Every Tuesday morning, people can thus walk into the new building of the Social Garden for a cup of coffee and consultation hours, or to do some activities like breathing classes and handicrafts. At the moment, the standard number of people walking in on those mornings is around 6 to 10 people, mostly single mothers and elderly people. Tablis Wonen is encouraging its residents to visit the Groene Huiskamer to prevent or bring situations of social isolation to an end. The outdoor space is enjoyable in summertime, but the indoors might be quite tight if a large number of people are expected to attend the gathering in wintertime.

The three social partners came together on this project of the Groene Huiskamer to realise their common ambition to provide help and community space for people of Sliedrecht in need. The idea behind this project is that the garden is a nicer place for people to come together than the office of the Bonkelaarhuis. Moreover, the location of the Social Garden is close to the social houses from Tablis Wonen, thus close to the primary target group of people in need of social assistance. The Groene huiskamer was initiated to set up something for young people with social disadvantages, limitations, and disabilities. It was initially meant to provide guidance and care for disadvantaged or disabled youth.

According to all stakeholders involved, the collaboration is certainly relevant for the social mission of each of the three organisations. However, they do not all agree on the current success of this initiative. The common understanding is that people that come to the Groene Huiskamer do receive “real help” from the professionals of the Bonkelaarhuis, although this meeting-up could reach and thus benefit even more people. Besides, the garden encourages people to be active (volunteering work, for example) and to meet and help each other (in the social field) when necessary. The initiative aims to be “*a living room and a garden where people meet, where prejudices disappear, where you can get information, advice and answers, but above all where you discover what you have to offer*” according to the website of the Bonkelaarhuis.

The Groene Huiskamer is evidently an activity that aligns well with the social mission at the core of the Social Garden. In return for the provision of the meeting-up space, the garden receives a small fee from its partner Tablis Wonen, of 25€ per morning as a kind of social rent. In addition, the Moestuïn benefits from the active promotion done by the Bonkelaarhuis and Groene Huiskamer activity manager of its activities in the garden. As a member of the Moestuïn board puts it, there is some sort of “cross-pollination” happening as for instance one mother that participated in the Groene Huiskamer later helped with the vegetable garden activities, and another one became a volunteer at the Social Garden.

School programme

The Social Garden is cooperating through a rotation system with all the primary schools, and also secondary schools, which are all located in Sliedrecht. The Social Garden organises educational programs together with the GGD about healthy food and the schoolchildren get some insights about the vegetables and fruits grown in the garden. Next to that, the garden has a yearly educational project with schools to make them aware of how food is grown and what the benefits are of growing their own food, and also be active in the garden to use ‘own spots’ and growing some vegetables themselves. The Social Garden is in contact with all the schools in Sliedrecht and has a year-long programme rotating between different schools to host 70-80 pupils (6th grade). One plot of the garden is reserved during the whole year for these schoolchildren and cleaned up before the summer holidays when other crops can then be planted, as this was mentioned in an interview with a board member. According to the website, the Social Garden provide one hundred ‘garden spots’ for the schoolchildren at grade 5/6 of primary schools, every year. The children get knowledge and skills about how to grow the vegetables/fruits and what is needed to support the growth in a natural and organic way.



Figure 11: Moestuïn Sliedrecht, 2022 <http://www.socialemoestuïn.nl/educatie/>

One of the core pillars of the Social Garden is giving education about growing vegetables and healthy lifestyle/eating healthy. This is the foremost reason for the Social Garden to cooperate with schools and teach the children about these topics. To teach these schoolchildren that lettuce and cucumber for example do not grow in supermarkets, but in nature (the garden). This is one of the basics of life that the kids have to know according to the Social Garden. From interviewing some board members/paid workers, it is really nice to work with children and learn them about this kind of things, because most of the children are eager to learn about this subject and also like to do activities outside the schools. Next to that, the schools give positive feedback to the Social Garden and they hope to work together in the future again. The education and workshops that are given in the garden contributed to more knowledge about health in general, which is also shared within the households of the schoolchildren. Additionally, the parents of the children are helping in the garden itself and make sure that the garden is free of weeds during the summer holidays for example. The help of the parents, shows that the Social Garden relies on the assistance of volunteers and that the volunteers are key for the Social Garden.

The real gardenwork at their own garden 'spots' is intended for around 80-100 schoolchildren; the Social Garden is given this service to the schools. The garden pays for those activities with both the compensation by the school, but also from the subsidy which they got from the municipality. The activities regarding the school education programme on which the Social Garden received financial inflow from, are mentioned in the 'workshop' section.

- Internships

The *Groen Traineeship* (Green Traineeship) is an initiative from ten nature and environment organisations in the Netherlands, in particular IVN Nature Education, and is part of the Social Service Time of the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport of the Netherlands to link green organisations with young Dutch people (from 16 to 27 years old) interested in doing "something" for a greener and more sustainable world. There are several open calls per year for the organisations to submit project proposals in order to recruit interns, but no open call is planned for Spring 2023 because of uncertainty from the subsidy provider side. The next open calls will be starting in July for the "summer block" (July-August) and September for the "autumn block" (September-January 2024).

The project leader of the Social Garden applied to the previous call but did not reach enough interested students, and that resulted in too few registrations for the Social Garden to carry out the internship project. The garden has already drafted a comprehensive project proposal expecting 15 trainees, from all over the Netherlands, to come work on the garden for 6 hours per week, for a duration of four months. The project will be carried out with the *Stichting Open Jeugdwerk Sliedrecht* (Foundation Open Youth Work Sliedrecht) but the guidance will be provided by the project leader of the Social Garden. Workshops and training courses are

planned out on various topics, such as social entrepreneurship in practice, practical lessons on the vegetable garden, and composting.

The main objective of the Groen Traineeship is for the Social Garden to involve more young people to the garden. The Social Garden is trying to reach out to another target group by offering this internship opportunity, as one of the goals of the Social Garden is to be “as diverse as the community of Sliedrecht”. Hence, it would be in line with the social mission of the garden if more young volunteers or young people would be part of the Social Garden in any way. Thus, the Groen Traineeship would be an opportunity for the Garden to experience what young people would find attractive in the garden, to carry out their own projects aligned with the mission of the garden, and maybe develop new ideas and activities to further reinforce the attractiveness of the Social Garden for young people. Moreover, the green traineeships are subsidized by the national government, thus possibly providing 7000 euros to perform the traineeship project in the garden.

External projects

The external projects of the Social Garden are outside the garden itself. There are several different external projects the Social Garden engages in. Those are listed and explained in the paragraphs below.

- *Buiten Tuinen*

Since 2018 the Social Garden works on behalf of Tablis Wonen, a social housing cooperation, to create more greenery in Sliedrecht. The parties involved are the residential coaches of Tablis Wonen, horticulturist (hovenier) Van Roosmalen, coordinators of the Social Garden together with participants and with permanent staff of the Social Garden itself. For these tasks, the Social Garden has a number of permanent contracts in agreement with Tablis Wonen, where the Social Garden earns €27,50 per hour worked per person. Most of the work comes from housing counsellors who take individual applications for jobs to be done in the neighbourhood. This is done, by making Sliedrecht greener and create more green ecological zones, or improving the current ones, in the urban surroundings. Next to that, the Social Garden also works in private gardens, of people in Sliedrecht, on request. These gardens belong to people who can't do it themselves.

Helping the residents of Sliedrecht, who are not able to manage their own gardens, is something the Social Garden values. Everyone deserves to have a well-kept own garden, even if people are not able to and the Social Garden is appreciated to contribute on this. Depending on income, the Social Garden charges between the 10-15 euros per man-hour for this activity. The revenue stream of 'inkomsten projecten' is a big part of the total income of the social garden (22%). Merely 2 percent of the total income of the Social Garden is generated by the external project 'Buiten Tuinen'.

- Tablis Tuinen

The Social Garden Sliedrecht and Tablis Wonen, a social housing cooperation, are working together since 2017 on the project 'Tablis Tuinen'. Paid workers/volunteers of the Social Garden are helping and advising the tenants with their own gardens at their homes. The volunteers of the garden can help the tenants by working in their garden. In return the tenant could give a donation to the social garden or could even help with some activities in the social garden itself. It offers both value for the tenants, as the gardens get more attention and have a better appearance by the help they receive from the volunteers; and it offers value for the garden and the volunteers to participate in this project and engage the community of Sliedrecht. The revenue stream of 'inkomsten projecten' accounted for 22% of the total income generated by the garden. Over 62% of the 'inkomsten projecten' is earned by the 'Tablis tuinen' project (14% of the total revenue stream). So, a significant revenue stream is coming from the 'Tablis tuinen' project, which could perhaps be expanded to get a larger revenue stream through this.

- Ecological square meters

The Social Garden recently got involved in a project in cooperation with Tablis Wonen and the municipality, where they planned areas with empty plots which would be converted into ecological zones or ecological square meters, fostering biodiversity and local flora and fauna. These ecological square meters are accompanied by educational signs informing residents of their value and mission. The Social Garden just got the approval for the first 100 packets to transform 10 pilot locations into ecological square meters, with funding from the Prins Bernard Cultuurfonds and from the Provincie Zuid Holland Natuur in de stad regeling, for a combined 14.500 euros.

- Home-gardening kits

The Social Garden and the schools, both primary and secondary, are planning on working together on 'growing packages' for doing home gardening, as this project was started and is now running as one of the activities with grade 5 pupils. The Social Garden contacted several schools, which were all interested in participating in this project. At this point the Social Garden has 230 children from schools who are interested in participating. Teaching and educating both about gardening skills and the effect of healthy food (vegetables and fruit) are key aspects that are valued the most by the Social Garden. Giving lessons to the schoolchildren, which are often willing to learn about this subject, will both effect the lifestyle and eating behaviour of the children as the household, which is the purpose of the Social Garden.

The Social Garden is still waiting for schools to respond to the last mail they sent to the schools, about the exact prices and packages. For the 'growing packages' for grade 5 next year, the Social Garden aims at a total price of € 28, - per growing package, which both schools can order or the parents of the children. This €28 contains of two parts, the Social Garden asks 18

euros per package ordered by schools/parents and the GGD (The partner in this project) pays 10-euros per package. The total price of 28 euros includes all the goods/tools, study material for 7 lessons including an excursion to the social garden, a harvest feast, and a guest lecture about health. The status for now is waiting for the schools to respond if the price is affordable. The Social Garden wants to make the packages in January or February and distribute them in March 2023.

Sales and activities



Figure 12. Drone picture of the Social Garden of Sliedrecht by Dennis van Campen (DeVaCa)

- Sales

The Social Garden produces a great variety of seasonal fruits and vegetables which are grown from seeds obtained from an organic supplier, using natural resources and organic agricultural practices, such as crop rotation and intercropping, using natural pesticides like nettle vulture and fertilizers coming from their own composting or cow manure from the Sliedrecht petting Zoo Charlotte van Bylandthoeve. They use their products to donate, sell or supply to, among others, the Sliedrecht food bank, cooking clubs for the elderly, restaurants with special (regional) dishes and other organizations. The earnings received from these sales are used to economically support the garden and its activities, helping it sustain itself apart from the municipal subsidies.



Figure 13. Crop cultivation and rotation plan.

All the different products from the garden are sold to visitors in the shop inside the main building, oftentimes directly after being harvested from the garden. The visitors can purchase these products both with cash, credit card or through a ticket system or “harvest cards” (oogstkaarten) which reduce the excess circulation of cash. These “harvest cards” can be bought for 5, 10 or 20 euros, with the benefit that they can be gifted as presents or used to purchase fruits and vegetables directly from the Garden. The “harvest cards” sometimes are used as a social initiative from different organizations like the Entrepreneurs Association (Ondernemersvereniging) of the WoonBoulevard Sliedrecht or the Reformed Church (Gereformeerde Kerk) to donate food through the Social Garden to the Food Bank

The sales also include other products from the garden like flowers, herbs, honey, their own produced apple and pear juice, oliebolle, and sales from the Tasting Garden (De Proeftuin). Through the Tasting Garden they sell and provide meals and food like tea, coffee, cakes and other baked products, and a variety of soups. Which can be consumed inside the building, in the terrace or around the garden.

