

AGENTS OF CO-EXISTENCE

Integrated Action Plan of the city of Breda



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Section 1

Context, needs and vision

Overall theme

The main challenge of the "Agents of co-existence and open government" network (AoCE) is to embrace social innovation and inclusion in all fields of local governance by improving skills and capabilities of municipal staff and creating new organisational structures in order to further boost civic participation and create a more solid basis of democracy. As a result, empowered civil servants with proper skills and attitudes, and better organisational structures will encourage public service innovation.

By the end of the Activation stage, the AoCE partnership agreed on focussing on the following themes:

Theme1 - Working together with citizens

Theme2 - Innovators coming into government

Theme 3 - Focus on staff, internal capabilities, and officials as innovators

Theme 4 - New working methods and rethinking the rules.

Inside each theme, partners have identified sub-themes, expressed their knowledge needs, and highlighted their good practices.

All partners are already applying different methods, tools, techniques, and approaches to citizen participation. At the same time, they are struggling **to find solutions to increase trust in government institutions**, tackle polarisation issues and mobilise the silent majority of their population improving the participatory culture of citizens. Fortunately, some partners have well-elaborated systems for cooperating with young people or other specific groups of citizens represented by NGOs. Also, many partners have extensive experience with and tested **tools for participatory budgeting**.

We can safely say that the partners already have a deep knowledge about 'working with citizens' but they have a lack of knowledge on **how to embed the results of citizen participation into the daily work of the administration**. Another important element are the innovations and new ways of thinking that citizens can bring to the table. Generally speaking, civil servants (very often experts in their field) find it difficult to embrace citizens' ideas as possible solutions for the policies being discussed.

Moreover, they struggle to follow up on citizens' ideas, whether the idea has been taken into consideration or explain why it could not be implemented. They are also looking for new ways to communicate these decisions to citizens in such a way that they can easily absorb them. To sum up, partners want to know how **to create transparency in decision-making**.

As mentioned before, AoCE particularly focuses on **improving the skills and capacities of civil servants** (theme 3) to implement citizen participation processes more successfully. Partners found the **communication and facilitation skills** the most important skills of civil servants to be improved. Some partner cities need to improve their civil servants' knowledge of citizen engagement methods. Further, partners wish to focus not only on civil servants in general but focus especially on the leaders of the municipality, to **achieve participatory leadership** in tackling power relation issues. Almost all partners expressed their willingness to **make changes in the attitude, and mindset of their civil servants** to overcome fear and increase motivation for innovation and citizen participation.

On top of upskilling civil servants, partners would like to **explore and establish new working methods** for and rethink the rules of citizen participation (theme 4). As with theme 3, the main questions for partners in this theme are: how to increase cross-department collaborations involving all departments in citizen participation; how to set up and run an internal platform for civil servants being a safe place for innovating

and mutual learning; and how to create a clear legal framework for working with citizens. Half of the partners have already set up a participation department or at least established a position for a participation officer. They will exchange knowledge about their working methods and support those partners who haven't created such a unit in their organisation yet but would like to do so in the future.

Current situation

Breda is a medium-sized urban area and the largest city in the Southwest of the Netherlands with a growing population due to migration. There is a growing dichotomy in Breda's society based on livelihood security and equality of opportunity. This division follows geographical lines within the city. Roughly speaking the northern part of the city is characterised by social housing, low income, low education level, a large population of immigrants, less opportunities. The middle and higher classes (those with the better opportunities) are in the southern half of the city. In this challenging context within Breda municipality, the city servants work together to ensure equity of opportunity for all residents, to reduce this divide. They do this through citizen participation and by consistently and sustainably engaging in dialogue with their residents. Breda holds the opinion that governments can no longer do without the voice of inhabitants and will have to be proactive in this.

Thanks to citizen participation **improved decision-making** is expected: Breda aims to tap into the collective knowledge, ideas, and expertise of their citizens. By involving the community in decision-making processes, they can make more informed and effective decisions that align with the needs and preferences of the people. In addition, the introduction of civil participation aims to **empower citizens** by giving them a voice in local policies, projects, and issues that directly affect their lives. It promotes a **sense of ownership** and responsibility among residents. Depending on the kind of policy development, Breda currently applies different participation methods such as neighbourhood councils, advisory committees (with a Senior council and a Youth council), participatory budget, online platforms (a.o. [Breda Platform voor Iedereen](#)), and public consultations.