The Social Garden is also involved in a recent project where they are developing and building hedgehog houses and insect hotels and selling them, the materials used are sourced from sustainable sources and they are built based on information gathered from conservationist experts to guarantee their efficiency and positive impact on the animals and the environment. The prices are of 29.5 and 39.5 euros for the insect hotel and hedgehog houses, respectively.



Figure 14. Insect house installed in the garden of the Sociale Moestuin in Sliedrecht.

The sales represent 5% of the total earned income of the Social Garden in 2022. Most of the sales revenue is obtained in the summer months, as the harvest season brings more products to be sold in the shop and the weather allows more customers to enjoy food from the Tasting Garden and the outside terrace.



Figure 15. Overview of the sales from the garden for the year 2022 (except the months November and December which are for the year 2021).

- Activities

Activities cover the wide range of workshops that the Social Garden carries out, some examples could be decorative and artisanal workshops for wooden clogs (klompen), dot art painting for tableware, craft activities for elderly and children, workshops for growing vegetables like chili peppers, etc. Most of the workshops are free of charge, sometimes they ask for a small entry fee (around 10 euros) to participate in them. Therefore, these workshops don't provide a considerable amount of money to the finances of the Garden, and the reason behind them is mostly contributing to the social wellbeing of the community, providing entertainment and fun activities, and increasing awareness and promotion of the Social Garden among all target groups.

An important component of these workshops is the focus on educational activities in cooperation with schools like the primary school Prins Willem Alexander and the high school Griendencollege. The aim of these workshops is to contribute to the education and health of the students through teaching knowledge in the fields of nature, the environment and sustainability. The schools pay directly for these workshops which consist in lessons or more practical activities like a discover and harvest workshop in the garden.



Figure 16. Arts and crafts workshop with an autumn decorative theme on the Social Garden on October 22, 2022. Source: Sliedrecht24.nl <https://sliedrecht24.nl/kinderen-en-volwassenen-vermaken-zich-tijdens-herfstknutselen/>.

The workshops only represent 1% of the earned income of the Social Garden in 2022, although it also receives a subsidy from the municipality of 2250 euros annually to purchase material for these activities, however not to develop and carry out these activities. This subsidy is also used to arrange the school programmes.

Sponsoring and donations

The revenue stream by sponsors and donations, “giften donaties” and “overige bijdragen”, account for 20 % of the total revenue generated. Although it seems like a significant income flow, it has to be noted that this is a bit distorted, as more than half of the revenue from sponsors and donations consists of a one-time donation to support the construction of the Social Terrace. This revenue stream also fluctuates a lot over time, since big one-time donations happen from time to time. This for example happened a last year too with the donation of the building by the Kringloopwinkel. It is not uncommon for sponsors to donate with the intention of their donation being spent on a certain project, or to simply donate materials needed for a specific project. Therefore, we can distinguish between two types of sponsors and donations, namely those being financial and those being materialistic.

- Why do parties offer financial support in the form of sponsors and/or donations?

Financial sponsors and donations provide money. The Social Garden is actively trying to attract new sponsors in several ways. For example, there is the ability to adopt and sponsor a piece of land as can be seen on figure 2 and 3. Secondly, partners can finance projects with giving money like the Rotary/Lions charity clubs are doing. Lastly, a new initiative has been founded named the “Vrienden van de moestuin”. It was set up by one of the volunteers, but due to personal reasons has been put on a hold.



Figure 18: Piece of land sponsored by an individual.



Figure 17: Piece of land not sponsored yet.

When asking one of the private donators on his motivations for donating money, it became apparent it was due to his personal connection with one of the founders. The ability to financially help someone the donator feels acquainted with, was a good enough reason for the donator to donate.

Financial sponsors are important for the Social Garden because with the money more activities can be organised, or basic bills can be paid. It helps the Social Garden to create more value for its stakeholders. Some examples would be the funding of workshops or the free coffee and tea for everyone.

- Why do parties offer material support in the form of sponsors and/or donations?

As already mentioned, some sponsors opt for another way of sponsoring the Social Garden. Instead of sponsoring projects or activities with money, they sponsor them with materials. This can be as small as a tool to operate the garden, but also as big as a whole building.

Sponsoring materials increases awareness and are a marketing tool for the sponsor and is something to be proud of. According to one of the project leaders, it happens that sponsors go to the Social garden and say to their partners “Look at that fence, I donated that.”. Knowing what happens with your donation, and immediately seeing the accompanying results, is a good reason for people to donate materials instead of money too.

However, promotional reasons are not the only motivators for sponsors to donate materials. Whilst interviewing the donator of the Bessenhaag, it became clear that, just like the private financial donator, the main motivation for donating was the personal connection with one of the founders. The donator of the Bessenhaag has a personal connection with one of the founders and met the Social Farm via that connection. He decided to donate out of sympathy with one of the founders and to help the initiative. He lives at a farm and likes to contribute to the feeling of being in nature to the less fortunate. He certainly doesn't do this for promotional reasons because his company doesn't do business with private contractors, only with big cooperatives.

Last year, the Kringloopwinkel fully funded the construction of the headquarters of the Social Garden. When asked about the reason, it was explained that the Kringloopwinkel always donates according to their guidelines of environmental impact, to which the Social Garden sufficed. The Social Garden fit the profile and therefore got sponsored. The founder of the Kringloopwinkel is also personally acquainted with the founders of the Social Garden as an advisor of the board.

Material sponsors are important for the Social Garden because the materials provided help the Social Garden provide value for its stakeholders. An example is that sponsors can have their name tied to a garden perk, giving recognition for the donation. Donated tools can be used in projects that are in collaboration with the stakeholders.

Insights from stakeholders, residents, and experts

To get a fine understanding of the challenges that the Social Garden faces and uncover potential solutions, our consultancy team interviewed the people that know the Social Garden best, for they are working every day in the garden ('internal stakeholders'), the partners of the Social Garden that have been collaborating for years with this social initiative ('external stakeholders'), residents of Sliedrecht that the Social Garden is aiming to bring together ('residents'), and academic experts on topics of urban agriculture or researchers familiar with the issues faced by community gardens in the Netherlands ('experts').

Internal stakeholders

Our team interviewed three paid workers, eight work integration participants, and three language interns. All interviewees gave interesting insights which are discussed in the following paragraphs.

- *Work integration participants and language trainees*

These short interviews deepened our team's understanding on 'how' the garden is providing care and social benefits to the people working there. Work integration participants (hereafter referred to as "participants") and language interns are "sent to the garden" [sic] by the social services of the Sliedrecht municipality or the Drechtsteden region. Some of the participants said to have heard or known about the garden before coming to work here, thanks to relatives or social providers (a nursing home, social housing company, and social services of the municipality). Injuries, mental health issues, or disabilities were the main reasons evoked for a distance to the labour market and the necessity of a support tailored to specific needs.

Interviewees said to be coming between 2 to 5 days a week, for half days or full days depending on their capabilities. Some of the people interviewed had been introduced to the garden for a few months only, some had been working there for several years. One participant had prior education in gardening and the Moestuin matched his needs and interests. Some people had preferences or special abilities to work inside the building of the garden, others

enjoyed being outside and doing on manual labour. All participants and language trainees interviewed were adamant on their liking of the garden and the natural environment it provides them with, often helping with mental health issues and giving back a sense of responsibility and agency in their own life. Most of them expressed that they also like the social atmosphere, having coffee and tea with people of the garden, and meeting new people there.

- Board members and project leader

Three board members and a project leader have been interviewed on their roles, motivations, and expectations, although with slightly different questions due to their deeper acquaintance with the functioning of the garden. The main outcome was an understanding of the dynamics of the garden in terms of organisational responsibilities and initiatives, which mainly lay with the board, especially the chair, with little input from the volunteers that are mostly seen as lacking the necessary organisational skills to carry out projects. The collaborations with new project partners are sought for by the board and the project leader for example, as well as the coordination of activities in the garden. The common and dominant trait of motivation expressed by the board members and the project leader, as opposed to the work integration participants and the language trainees, is the commitment to help other people, especially people on the fringes of the labour market, and in general their wish to do good for the community of Sliedrecht.

The garden was initiated to offer a workplace for people, as well as integrating them with the larger and diverse community of Sliedrecht through various activities offered at the garden, and the sale of vegetables. The board members and the project leader interviewed have an overview of the activities of the Moestuyn, and a shared vision for the growth of the garden, in terms of reach, frequentation, number of volunteers, and partnerships. Moreover, they all invest significant time and energy into this initiative, most of them voluntarily. However, they are increasingly worried about the uncertainty currently surrounding the management of the organisation and the financial sustainability of their growing initiative. In the words of one of the board members, *“The Social Garden started as a small organisation ran by volunteers. Because of collaborations, the Social Garden has grown a lot and seems to work well. It would be a shame if all the hard work (in growing) had to be overturned because of bad management.”*

External stakeholders

From the interviews with key external stakeholders, our consultancy team identified the main features of the Social Garden which are explicitly valued by its partners, the grounds for their collaboration, the challenges faced by the stakeholders in collaborating with the garden, the impact that these collaborations already had, and finally the wishes of the partners of the garden for future collaborations. These aspects are developed hereafter and contributed to inform the work of our consultancy on the rendering of the value proposition of the garden for the “customer segment” of external stakeholders. A difference was noted in the approach

with the Social Garden between project partners such as Tablis Wonen or the Bonkelaarhuis that are focused on the common objectives with the garden, and the sponsors or the municipality of Sliedrecht which are mainly funding partners, thus focusing on the efficiency of the funds provided to bring about the desired results.

- Reasons for collaboration

The external stakeholders of the Social Garden that have been interviewed cited three major reasons for collaborating with this social initiative. First, the Social Garden and the partners share common objectives: they are passionate about helping people and they want to green the city environment of Sliedrecht. Second, they are focusing on the same target group: helping residents of Sliedrecht, especially those in need of social assistance such as the residents of Tablis Wonen or the visitors of the Bonkelaarhuis, and the beneficiaries of the social services of the municipality. People with social disadvantages or physical disabilities are also targeted by the social partners, with thoughts about helping diverse groups such as the lonely, the youth, the elderly, and single parents in particular. Third, the Social Garden and its partners share a common vision on how to reach their objectives: by providing advice and social support, bringing people together and breaking social isolation, and providing healthy food, the collaborations are successful in being beneficial for people's physical and mental health.

- Outcomes of existing collaborations

The external stakeholders interviewed answered on the impact that their collaborations with the Social Garden had in relation to their expectations, being positive or negative. The impacts of the collaborations were overwhelmingly positive. The major consequence for the people of Sliedrecht projects like the Groene Huiskamer is that people are coming to the garden that had never been there before. Single mothers and elderly are the main frequentation of this project, and some became also volunteers for the garden and helped with the activities afterwards. People that come to the garden can ask and receive the help that they need, they come out of their homes to meet other people and are able to do activities that keep them active. Some activities have unfortunately not worked as well as was hoped and did not manage to bring positive impact for some target groups, such as the disadvantaged youth of Sliedrecht.

- Valuable aspects of the Social Garden for its partners

There was considerable overlap between the aspects cited or implied as desirable aspects of the garden in the eyes of the different projects and funding partners interviewed. These aspects can be grouped into three main categories: the social mission of the Social Garden, the nature of the organisation as a vegetable garden and its location, and the dynamic management of the organisation. Indeed, the external stakeholders appreciated that the Social Garden aims to be an accessible and somewhat informal place where everyone, and especially people facing social exclusion, can meet-up and integrate, and that it focuses on encouraging people with a distance to the labour market to stay active. Moreover, the form

that this social initiative takes, as a vegetable garden, is valued for being a beautiful environment where people can be outside and work in nature. The fact that the vegetable garden is located close to social flats in a “focus area” is also an advantage for social partners. Last but not least, the organisation is seen as very active, with many projects and new ideas, and various events happening in addition to the volunteering possibility. The easiness to reach the chair of the board, the honesty and responsiveness to feedbacks in case of issues, the genuine engagement of the board members, and the good promotion done on social media were also cited as valuable to the partners of the Social Garden interviewed.