The city of Breda has developed an innovative collaboration model in which social organizations work together within six **"value networks"** to create targeted implementation plans. These networks focus on key themes: "togetherness and self-reliance," "existence security," "a safe home," "coming home to Breda," "a healthy and active life," and "a promising youth." Each network collectively defines the unique value it aims to bring to the community, establishes specific objectives, and devises strategies to meet these goals collectively.

By developing one cohesive plan within each network, the organizations avoid duplication, address service gaps, and ensure the full use of collective expertise and knowledge.

Through the focused efforts of the value networks—particularly those centered on "existence security" and "a safe home"—Breda expects to achieve greater participation among marginalized groups, youth, and women.

The **Participation Strengthening Act**, effective in the Netherlands from 2025, aims to give citizens a more prominent role in both the development and implementation of policies, introducing the **"right to challenge."** This provision enables citizens to propose taking over certain government tasks if they believe they can perform them more effectively, especially enhancing opportunities for marginalized groups to influence local governance.

For youth, new engagement initiatives are being developed to increase their role in policymaking, ensuring their voices shape Breda's future. In the social domain, client councils are established to give residents direct input on social support and care services, amplifying the voices of diverse community members.

Additionally, a new policy framework focused on **Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion** is underway, emphasizing inclusive principles.

The ULG network (Urbact Local Group), consisting of diverse stakeholders, marks a foundational step toward broad-based inclusion across city policies, aiming to ensure participation is both equitable and effective.

With the [Verbeter Breda](#) (**Improve Breda**) program Breda also works on equal opportunities, wherever you grow up in Breda. The goal is to achieve this within one generation. In 2040 Breda's inhabitants should have enough opportunities to live their own valuable lives. Living, school and income are central to this. And they will do this together: inhabitants, schools, companies, police, housing corporations, health care and welfare, the municipality, and the state are working towards a permanently better Breda!

The “Verbeter Breda”-program is not just another program. It is about changing what is already there. And it is about working together in new ways with joint responsibility for the results. This is all laid down in the “Verbeter Breda”-principles: with and for residents, prevention, neighbourhood, and city-oriented, multi-year approach, we support differently, and we work on trust. “Verbeter Breda” goes beyond individual input. We all represent each other, whether you are a professional or an inhabitant. The basis for everything is trust, equality and give and take.

URBACT LOCAL GROUP

The ULG in Breda comprises policy officers of the municipality, local NGOs, community organizations, and citizens. This diverse composition ensures a broad range of perspectives and expertise:

AoCE project team:

- Lot van Schendel: policy advisor Social Domain, project manager Value Networks
- Petra van der Elst: policy advisor Social Domain, project manager Value Networks

Testing action researcher:

- Mustafa Sezen: intern Social Domain (from January to July 2025)

DGI network:

- Loubna Es-Saffroui: policy advisor Diversity, equality and Inclusion, Social Domain
- Lot van Schendel: policy advisor Social Domain, project manager Value Networks
- Petra van der Elst: policy advisor Social Domain, project manager Value Networks

From Participation broadly from the municipality:

- Sarah Check Ibrahim: project manager District Affairs and involved in VerbeterBreda
- Jetze van Ham: policy advisor District Affairs and involved in VerbeterBreda
- Lieke van Ooijen: policy advisor education
- Mirjam Rijvers: project manager Youth Projects
- Jos Oskam: project manager Participation
- Debby Den Heyer: project manager Programmatic Work
- Trudy Hollander: policy advisor Social Domain and involved in VerbeterBreda
- Loubna Es-Saffroui: policy advisor Diversity, equality and Inclusion, Social Domain

In the neighbourhood mother's project

- Ceciel Grasmeijer: team leader participation, migration and integration
- Loubna Es-Saffroui: policy advisor Diversity, equality and Inclusion, Social Domain
- Lot van Schendel: policy advisor Social Domain, project manager Value Networks
- Petra van der Elst: policy advisor Social Domain, project manager Value Networks

NGOs:

- COC Tilburg – Breda: Supports LGBTQ+ inclusion and visibility through advocacy, events, and education in Breda and Tilburg.
- GGD West-Brabant: Promotes health equity and supports programs for vulnerable groups to ensure equal health opportunities.
- RADAR: Fights discrimination and promotes equal treatment, providing reporting points and educational programs.
- Breda Gelijk: Drives inclusion and equality in Breda, partnering with the municipality and organizations to raise awareness of diversity.
- Platform Breda for Everyone: Digital platform facilitating citizen participation and engagement in city policies.
- Bo Diversity: Focuses on gender equality and gender emancipation, addressing sexuality, intimacy, and sexism.
- Buddy to Buddy: Connects newcomers and locals based on shared interests to foster social bonds and inclusion.
- Hello Breda: Provides resources and support to newcomers in Breda, promoting community integration and inclusiveness.