- Challenges for partners in the collaboration with the Social Garden

Three main challenges were evoked by the partners of the Social Garden when discussing the success of their collaborations. These were first the limited resources on both the partner and the Garden’s ends, the doubts on the reliability of the Garden and its ability to maintain itself in the future, and the low engagement and communication from the Garden’s end towards the social target groups. More specifically, time, money, and the amount of volunteers available for the many ideas and projects, and possibly the small area of the garden and inside space are limiting factors in the implementation of successful projects. Moreover, the uncertainty of the relocation of the garden, the possible end of the language programme, and the issue of the quantification of the social value brought by the Social Garden to the residents of Sliedrecht are casting shadows on the partnerships as well. Finally, the projects are for the most part reaching only a small number of participants, and one reason brought forward by some of the external stakeholders interviewed was that the Social Garden is not communicating on the benefits for the people themselves, which can lead to people not seeing the advantage of working outside, together, or grabbing a cup of coffee and walking-in for consultation hours.

- What the partners are bringing to the garden and what they envision for the future

Finally, the external stakeholders are instrumental in supporting the Social Garden and its mission, so long as it correlates with their own vision of social assistance. The partners interviewed are supporting the Social Garden financially by paying for the services (such as gardening in the town of Sliedrecht), or the venue offered by the Social Garden. They are also helping increasing the awareness of the residents of Sliedrecht on the existence of the Social Garden and the activities offered there, through communication to their own networks about the collaborations and advice to the social target groups. Lastly, the main recommendation coming from the partners of the Garden is to focus on what the Social Garden does best, keeping an informal approach while providing more professional care to the social target groups. All in all, with the appropriate measures put in place to overcome the challenges previously cited, the stakeholders are adamant in their wish to further collaborate with the Social Garden of Sliedrecht and to continue bringing life to plethora of new projects together.

Residents of Sliedrecht

The distributed survey had a response of 58 respondents. This survey was distributed in Facebook groups called “Zoekhoek Sliedrecht” and “Helpende handen Sliedrecht”. The most respondents were women around the age of 46 to 55 (¡Error! No se encuentra el origen de la referencia.). The demographics of the respondents are likely to be influenced by the demographics of the Facebook groups. The amount of respondents that are male and have a different age class are neglectable. Most of the respondents know the Social Garden (¡Error! No se encuentra el origen de la referencia.12). From the respondents, who know the garden, have only a small part actually have been to the garden (¡Error! No se encuentra el origen de la referencia.). This can mean the garden is well-known under the respondents, while the actual engagement stays behind. This lack of engagement has different reasons. 21% of respondents who know the garden but never went there, said to have no spare time to visit the garden (¡Error! No se encuentra el origen de la referencia.). 15% responded to be not interested in visiting the garden. Interesting is the group of 18% of respondents who do not know why they have never been to the garden, and 21% said it never came to be. This 21% which never came to be, clearly shows initial plans of going to the garden. The respondents who said they don’t know why they have never been to the garden and the respondents who said it never came to be, add up 39% of the people who have never visited the garden. This 39% seem to be open, and maybe even interested in a visit, which could potential translate in new participants for workshops, target group or customers for the sale of vegetables, or even possible volunteers.

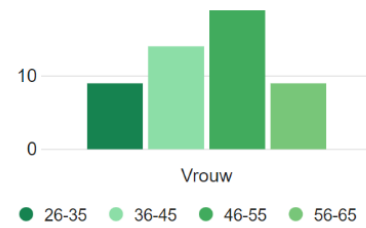


Figure 19: Age groups of women who responded.

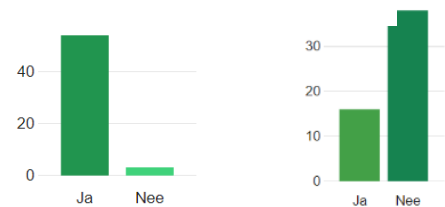


Figure 20: Number of respondents who know the garden.

Figure 22: Number of respondents who have been to the garden.

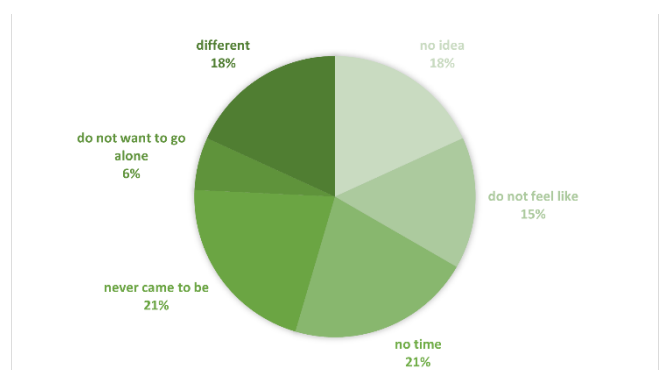


Figure 21: Why do the respondents not go to the garden when they know the garden?

Although many respondents have not been to the garden, mainly the age groups between 26 and 55 did go to the garden. Most of these visitors come to buy vegetables (Figure 23).

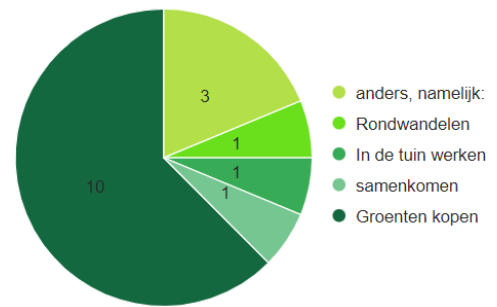


Figure 23: Reason of visit

Experts

From the meetings and interviews with experts, our consultancy team obtained insights and further knowledge on two main areas, first in relation to survey and interview development and their qualitative and quantitative analysis, and second regarding urban agriculture and the related questions to the Social Garden. The main insights extracted from these interviews are developed here, as they helped us to answer or entrepreneurial questions and guide our project.

Concerning the development of the surveys aimed at measuring the awareness and engagement of the residents of Sliedrecht towards the Social Garden, we validated our method for identifying target groups and market segments. There was an important distinction to be made on the methodology between surveys and interviews, since we were informed that first we would need to obtain findings through interviews and then surveys should be focused on testing our different hypothesis. The consultancy team got knowledge on how to produce relevant questions, and what to focus on in order to gather valuable information, with open questions not considered ideal due to time constraints and how can they affect the rest of the survey. An important understanding was also incorporated on how to code and score the surveys, sampling size and the optimal number of respondents we should strive for.

Our meetings with experts in relation to urban agriculture brought a lot of information and knowledge on current successful examples but also past failures and their causes. Urban agriculture initiatives present a lot of common problems, threats and opportunities at the same time.

In terms of financial sustainability which is the main topic of our entrepreneurial project we realized the difficulty on sustaining grassroots projects that depend heavily, or only, on local subsidies. While a big point was brought to our attention on how relevant and important the subsidies are for these organization, since this funding is the main way most projects are supported. This also highlighted the need to diversify the sources of income with a multiple revenue model, while reducing costs as much as possible. The main takeaway being that relying on subsidies is almost a necessity, one that makes these initiatives very vulnerable and

brings the need to diversify the sources of finances. On this note multiple experts coincided and praised the garden and the organization, being impressed by the stage at which the garden is already in terms of finances diversification, with other positive comments on the impact and number of people involved in the project, and even the professional look that the website provided. Regarding the subsidies we got informed on how there's multiple different segments or sections of available funding from municipalities (green/environmental, education, health and food strategy, etc) and how the garden should try to tap in most of them as possible. We identified the food strategy as one of the segments that it's not currently exploited by the garden, but the problem is that although there's a growing group of municipalities that have a food strategy, Sliedrecht is not yet one of them. There could be an option for the Social Garden if they created their own support, contacting with aldermen and policymakers, creating a food policy council with civilians or local agriculture initiatives, etc. In order to make it an official policy in the municipality through which to get support since the Social Garden participates in producing healthy food, local connections to food, short food supply chains, community and education.

On the organizational structure of these initiatives, we understood that for a successful volunteer-based project as is the case of the Social Garden, the volunteers should be at the core of the organization. There's a great need on increasing the importance of their role and sharing the ownership of the problems that might arise, talking about them among as many people from the organisation as possible. Also, paramount to this is how volunteers are a real asset to come up with new ideas that could be implemented.

Another essential aspect for these initiatives is the community, which should always be at the centre and bring awareness to it. In order to do so is important to consider how the communication with the community is being performed, with a need to talk about things people can understand. Simple but effective things like experiences for instance, and not complex terms about biodiversity and other "difficult words", should be prioritized. It's also important to analyse where and when the Social Garden is communicating with the community, with the presence of it on community events outside the garden like the market or organizing open events or seasonal parties being relevant ideas. Lastly, we should also focus on how the Social Garden is perceived by the community, how is its accessibility, how is it embedded on the area and how it presents itself in case of having a fence or being hidden from open view with a wall.

One big point of attention was brought for the relevance of increasing the social support network of these initiatives. There's a need for cooperation with other volunteer-based organizations outside gardening and farming, NGOs, charity groups, immigrant integration organizations, both from Sliedrecht and the surrounding region. In order to build and increase the social support network and reduce dependency and increases the resilience of the Social Garden. In relation to this the Social Garden should contact other related initiatives like care

farms, community gardens, urban farms, etc. Even outside of Sliedrecht or the region, which could help to get new ideas and inspiration, and also exchange information because everyone is struggling with the same problems.

We also got insights on the relationship of these projects with municipalities and local government bodies. It's also a common problem among them to struggle with politics and policies, changes in administration, budget cuts, etc. Municipalities are often hesitant to support these initiatives since the garden has to be maintained by the citizens, which is also an opportunity, since the cost to do so is lower than other maintenance methods. The most important insight was gained on the extreme importance on better measuring and communicating the social value from the Social Garden to the municipality, and even doing a cost-benefit analysis. Which would make the municipality more aware of the benefits that the project provides through their activities like increasing biodiversity, producing healthy food, educating schoolchildren, language programmes and work integration, etc. Although it's also necessary to reverse the conversation and communicate both ways and reach new conclusions on how these initiatives can help the municipality achieve their goals

Lastly, we got insights on new possible opportunities for the Social Garden. Which covers new sources of finance like crowdfunding, increase the number of sponsors or contact old sponsors again to explore new funding or build more sustainable relationships with them. Trying to get new sponsors from large companies based in Sliedrecht interested in making social connections with their own city, which would increase the network with "rich families" from these companies that could make for more social power. The opportunity of getting ownership of the land instead of renting it from municipality which would reduce costs, although not currently viable could be an option for the future in case of relocation or expansion to other locations. The team also got inspiration on how possible changes in the urban planning on the area could be not only a challenge, but also an opportunity to connect and integrate social housing and the neighbourhood with the garden in different or improved ways, an opportunity to redevelop the garden.