Relevant existing strategies and policies

- **Social Vision Plan and a forthcoming policy framework diversity equity and inclusion**

These plans outline Breda's commitment to fostering inclusivity and participation. It includes specific goals related to engaging underrepresented communities and ensuring that all residents have a voice in local governance

- **Participation guidelines in the public domain:** Recently updated, these guidelines focus on inclusive practices and aim to broaden the demographic reach of participatory processes. They serve as a framework for ensuring that all community members can participate effectively. These guidelines are however not yet used in the social domain.

) **Verbeter Breda/ Improve Breda program:** Breda is doing well but there is a division: people who live in one neighbourhood have better opportunities than people from another neighbourhood. That is what we are going to change with Verbeter Breda. The Improve Breda program has six principals:

- With and for residents: We make plans together with and for residents. They are central.
- Prevention: We are there in time. We are committed to preventing problems by addressing the causes.
- Neighbourhood, district and city oriented: Some neighbourhoods or districts deserve extra attention and the solutions for this sometimes lie elsewhere in the city.

- Multi-year approach: We persevere and persevere. We learn and improve along the way. But the ambition remains.
- We support differently: We invite residents to indicate what can be improved. With personal attention and warm contact, we achieve solutions that are their own. If there are obstacles, we remove them.
- We build trust: We give professionals and residents the space to solve problems together. We want to meet each other more in Breda and get to know each other better. We communicate openly, honestly and clearly to each other.

- **Waardenetwerken: Waardenetwerken | Gemeente Breda**

The city of Breda has developed an innovative collaboration model in which social organizations join forces within six thematic "value networks" to design targeted implementation plans. These networks focus on key societal themes: Togetherness and Self-Reliance, Existence Security, A Safe Home, Coming Home to Breda, A Healthy and Active Life, and A Promising Youth. Within each network, partners collectively define the unique value they aim to deliver to the community, set specific objectives, and develop joint strategies to achieve them.

Some actions from Breda's Integrated Action Plan (IAP) specifically aim to strengthen cooperation with selected value networks to foster more inclusive citizen participation in local decision-making and service design.

Problem identification

SWOT ANALYSES

Strengths:

- Breda has a strong municipal commitment to inclusive governance, supported by established community networks that can be leveraged to improve participation.
- Recent policies promote diversity, equity, and inclusion, aligning municipal goals with inclusive governance principles.
- Active local NGOs and the new Urbact Local Group (ULG) network enhance cooperation with civil society, creating a foundation for broader community involvement.
- Civil servants possess facilitation and communication skills that contribute to effective citizen engagement and public service innovation.

Weaknesses:

- There is limited engagement from marginalized groups, partly due to a lack of awareness about participation opportunities and perceived barriers to entry.
- Some demographic groups show lower levels of engagement, pointing to a need for more targeted outreach strategies.
- There are currently limited resources available for outreach and engagement, restricting the city's capacity to broaden participation effectively.

- A shared vision and consistent participation framework across departments are still lacking, which hinders unified and coherent implementation of participatory initiatives.

Opportunities:

- Integrating inclusive practices into existing participation frameworks could foster more equitable involvement and stronger community trust.
- Digital tools can expand Breda's reach to a broader audience, making participation more accessible and adaptable to diverse community needs.
- Partnerships with local organizations can enhance engagement and bridge gaps in participation among underrepresented groups.
- The Participation Strengthening Act provides a legislative foundation for sustained participation, including the "right to challenge," which empowers citizens to take on government tasks when beneficial.

Threats:

- Potential resistance to change from established structures and resource constraints could hinder the implementation of new participation initiatives.
- Resource constraints, both financial and human, could affect the sustainability and reach of new initiatives, making long-term implementation challenging.
- Inclusive practices might face resistance or backlash, particularly if existing structures view them as disruptive.