SWOT analysis – strengths and weaknesses

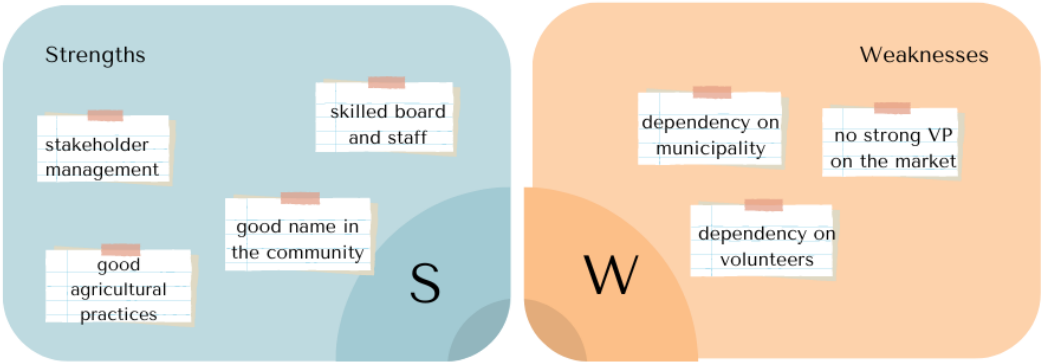


Figure 24: Strengths and weaknesses of the garden

Strengths

The Social Garden has a very skilled board and staff. They have shown to be able to let the garden grow and professionalize. One of their main activities is stakeholder management, and this is also one of the strengths of the garden. Partners and sponsors of the garden have high regards of the social garden and are happy to work together on projects. Another strength is the good reputation in the community. In the conducted survey and interviews with the residents of Sliedrecht, most speak highly on the garden, what reflects good reputation in the community. Multiple experts have conveyed to be impressed with the good agricultural practices in the garden.

Weaknesses

The garden has several weaknesses which impede the organization to perform at its optimum level. One is the dependency on the municipality, the garden receives crucial funding which is needed in order to perform their activities. Next to the dependency on funding, the municipality also has a lot of decision power over the garden. This dependency can cause a lot of uncertainty and restrain. The garden is also dependent on volunteers. For instance, the board consists solely out of volunteers. Without this voluntary work, the garden would not exist. The garden does not have enough resources to be able to afford (more) paid workers. Still, the garden has the ambition to professionalize and grow. For that, the garden should have more funding or other revenue streams. Would the garden aim to gain revenue outside of governmental funding, there should be a strong value proposition. As of now there is not a strong value proposition of the garden that consumers are willing to pay for, at least not one that would cover a substantial part of the garden costs.

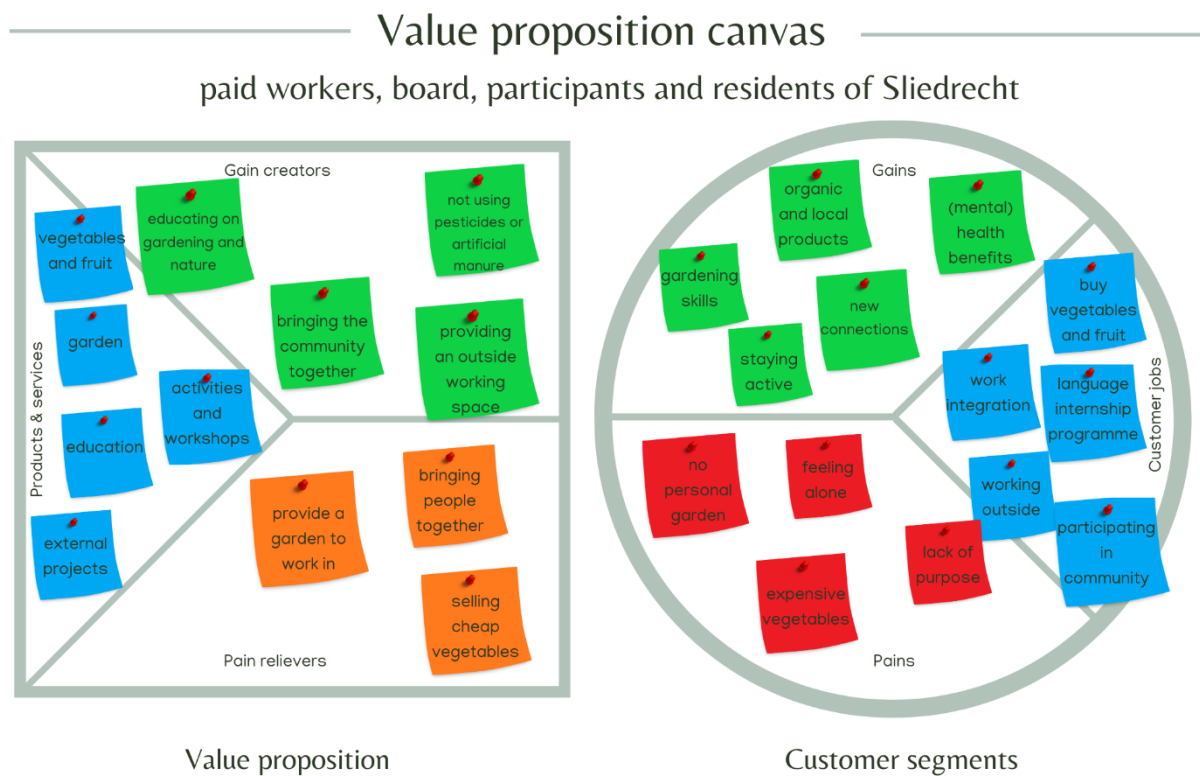


Figure 25: Value proposition canvas internal stakeholders

This value proposition canvas is made according to the opinion of the paid workers, board, participants and residents of Sliedrecht. It consists of a part of customer segments (circle), and a part for the gardens value proposition (square). The consultancy team feels like these groups are more similar in their needs and wants from the garden than for example the external stakeholders, for which a separate value proposition canvas is made below.

Customer jobs

The customer jobs for the stakeholders are the tasks they wish to perform, the wishes they need to satisfy and the problems they are aiming to solve. For these stakeholders the customer jobs could be: Buying vegetables and fruit, working outside, participate more in the community, and participate in work integration programme or the language internship programme. These customer jobs can vary per person or per group.

Gains

The gains of the customer segments are the expectations of wishes from the stakeholder, which makes them happy. The garden brings these gains to the stakeholder: Physical and mental health benefits. These are benefits provided by working outside in green spaces. Organic and local products are gains that the residents of Sliedrecht value, according to several interviews and the survey. Gardening skills is a gain that one can learn while working in the

garden. Staying active is also a gain that comes with working outside and doing a physical activity. New connections are a gain provided in partaking in social events and participating in the community.

Pains

Pains are the negative experiences the customer notices when performing their customer jobs without using the value proposition of the Social Garden. Feeling alone is a pain that the Social Garden could resolve by providing the opportunity to the customers to participate in social events. No personal garden is a pain resolved with providing the customers with the opportunity to work in the communal garden area in the Social Garden. Lack of purpose is resolved by offering cheap vegetables to the customers. Lack of purpose can be resolved by giving customers a common purpose with the Social Garden.

Products & Services

The products and services the Social Garden delivers are aimed to fulfil the customer jobs. The Social Garden offers vegetables and fruit, a garden to work in, education, activities, workshops and external projects. These external projects are mainly focused on customers in Sliedrecht who cannot work their own garden or want ecological zones (Buiten Tuinen and Tablis Tuinen).

Gain creators

Gain creators are the ways the Social Garden assures the gains are taken into the service. The customers have the gain that they like organic products, so the gain creator is; not using pesticides or artificial manure. The gains 'staying active' and '(mental) health benefits' are assured by the gain creator of providing outside working space, but also proper guidance and a welcoming ambiance. For the gain of 'new connections' the gain creator of 'bringing the community together' is used. The 'gardening skills' gain is provided for by the 'educating on gardening and nature' gain creator.

Pain relievers

The pain relievers describe how the products and services reliefs the customers pains. The pain of feeling alone is relieved by bringing the people together. The pain of no personal garden is relieved by providing a communal garden to work in. The pain of expensive vegetables is relieved by selling cheap vegetables.

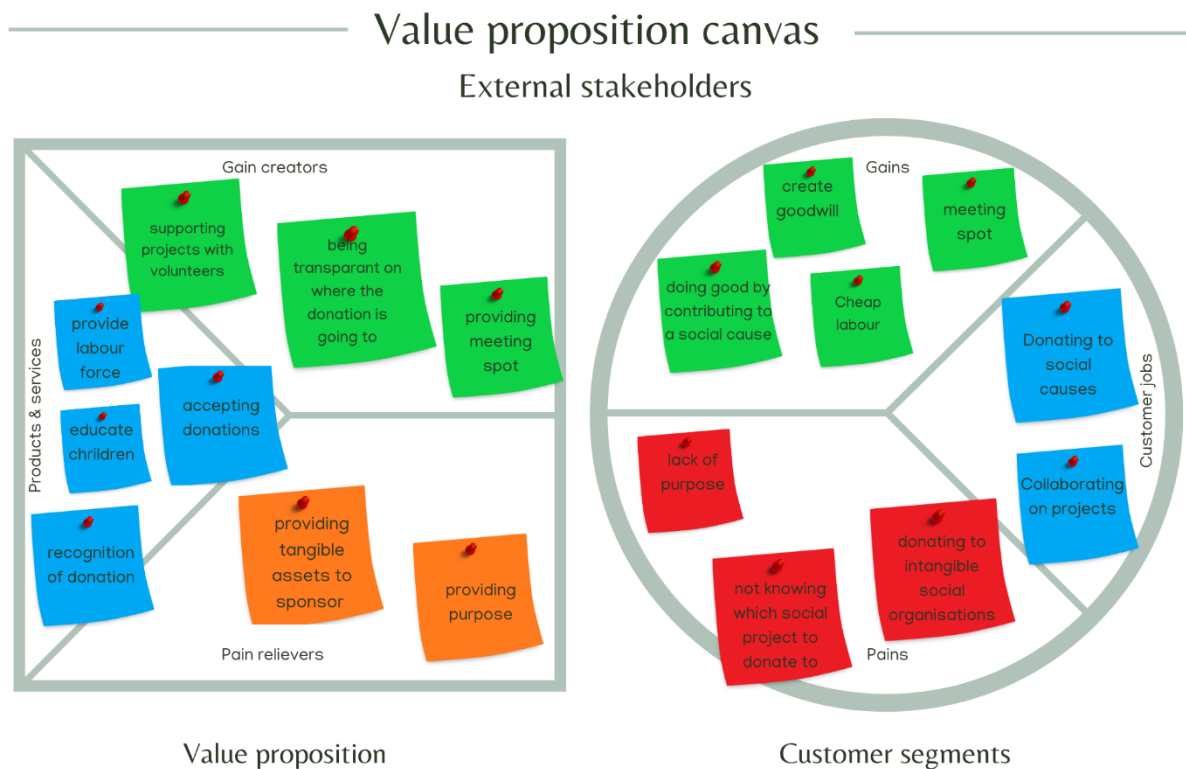


Figure 26: Value proposition canvas external stakeholders

This value proposition canvas is made for the external stakeholders. We can distinguish project partners (as Tablis Wonen, Bonkelaarhuis and Hovenier Van Rosmalen), sponsors who can provide materials or funding, the residents of Sliedrecht, and the municipality. These external stakeholders are directly or indirectly influenced by the actions of the garden.

Customer jobs

The customer jobs for the stakeholders are the tasks they wish to perform, the wishes they need to satisfy and the problems they are aiming to solve. For these stakeholders the customer jobs are: Donating to social causes and collaborating on projects. The municipality has more a complex relation to the garden, but these customer jobs are also part of their customer jobs.

Gains

The gains of the customer segments are the expectations of wishes from the stakeholder, which makes them happy. The garden brings these gains to the stakeholder: Creating goodwill, doing good by social causes are both a gain for the customer job of the donating to social causes customer job. Cheap labour is a gain for the collaborating on projects job. Providing a meeting spot is a gain provided by the use of the building and can be applicable for more customer jobs or external stakeholders.

Pains

Pains are the negative experiences the stakeholder notices when performing their customer jobs without using the value proposition of the Social Garden. Lack of purpose to be resolved with the donating to social causes customer job. Not knowing which social project to donate to is also a pain for the same customer job, as is donating to intangible social organisations.

Products & Services

The products and services the Social Garden delivers are aimed to fulfil the customer jobs. The garden provides labour force, accepts donations, educates children, and gives recognition to donations. Educating children and provide labour force are in relation to the customer job of collaborating on projects. Accepting donations and giving recognition of donations are in relation to the customer job of donating to social causes.

Gain creators

Gain creators are the ways the Social Garden assures the gains are taken into the product or service. The external stakeholders have the gain that they like a meeting spot, so the gain creator would be to provide a meeting spot. The gain creator of being transparent on where the donation is going to is provided by the opportunity to donate materials or parts of the garden. Garden perks have signs to it stating the sponsor. Supporting projects with volunteers is a gain creator for the gain of cheap labour.

Pain relievers

The pain relievers describe how the products and services reliefs the stakeholder's pains. The pain of lack of purpose is relieved by providing purpose, this is mostly done by accepting the stakeholders to the garden and providing them with something to be invested in. Providing tangible assets to sponsor relieves the pain that sponsors often not precisely know where their donations go.

Current business model

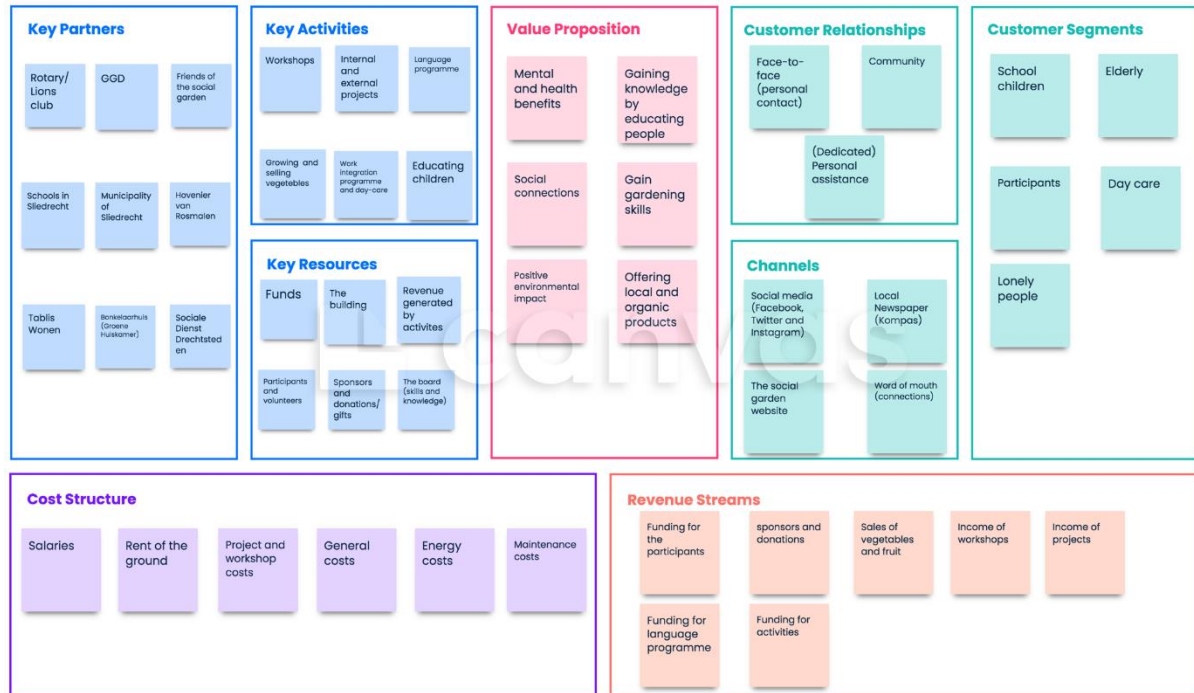


Figure 27: Current business model canvas

The result of all research the consultancy team conducted about the current situation of the Social Garden is portrayed in the current business model canvas, which can be seen above in figure 22, as well as in the appendix where the image is bigger and better readable.

Key Partners

Key partners are parties that the Social Garden are engaged with in one way or another. The following Key Partners of the Social Garden are mentioned in the paragraphs “Stakeholder analysis” and other paragraphs (see text in brackets after the stakeholder): “Schools in Sliedrecht” (Stakeholder analysis | Internal Projects; school programme | External projects; Home-gardening kits| Sales and Activities; Activities), “GGD” (Internal Projects; school programme | External projects; Home-gardening kits), “Sociale Dienst Drechtsteden” – This includes also ASVZ and Ieder Zijn Werk (Stakeholder analysis | Internal projects; Work integration programme and daycare; Language internship programme), “Friends of the Social Garden” (Stakeholder analysis | Sponsoring and donations), “Rotary\Lions club” (Sponsoring and donations), “Bonkelaarhuis” (Stakeholder analysis | Groene Huiskamer)”, “Hovenier van Rosmalen” (External projects; Buitentuinen), “Tablis wonen” (Stakeholder

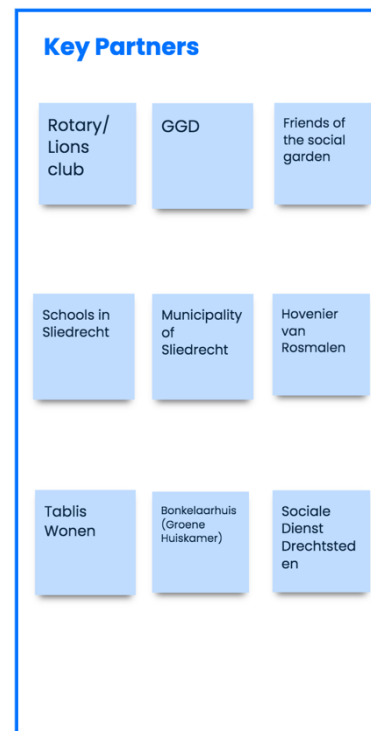


Figure 28: Key partners

analysis | Internal projects; Groene Huiskamer | External projects; Buiten Tuinen; Tablis Tuinen) and “Municipality of Sliedrecht” (Stakeholder analysis | Internal projects; Work integration programme and daycare; Language internship programme; Groene Huiskamer; School programme; Internships | External projects; Tablis Tuinen | Sales and Activities; Sales; Activities; Hedgehog houses and Insect Hotels).

Key Activities

Key Activities are the main activities the Social Garden engages in. The following key activities are mentioned in the following paragraphs (in brackets): Workshops (Sales and Activities; Activities), internal and external projects (Internal projects | External projects), language programme (Internal projects; language internship programme), growing and selling vegetables (Sales and Activities; Sales), work integration programme and daycare (Internal projects; Work integration programme and daycare) and educating children (Internal projects; school programme).



Figure 29: Key activities

Key Resources

The Key Resources are resources that are essential for the running of the Social Garden. The following key resources are mentioned in the following paragraphs (in brackets): Funding (Financial Inflows | Internal projects; Language internship programme; Work integration programme), the building (Internal projects; Groene Huiskamer | Sales and Activities; Sales | Sponsoring and Donations), revenue generated by activities (Sales and Activities; Activities), participants and volunteers (Internal projects; Language internship programme; Work integration programme | External projects; Tablis Tuinen), sponsors and donations/gifts (Sponsoring and Donations), the board (Sponsoring and Donations | Swot – strengths and weaknesses).



Figure 30: Key resources

Value proposition

The value that the garden can propose to the stakeholders, customers and everyone involved. The following value propositions are mentioned in the following paragraphs (in brackets): Mental and health benefits (Internal projects; school programme | External projects; Home-gardening kits), gaining knowledge by educating people (Internal projects; school programme), social connections (Value proposition canvas), gain gardening skills (Value proposition canvas), positive environmental impact, offering local and organic products (Value proposition canvas | Survey)



Figure 31: Value proposition

Customer Relationships

The customer relationships are relationships that are essential for the running of the Social Garden. The following customer relationships are mentioned in the following paragraphs (in brackets): Face-to-face contact and personal assistance refer to the contact of caring, educating schoolchildren and (re)integrating the participants (Internal Projects). Initially the Social Garden is founded to bring people together and create a 'community' (Background information).



Figure 32: Customer relationships

Channels

The channels are ways the Social Garden is communicating to their customers and stakeholders. The following channels are mentioned in the following paragraphs (in brackets): Social media (Problem definition), local newspaper (Problem definition). the website of the Social Garden is also one of the channels to communicate with stakeholders and customers. A lot of information is stated on the website, like the mission(s) and objectives of the Social Garden and how to become a sponsor for example. word of mouth is the last channel of the Social Garden. People who visit the Social Garden could talk about their experiences onsite the garden (interviews with the participants). Word of mouth is one of the strongest channels, since hearing it directly from someone else has a lot of personal impact as well as it is free advertisement.

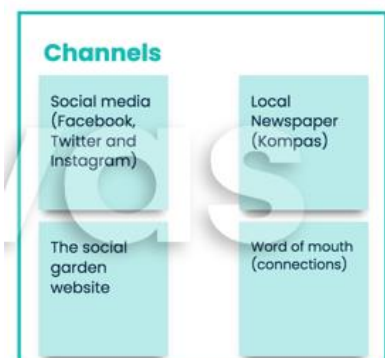


Figure 33: Channels

Customer segments

The customer segments are target groups the Social Garden has for different value propositions. The following customer segments are mentioned in the following paragraphs (in brackets): School children (Internal projects; school programme | External projects; home-gardening kits | Sales and Activities; Activities), participants (Internal projects; Work integration programme and daycare), daycare clients (Internal projects; Work integration programme and daycare), lonely people (survey), elderly (External projects; Groene Huiskamer | Sales and Activities; Sales; Activities).



Figure 34: Customer segments

Cost structure

The cost structure are the most important costs the Social Garden has. The following costs are mentioned in the following paragraphs (in brackets): Salaries (executive summary | Problem description), rent of the ground, project/workshop costs (Tablis Tuinen), general costs (executive summary), energy costs, maintenance costs.



Figure 35: Cost structure

Revenue streams

The revenue streams are the most important revenues the Social Garden has. The following costs are mentioned in the following paragraphs (in brackets): Funding participants/WMO clients (Internal projects; Work integration programme and daycare), funding language internships (Internal projects; Language internship programme), funding activities (Financial inflows), sales vegetables (Sales and Activities; Sales), income workshops (Sales and Activities; Activities), income projects (External projects; Tablis Tuinen; Buiten Tuinen)



Figure 36: Revenue streams

Sub research question 2 – What could an improved business model for the Social Garden in Sliedrecht look like?

Introduction

After gathering all the information about the current situation of the Social Garden in Sliedrecht, the consultancy team was able to answer the first sub research question and developed the current business model canvas. In the first sub research question, the strengths and weaknesses of the SWOT analysis regarding the Social Garden were elaborated. In the next sections, the opportunities and threats are taking into account also looking to the future respecting the Social Garden. Afterwards, the improved business model is introduced and every part is explained. Taking all the knowledge and results into account, the final recommendations are developed by the consultancy team and conclusions will be drawn regarding the financial viability of the Social Garden.