The **primary problem identified** is that, although Breda has implemented various participatory initiatives—such as neighbourhood councils, public consultations, and the 'waardennetwerken'—these efforts have **not consistently reached the most marginalized groups**. Upcoming initiatives aim to enhance participation among youth, yet there remains a pressing **need for more inclusive strategies** to engage broader demographics. **Limited resources** constrain the city's capacity for extensive outreach and engagement, which further impacts effectiveness. Additionally, the **lack of a shared vision and a consistent participation framework** across departments hinders the unified and coherent implementation of these initiatives. It is also a key challenge for Breda is how to effectively embed participation methods across the entire municipal administration. This involves finding ways to meaningfully engage civil servants, encouraging them to adopt new working methods, and improving communication with citizens. Addressing these issues is essential for Breda to foster **truly inclusive participation** and ensure that all voices are represented.

Vision

Participatory tools, processes, and platforms are in place, contributing to a **more inclusive Breda** where residents from all neighbourhoods have equal opportunities. These **participatory practices** are continuously and **effectively applied by civil servants**, under the guidance of a **Participation Officer**, as well as by all citizens, including those from the **most marginalized groups**.

Main integration challenge(s)

Obligatory Aspects of Integration

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-) Stakeholder involvement in planning

 - Current situation: Stakeholders in Breda are inconsistently engaged, often lacking a unified framework to ensure their involvement across all stages of the policy cycle.
 - Possible progress: Develop a structured participation framework that comprehensively involves diverse stakeholders during planning, implementation, and evaluation. Emphasize marginalized groups to promote equitable participation.
-) Coherence with existing strategies

 - Current situation: Participation efforts partially align with overarching strategies like Verbeter Breda, but integration across departments and alignment with policies such as the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) framework remain inconsistent.
 - Possible progress: Explicitly link participation activities to municipal strategies like Verbeter Breda and the DEI framework. Strengthen cross-departmental coordination to ensure a cohesive approach.
-) Sustainable urban development

 - Current situation: The social domain has a participation guideline, but spatial domain strategies lack integration with efforts to engage marginalized groups and are often siloed.
 - Possible progress: Implement an integrated approach to spatial planning by incorporating diverse stakeholder voices, particularly marginalized communities, in sustainable urban development efforts.
-) Integration over time

 - Current situation: Participation initiatives are frequently short-term and project-specific, with limited consideration of medium- or long-term impacts.
 - Possible progress: Establish phased timelines for participation initiatives to ensure continuity. Incorporate long-term evaluation mechanisms to refine approaches over time.
-) Stakeholder involvement in the implementation

 - Current situation: During implementation, stakeholder involvement is limited, with the municipality taking on most responsibilities.
 - Possible progress: Actively engage stakeholders as co-implementers by empowering local organizations and communities—particularly underrepresented groups—through resources and training.

Optional Aspects of Integration

The optional challenges could be further explored in collaboration with the graduate student.

-) Sectoral integration

 - ◆ Current situation: Sectoral integration is mostly ensured as participatory processes are applied related to different initiatives or projects from different sectors.
 - ◆ Possible progress: The challenges is rather to ensure all type of targets to be involved in all participatory processes from all sectors.

-) Spatial integration

- ◆ Current situation: There are ongoing participatory processes both on city and site-specific level which aren't always in coherence.
- ◆ Possible progress: The IAP includes both city-wide and neighbourhood-specific actions, as some of the adapted good practices learned from project partners are applicable at different territorial levels. Coherence across these actions is ensured through a well-structured implementation logic.

) Integration of cross-cutting thematic aspects

- ◆ Including gender, digitalisation, climate change and procurement
- ◆ Current situation: Breda's participatory actions do consider the cross-cutting thematic aspects on certain level depending on the type of actions.
- ◆ Possible progress: This IAP includes one specific action related to digital transition which is setting up a digital platform which hosts all ongoing participatory processes of Breda.

) Complementary types of investment

- ◆ Balancing 'hard' and 'soft' investments
- ◆ Current situation: Most of Breda's participatory processes are soft investments.
- ◆ Possible progress: The IAP intends to include at least one hard investment; however, it is expected that this can only be realized in the long term, and its implementation details cannot be fully developed within the timeframe of the AoCE project.

) Mobilising all available funding

- ◆ Current situation: Most participatory processes and initiatives are financed from the own budget of the Municipality except the ones which are related to projects funded by external sources (EU or national funds)
- ◆ Possible progress: Breda is motivated to join as project partner to a possible Urbact action planning network with a focus on youth involvement.

Section 2

Overall logic and integrated approach

Strategic objectives

Breda has formulated two strategic objectives, the first being to ***Enhance Understanding and Skills in Fostering Inclusive Participation***. To achieve this, Breda aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of the participatory practices and tools currently used by the city administration. Additionally, Breda seeks to identify areas where civil servants need further skill development to engage more effectively with marginalized groups in the community. The ultimate goal is to strengthen these skills among civil servants, equipping them to foster more inclusive, meaningful, and impactful participation from all segments of the population.