SWOT analysis – opportunities and threats

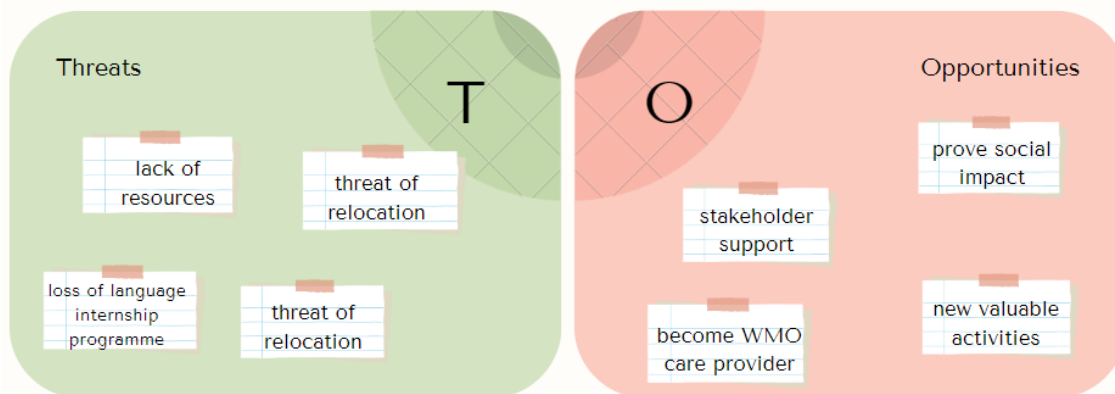


Figure 37: SWOT analysis, opportunities and threats

Opportunities

The Social Garden has several opportunities to strengthen its position. One opportunity would be to prove the Social Gardens' social impact to the municipality, stakeholders and residents of Sliedrecht. To prove the social impact, the impact has to be measured first. Proving the social impact can increase the support from the community or stakeholders. Using the current support from stakeholders and community to gain more revenue would be another opportunity. Examples would be crowdfunding, sponsors or workshops. An opportunity would be to do more valuable activities. The value in these activities could be that it would be profitable, strengthen the Social Gardens' good name or improves the Social Gardens' social impact. An opportunity to strengthen the Social Gardens' financial status would be to become a WMO care provider. This change would drastically improve the financial situation of the Social Garden.

Threats

The Social Garden in Sliedrecht would be likely to be subject to some changes, and some negative changes could be realistic. One possible threat is not unthinkable: the Social Garden running out of resources to maintain daily activities. Staff has to be paid, and there are costs bound to the farming practices and other activities. Another realistic threat with a wider horizon would be the need to relocate. As the municipality has decision power over the Social Garden and have a concrete alternative plan for the ground the garden is located on, the possibility of a forced relocation is on the table. This relocation would mean a serious drawback for the progress the Social Garden made already, where for instance the soil takes a long time to be right for farming. However, in this threat you can also find opportunities, as a new location could provide new possibilities. Another threat would be the loss of the language internship programme. The government is planning to introduce new, stricter rules for such programmes. At the moment, this programme assures 6% of the current revenues, and also brings workers to the Social Garden. A loss of workers and volunteers is another possible threat. At the moment, workload and stress is high. This is mostly because the lack of staff and leadership in the Social Garden. In those situations of distress, the work satisfaction could decrease, and workers or volunteers could leave the Social Garden.

Improved business model

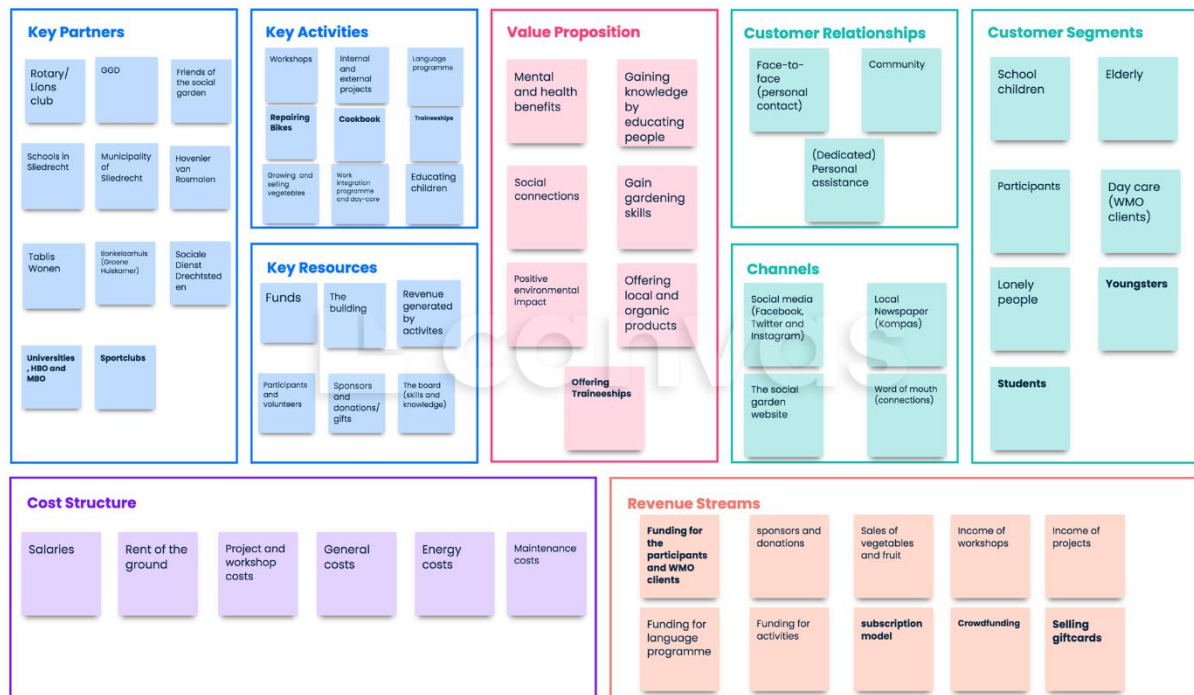


Figure 38: New business model canvas

The complete improved business model the consultancy team visualised, can be found in figure 33., as well as in the appendix, where it is bigger and better readable. The improved business model has a lot of similarities compared to the current business model. However, several opportunities and improvements were added to the current business model, because of the knowledge and information the consultancy team gained throughout this project. A lot of brainstorming sessions have been conducted with the whole consultancy team about what improvements, opportunities and new activities could be made regarding the Social Garden. The consultancy team came up with the following improvements and opportunities for the current business model of the Social Garden.

Key Partners

In the improved business model canvas, the first key partner that the consultancy team added are sport clubs in Sliedrecht. There are some sport clubs located near the Social Garden which poses opportunities. Some of those opportunities could be the selling of fruits and vegetables, and organising activities and events together. Sport clubs want to be associated with social and health organisations like the Social Garden (Sportclubs als ideale setting voor gezondheids promotie, 2018). Next to that, sport clubs want to take the initiative, but not doing it right now. So, a collaboration would therefore be a win-win situation. The next key partner that is included in the improved business model are universities, HBOs and MBOs. This is because the Social Garden wants to offer traineeships spots and need a minimum number of students, so with a good collaboration with the new key partner the Social Garden should be able to reach the minimum amount according the consultancy team.



Figure 39: Key partners

Key Activities

In the improved business model canvas, three main activities are added. The consultancy team thought of making a multi-cultural cookbook, doing traineeships and repairing bikes. To connect the grown food the Social Garden is producing with a practical idea, the multicultural cookbook would be a very interesting project. Having the board, (voluntary-)workers and the participants present their favourite meals accompanied with some background stories, would really show the connection between the Social Garden and the people that are working there for everybody to see. Next to that, it will also generate more financial inflow by selling the cookbook.



Figure 40: Key activities

Another activity the Social Garden could provide are traineeships for students (University, HBO and MBO). The Social Garden is already offering these spots, but unfortunately gathered to few applications. A minimum number of applications is needed to receive funds/subsidies and make it work. If the Social Garden would be able to acquire more students who are willing to work on the Social Garden (e.g. Wageningen University students, or students from other

agricultural schools), a result would be more financial inflows, as well as more hands to help in the garden itself.

Whilst brainstorming, the consultancy team came up with an out-of-the-box idea. A new activity to take a look at, could be repairing bikes. More income will be generated by this, whilst also helping the community by fixing the broken bikes of the residents. Helping the residents is one of the core pillars of the garden, so this opportunity is in line with the existing mission of the Social Garden. Also, as of now there is a lack of activities in the winter because farming is less possible due to the colder weather. Therefore, repairing bikes could be a fun activity for the participants to engage in throughout the whole year.

Lastly, there are improvements and opportunities that could be implemented by the Social Garden concerning internal and external projects. Organising (community) festivals, sport activities (e.g. yoga) and movie nights onsite the Social Garden, could bring more money in by e.g. asking for a small entr ee fee. It also increases awareness among the (young) residents of Sliedrecht, which could also be good for the image of the garden. Selling mushroom kits and keeping chickens for the egg production, could also generate some additional revenue.

Key Resources

In the improved business model canvas, the key recourses did not change in the canvas itself. Nevertheless, to be able to increase the amount of funding, becoming qualified to provide daycare according to WMO standards would be a good idea. For this to happen, the Social Garden would need a quality book and qualified people to provide this daycare. As of now, the board of the Social Garden already contains someone who is able to provide this daycare, but the quality book for WMO has to be finalised to match the rules appointed by the government. Other key resources, like revenue generated by activities, change as well but are explained in the later paragraph about revenue streams.



Figure 41: Key resources

Value Proposition

In the improved business model canvas, there is a small addition to the value proposition. Because the consultancy team wants to be in line with the current mission of the Social Garden, no big changes in the value proposition are happening. However, by offering traineeships to students there will be an additional value that the Social Garden is able to propose. Some values will be increased due to the added activities the team came up with. Amongst others, publishing the multicultural cookbook and organizing (community) festivals will increase the health benefits whilst also connecting more people to the garden.



Figure 42: Value proposition

Customer Relationships

In the improved business model canvas, the customer relationships will mostly be the same. There will be more attention on the face-to-face (personal) contact and the (dedicated) personal assistance, because of the focus on the daycare providing (WMO). Having more daycare participants and providing proper care to these people, will lead to more (dedicated) personal assistance as well as more face-to-face (personal) contact.



Figure 43: Customer relationships

Channels

In the improved business model canvas, the different channels through which the Social Garden communicates with its customers will remain the same. The Social Garden uses several channels to reach the customers and make them more aware of the products and services the Social Garden is providing. However, according to the consultancy team, there are certain things that could be introduced or improved. In general, there could be better looked at who is being targeted whilst altering the content accordingly. For example, the consultancy team could not find any messages concerning a need for volunteers (with an exception of a few tweets on Twitter). Trying to find volunteers by engaging people with their communication, could prove useful. A suggestion could be to promote a project and specifically state that volunteers (for that project) are needed.

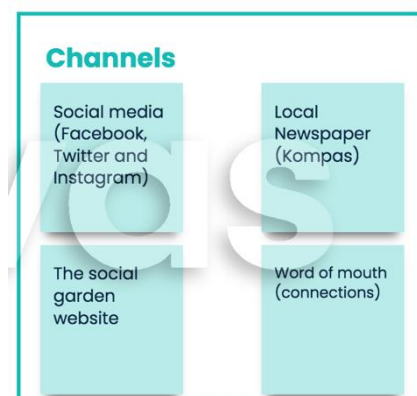


Figure 44: Channels

Customer segments

In the improved business model canvas, two more customer segments were added, whilst one segment was altered. Firstly, students could be a new and potential customer segment. This would be the case if the Social Garden is able to offer traineeships for students. As explained before, the Social Garden was already looking for students who could fill the traineeship spots but could not reach the minimum amount. By better communicating through their current channels, the Social Garden could be able to reach the minimum of students to offer the traineeship spots. Secondly, by offering and organising more diverse activities the Social Garden would attract an extra customer segment, like youngsters. The additional activities the Consultancy team came up with were (community) festivals, movie nights and sport activities (e.g. yoga) onsite the garden. The Consultancy team expects that by organizing these additional activities, the Social Garden attracts youngsters, resulting in a new potential customer segment.

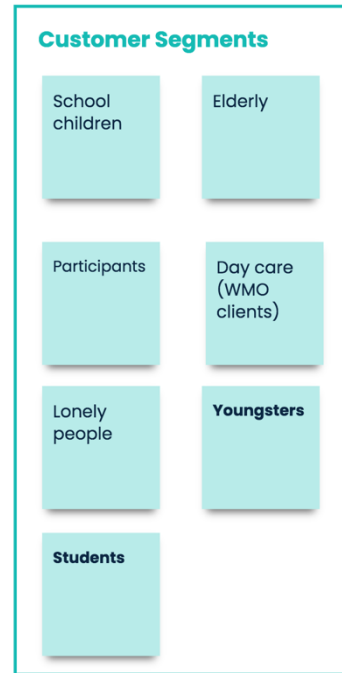


Figure 45: Customer segments

Thus, increasing the awareness and engagement among the youngsters in Sliedrecht. The daycare clients, as mentioned in the current business model, are altered to daycare WMO clients. This is because the Social Garden will focus on giving WMO daycare instead of 'normal' daycare, as it will receive a higher subsidy from the municipality.

Cost structure

In the improved business model canvas, the cost structure will more or less look the same as in the current business model. When the Social Garden is focusing more on daycare (WMO) and the employees need to have a

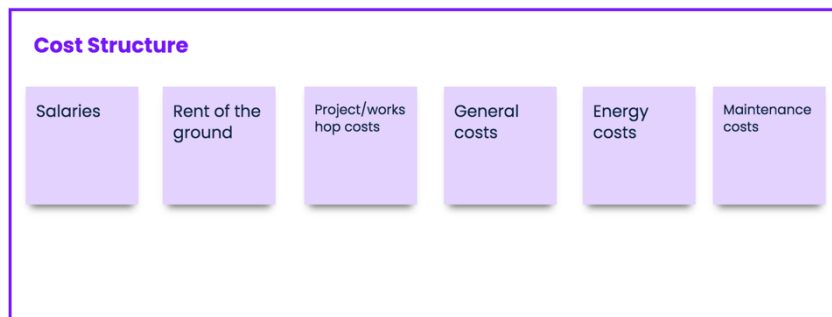


Figure 46: Cost structure

certificate or training to provide this care, salary, as well as internal project cost, will increase. The cost structure thus doesn't change, but the numbers do.

Revenue streams

In the improved business model canvas, there are more revenue streams added compared to the current business model. By focusing on the WMO daycare,

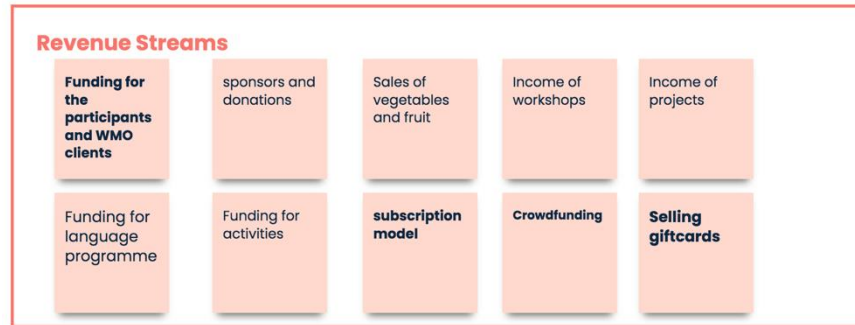


Figure 47: Revenue streams

organising additional activities and coming up with new initiatives, the Social Garden will grow their revenue streams. The subsidy for the WMO daycare clients, which is around €15.000 per client a year, is a strong financial foundation for the Social Garden. Next to that, another improvement that the Social Garden could think of, is to increase the prices of their products (e.g. vegetables and fruit) and their services (e.g. workshops, activities and renting out their place). Organising the additional activities, like movie nights and sports activities (e.g. yoga), will also generate more revenue by charging entrance fees to the attendees. Lastly, the new initiatives the consultancy team came up with will also create more financial inflow. Crowdfunding, introducing a subscription model and selling gift cards are added to the improved business model. Crowdfunding could be for specific uses, activities or events. Next to this, introducing a subscription model could be an interesting way of getting more financial inflow whilst simultaneously enlarging the Social Garden's supporting base, because there is direct contact between the Social Garden and the funder. The result of this is that more people are involved and engaged with the Social Garden. Selling gift cards will also generate more revenue for the Social Garden as well as increasing awareness and engagement. First the gift card is being bought by a customer and then the recipient of the gift card can use the gift card to buy groceries. The recipient is then introduced to the Social Garden and simultaneously invited to engage with it as well. The revenue stream regarding the sales of vegetables and fruits will also increase, because the consultancy team came up with the idea of having a market stand where the Social Garden could sell their fruits and vegetables or collaborate with (more) local stores to boost their sales as well.

Business model recommendations

Recommendation 1: Reallocate resources to find focus

Reallocating resources is priority number one given that with the information gathered, the main takeaway was that there is insufficient amount of resources to sustain the current business model of the Social Garden. By interviewing internal and external stakeholders, the consultancy team arrived to the conclusion that not enough resources are available to keep doing the activities the Social Garden is engaging in right now. This was confirmed by the experts and corroborated by project partners of the Social Garden. Although the consultancy team was not able to reach and talk to all the internal and external stakeholders of the Social Garden, as well as all the experts contacted, because of time pressure and a lack of response, the consultancy team concluded that the lack, or the improper allocation, of resources posed the biggest problem for the Social Garden.

The Social Garden is financially dependent on funds and subsidies, especially those provided by the municipality of Sliedrecht. The Social Garden is already providing daycare, but not according to the WMO regulations and rules. One paid worker is committed to writing a quality handbook, which is a mandatory requirement for providing WMO daycare. The consultancy team is adamant that the Social Garden needs to put more focus on implementing and providing the WMO daycare, because a lot of funds and subsidies will be drawn from this. When the Social Garden is providing the WMO daycare, the financial inflow this brings will be enough to continue with the activities and projects that are currently taking place. Next to that, the Social Garden could even introduce and organise some new opportunities the consultancy came up with (see improved business model). The challenge for the Social Garden could be that there will likely be a transition from being a Social Garden towards a Care Farm. This could be contradictory or challenging with the current missions and objectives of the Social Garden, something the consultancy team does not want to force upon the Social Farm and is thus careful about. However, the consultancy team advises the Social Garden to focus on the provision of WMO daycare, because this will give the financial inflow a huge boost.

The Social Garden is doing a lot of different projects and activities but seems to have troubles in managing those. First, the paid-worker(s) and coordinators must be recouped to be able to keep on paying their salaries. When engaging in projects and activities, these must at least break even, which for most of the current projects and activities launched at the Social Garden is not the case. Looking at the costs and revenues from all projects, the costs are significantly higher than the financial inflow of some projects. A cost-benefit analysis could be done to help the Social Garden in distinguishing which projects are most valuable. A collective decision should be made on what projects to prioritise.

Secondly, there are not enough volunteers to engage in projects or activities because of which paid workers have to fulfill those roles. Acquiring the right (project-specific) volunteers could help overcome this issue. Communicating throughout the channels of the Social Garden and trying to reach project-specific volunteers could be really helpful. Finding just volunteers could be difficult, but by marketing certain projects, and thus giving clarity on what is expected, people could be more eager to volunteer. Next to that, the Social Garden would be able to find people through this method that are both enthusiastic about the project, as well as having a high sense of responsibility.

The last part of this recommendation is about minimising the costs and focusing less on professionalising and growing. The priority should be on the most important activities, workshops and projects and just be a break-even organisation. Save money where it is possible and no taking on more activities, workshops and projects than the Social Garden can handle compared to its resources. As mentioned before, looking at the paid-workers and coordinators could be useful. Only let them do the work they are assigned to, and only pay them for the work they do. Having a critical view at the human resources policy to see what is going well and what could be changed in order to help the Social Garden. This can be seen as an emergency advice, but if there is no other way, this is how the Social Garden could be able to continue what they are doing right now regarding the future.

Recommendation 2: Measure both the social value and impact the Social Garden has, whilst also improving communication.

According to the consultancy team, measuring the social value and impact of the Social Garden will be useful for both the Social Garden itself, as for the internal and external stakeholders.

After the consultancy team interviewed several stakeholders and talked to a variety of Sliedrecht's residents, the social value and impact of the Social Garden stand out as being one of the most important aspects, as it is relatively unknown but has a big influence on how the Social Garden is being perceived.

Noteworthy was the interview with the Municipality of Sliedrecht where the consultancy team was told that it would be useful to map out the social value and the impact the Social Garden has, especially taking the close collaboration with the municipality into account. A lot of subsidies and funding come from the Municipality, showing the social value and impact the Social Garden has, shows the importance and value of the support the Municipality gives. Showing the resulting social value and impact by ones' support is not only applicable to the Municipality, this is also of use for sponsors and donators. The Social Garden could be able to obtain new funding opportunities or create commercial collaborations, as organisations are more inclined to work together when the social value created is increasing and clearly communicated.

Researching and mapping out social value and impact, is a whole study by itself. Measuring a concept which is seen as broad and vague, whilst having a different meaning for everyone, is quite difficult. Nevertheless, the consultancy team thinks it is of utmost importance to do a study on this subject, especially taking the insights into account the consultancy team got from the different stakeholders. Although the social value and impact has been researched a little in this report by analysing and conducting interviews, and is somewhat communicated in the value proposition canvas, no further research has been done on how to properly measure social value and impact. The consultancy team believes a complete study of the social value and impact would entail an overview of different measurements of the social value and impact to all the stakeholders of the Social Garden in a comprehensible manner. Taking resources like knowledge, time and finances into account, doing this research might prove to be a challenge. Measuring the social value and impact is a hard and time-consuming study, we therefore recommend a study to be conducted by, for example, another consultancy team, a MSc or BSc thesis project, or by an internship.

If the above-mentioned recommendation is not achievable, the consultancy team strongly recommends to still make the “measured” social value and impact into something tangible. Mapping all the participants that have been helped over the years, gathering their experiences and stories, and making a corresponding overview already creates a lot of clarity on what stakeholders engage in. Showing concrete examples and numbers to, for example, the Municipality of Sliedrecht and/or sponsors, might incline them to invest more in the Social Garden because it is clearer what the effect of their doing is.

Following up this recommendation of measuring the social value and impact of the Social Garden, it is important to clearly communicate. It should be researched how to communicate this measured social value and impact to all different stakeholders. The way the Social Garden should present its measurements to the Municipality of Sliedrecht is different to the way it should communicate its measurements to the residents of Sliedrecht, as both the intended outcomes differ as well. For example, the Social Garden presents its measurements to the Municipality of Sliedrecht to gather support in the forms of funding and subsidies, whilst the Social Garden communicates its’ social value and impact to the residents of Sliedrecht to gather more support in the forms of engaging with the Social Garden by buying fruits and vegetables, participating in workshops, or even becoming volunteers. Some ideas concerning communication to stakeholders, which could have a lot of beneficial outcomes for the Social Garden, the consultancy team came up with were advertising for volunteers for specific projects. This increase both awareness and engagements, people get acquainted with the Social Garden and might simply stop by to buy groceries, whilst others might actively engage with the Social Garden by becoming a volunteer. The latter being the most valuable as there seems to be a lack of volunteers. Whilst communicating to the residents in Sliedrecht, the conveyed message should be altered to the purpose. Messages should be differentiated and clearly have its goals, like buying vegetables, building connections by having a cup of coffee, tea, or soup, participating in workshops, or as previously mentioned, becoming a volunteer. Lastly, communication concerning the Green Traineeship, or internships in general, could be improved by e.g. promoting directly at agricultural education providers like the Wageningen University and/or Aeres Hogeschool Wageningen.

Discussion and critical reflection

The consultancy team is aware that implementing the recommendations might prove to be a challenge for the Social Garden, especially taking resources like available knowledge, time, and finances into account. To tackle this, the second recommendation made was to outsource the research on how to measure and communicate appropriately the social value and impact. However, this could also make the Social Garden reliable on an external party, whilst possibly inducing costs on the Social Garden as well. Finding a disinterested party, such as a scientific advisory team or an intern for this project specifically would help avoiding these undesirable outcomes.