The second objective ***Implementing Inclusive Participation Frameworks that Successfully Engage Marginalized Communities*** focuses on establishing structured approaches that actively include underrepresented voices in decision-making. This involves designing and applying participation frameworks that are accessible, culturally sensitive, and tailored to the unique needs of marginalized groups. By using proven methods to break down barriers, the aim is to create genuine opportunities for these communities to share their perspectives and influence outcomes. Training and support will be provided to ensure facilitators and civil servants are equipped to apply these frameworks effectively. Ultimately, this objective seeks to foster a more equitable and collaborative environment where all community members feel empowered to contribute.

Actions

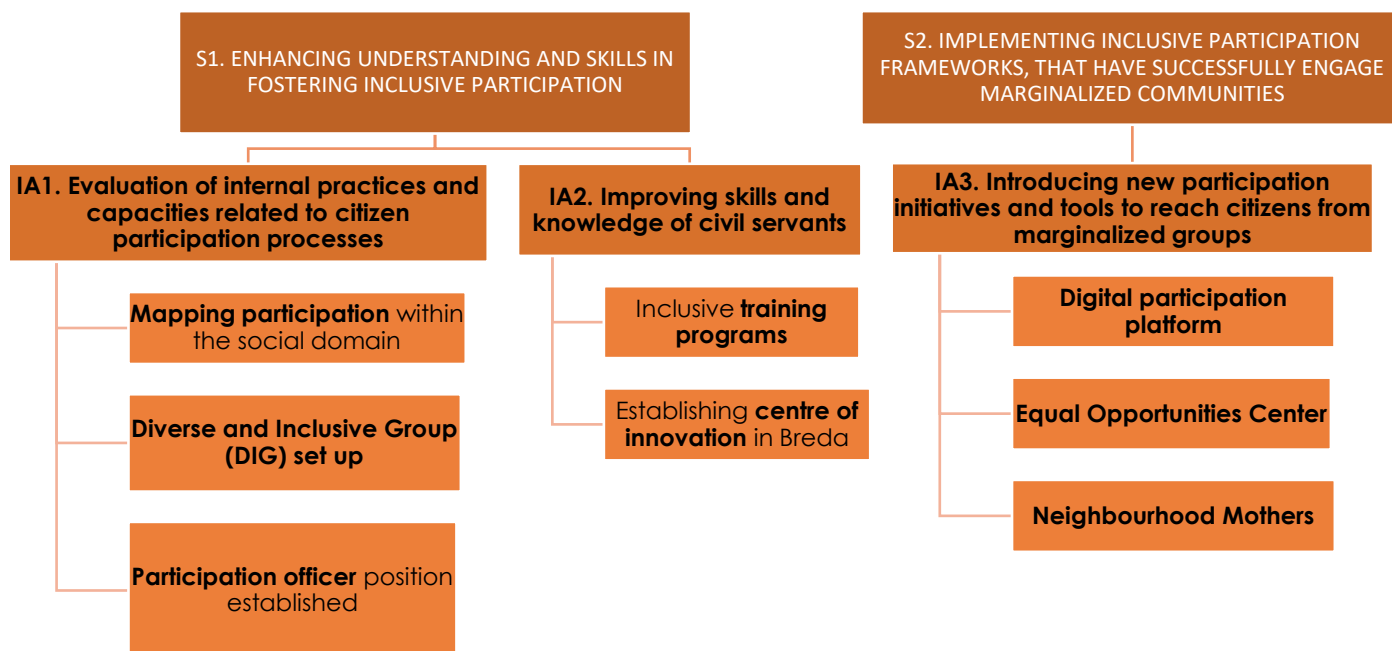
The first intervention area, *Evaluation of Internal Practices and Capacities for Citizen Participation Processes*, aims to assess and enhance the city's approach to community engagement within the social domain. This will begin with **Mapping Participation** efforts, identifying existing practices, resources, and gaps in current citizen engagement activities to build a clear picture of how participation is currently supported. To ensure a truly inclusive approach, a **Diverse and Inclusive Group (DIG)** will be set up, bringing together representatives from various social and cultural backgrounds to provide insights, advise on engagement practices, and help shape inclusive strategies. Finally, a dedicated **Participation Officer** position will be established, responsible for coordinating and advancing participation initiatives across the city. This role will also work closely with DIG to embed inclusivity in all processes, fostering an environment that values diverse input and strengthens community connections.