At the same time, some recommendations might challenge the initial mission of the Social Garden. For example, by focussing on the WMO, the Social Gardens shifts the interests to those of a Care Farm. This professionalisation might go against the informal aspect of the Social Garden that stakeholder's value, although allowing the Social Garden to maintain its existence. The balance is a sensitive one to find, and as the team of the Social Garden is responsible for the future orientation of the organisation, a healthy shared governance, and an increased number of volunteers besides the work and language programmes are desired. This is the direction that both recommendations made by this consultancy team are encouraging the Social Garden to take.

Whilst working on the project, news came of new plans of building houses and a new freeway in lieu of the current location of the Social Garden. It is yet unsure what the consequences for the Social Garden will be regarding these plans. Due to the time constraint and the uncertainty that comes with the newly made plans, the consultancy team decided to discard this information for the time being. Future research could be done on the impact of these plans, and how it affects the functioning of the Social Garden. Moreover, the recommendations made were tailored to tackle financial and some organisational issues within the Social Garden, which will hopefully help the project carry on even in the event of a delocalisation in the future.

Conclusion

The Social Garden in Sliedrecht called in the Wageningen University Science Shop after the end of its 10 years plan in order to bring some readability to the current financial and organisational challenges it faces. This consultation project has been carried out by a multidisciplinary team of students in the frame of the Academic Consultancy Training as part of their Masters' in business and consumer studies, sustainable food systems, and plant sciences. The project has been approached as an entrepreneurial journey to understand the current state of affairs in the Social Garden: interviewing key partners, mapping out key activities, analysing main financial streams and cost structure. The methods employed fitted this entrepreneurial approach: assessing the current value created by the Social Garden for its different target groups (e.g., people of Sliedrecht in need of social care), analysing how this value matched in the current business model comprising all resources available to the Social Garden and the activities carried out, and finally appraising the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT analysis) of the current situation of the Social Garden. The aim was ultimately to provide sound advice to a promising, inspiring, and dynamic but struggling social initiative.

The first recommendation concluding this study follows the identification of one major weakness of the Social Garden: the lack of resources to maintain the social activities, may they be financial or social (time, energy, manpower) resources. In order to remedy this issue, three options are available to the Social Garden at this point in time: reduce the use of resources, expand to new resources, or reallocate the current resources available. The first one would endanger the continuation of current activities and therefore negatively impact the social value that the Social Garden brings to the people in Sliedrecht. The second option has been tried out by increasing the number of projects and increasing the number of paid workers. Unfortunately, this led to the current situation of the Social Garden because of the overpowering workload on a small number of crucial employees of the foundation. Therefore, the third option, a reallocation of resources to find focus and manage them effectively, is the preferred option for the present recommendation. This can, for example, take the form of reducing the tasks allocated to the paid workers, provided only the high-valuable tasks are remunerated for, such as the drafting of a quality handbook to become a care-farm and increase this financial inflow. Only once a stable financial situation is attained, will the Social Garden be able to entertain the idea of further professionalising its management.

The second recommendation is evidently closely related to the previous one. Because the Social Garden is currently lacking focus, the communication towards its partners is also unclear. Both projects and funding partners, and potential new target groups which would benefit from the social services provided on the garden would benefit from a clear assessment of the past, current, and maybe future social value that the Social Garden has brought or is expecting to bring to the community of Sliedrecht. The analysis of the current value proposition of the garden, and the subsequent business model developed, have made clear

that the Social Garden is providing several crucial social services to the residents of Sliedrecht most in need of social assistance. However, the emotional involvement of the care providers and the founders of this social initiative is not sufficient to show unequivocally to various other potential partners or new volunteers what the concrete value of the Social Garden could be for them outside of the public social services. The subsequent recommendation is thus to make internally or have made by external unbiased parties a precise evaluation of the impact the Social Garden has had for the past 10 years. In addition, a structured communication of this value could open new perspectives for the Social Garden in terms of incoming resources.

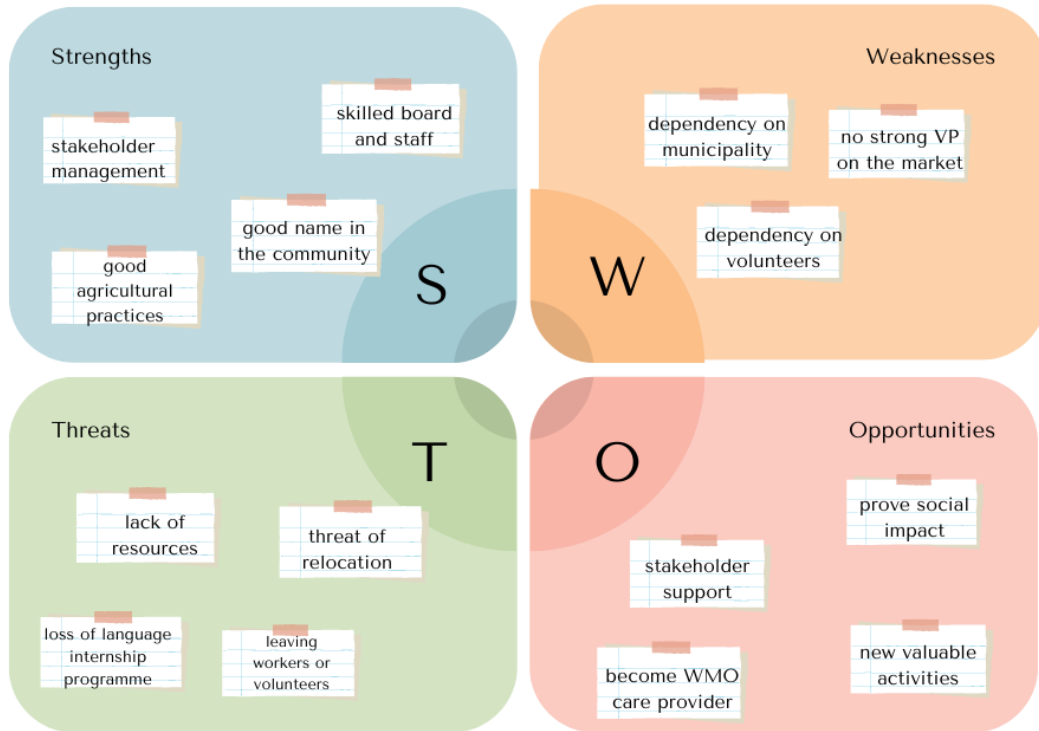
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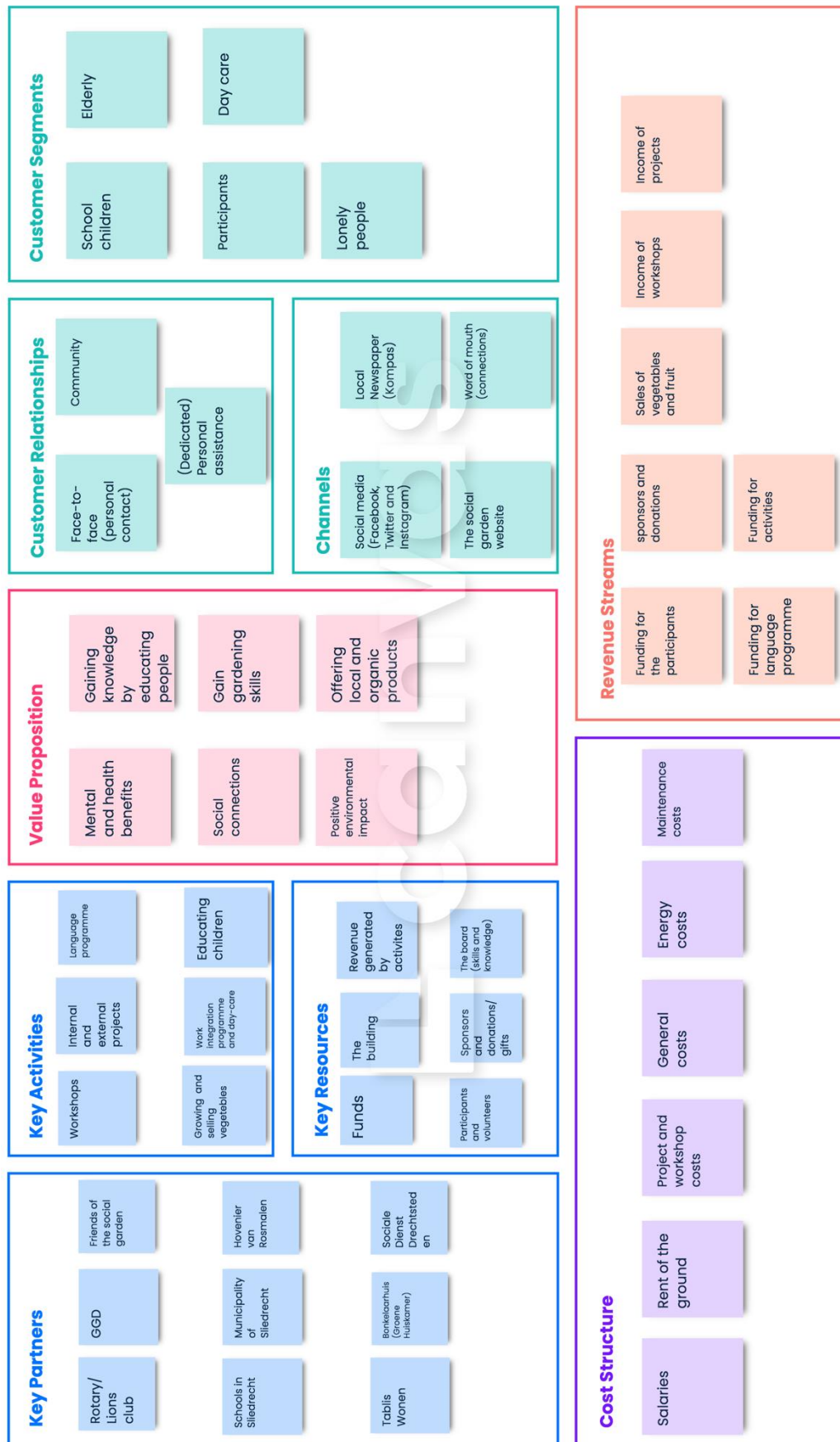
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Appendix 1: Complete SWOT analysis



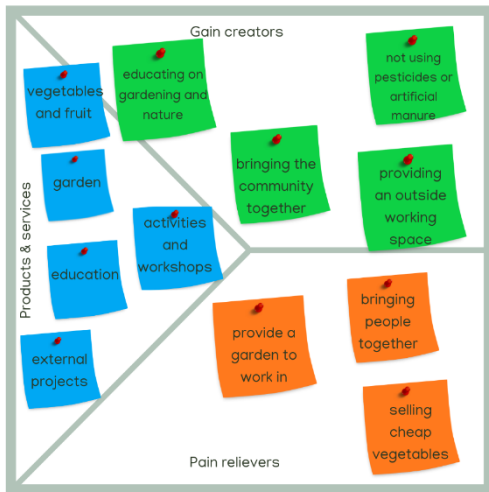
Appendix 2: Current business model



Appendix 3: Current value propositions

Value proposition canvas

paid workers, board, participants and residents of Sliedrecht



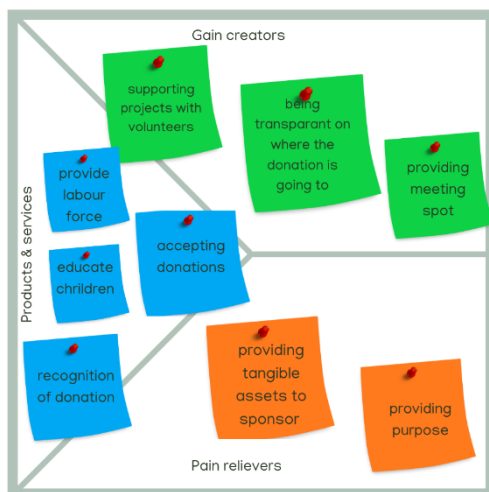
Value proposition



Customer segments

Value proposition canvas

External stakeholders



Value proposition



Customer segments

Appendix 4: Improved business model