The second intervention area, *Improving Skills and Knowledge of Civil Servants*, is focused on enhancing the capacity of city staff to foster inclusive participation across departments. Key actions include implementing **Inclusive Training Programs** that equip civil servants with practical skills and knowledge for engaging diverse communities effectively. Additionally, a **Center of Innovation** will be created in Breda to serve as a hub for best practices, new methodologies, and collaborative tools for citizen engagement.

The third intervention area, *Introducing New Participation Initiatives and Tools to Reach Marginalized Groups*, aims to create more accessible and targeted engagement opportunities for underrepresented communities.

This will include launching a **Digital Participation Platform** to make it easier for all citizens, including those in marginalized groups, to participate in city consultations and decision-making online. Additionally, an **Equal Opportunities Center** will be established to address disparities in civic access, offering resources and support to foster a more inclusive community environment. Finally, the **Neighbourhood**

Mothers initiative will involve trained community members who act as connectors, helping to bridge communication gaps and encourage participation from individuals who might otherwise be excluded. Together, these actions aim to create a more inclusive and responsive approach to citizen engagement.



In Section 3, all actions from the flowchart are presented in action tables. The ULG has begun working on the design and implementation of each action, though progress varies across them. Some actions remain at the conceptual stage—such as the Participation Officer, Centre of Innovation, Digital Participation Platform, and Equal Opportunities Centre—while others have been fully implemented as pilot actions (e.g. Mapping Participation, DIG Set-up) or developed into detailed project plans (e.g. Training Programs, Neighbourhood Mothers). Lessons learned from the testing actions are explained in the following sub-chapter and have also been integrated into the relevant action tables in Section 3.

Testing Actions

Breda has implemented two testing actions within the AoCE project:

The first, **Action 1.1: Mapping participation within the social domain**, is a comprehensive analysis of the current state of citizen participation in Breda's social domain. Based on this analysis, three main conclusions were drawn:

Inclusive participation is improved when the civil service reflects the diversity of society: For citizen participation to be truly inclusive, the municipal workforce should mirror the diversity of the community it serves. When civil servants come from a range of backgrounds—social, cultural, generational, and experiential—they are more likely to understand the needs, perspectives, and communication styles of different groups within the population. This not only builds trust between citizens and the administration but also helps to design policies and services that are more responsive and equitable. A diverse civil service can serve as a bridge between traditionally underrepresented communities and public institutions, fostering a more accessible and empathetic governance culture.

An analysis of recent participation projects reveals that current practices in Breda **are fragmented and lack coherence in implementation**. Different departments and teams interpret participation in their own ways, without clear, municipality-wide agreements or a shared vision. Coordination is also limited when it

comes to assessing whether and how the various forms of participation truly contribute to placing residents at the center of the social domain. Within the organization, there is growing awareness that meaningful and inclusive participation requires more than isolated tools or occasional consultations — it calls for a fundamental cultural shift.

The key conclusion is that, to genuinely **embed citizen participation in policy-making and governance, the municipality of Breda** must invest in an organization-wide transformation of mindset and practice. Only through an open, learning, and inclusive attitude can participation become a natural and powerful component of democratic decision-making. For Breda, a successful participation approach therefore demands more than enthusiasm or individual initiatives; it requires both structural embedding and accessible, inclusive implementation that actively engages residents. By applying these insights, Breda can move toward an approach where participation is not an optional add-on, but an integral part of the municipal policy process.

VerbeterBreda appointed “boosters” to strengthen the link between the municipality and residents, but greater support is needed: Within the framework of VerbeterBreda, the city has appointed a group of individuals referred to as boosters, who act as connectors between the municipal organization and the city’s inhabitants. These boosters play a crucial role in translating residents' concerns, ideas, and feedback into actionable insights for the administration. However, their impact is currently limited by insufficient institutional support. If the municipality provided stronger facilitation—such as clearer mandates, access to resources, regular training, and internal advocacy—the boosters could operate more effectively. In addition, involving more municipal staff as ambassadors for participation could extend their reach and integrate their work more deeply into the civil service, thereby strengthening participatory governance across departments.

Despite many participation initiatives, there is a need for clearer definitions and a more distinct approach: While a wide array of participation efforts is currently underway in Breda, there is a lack of shared understanding and clarity regarding what participation truly means within the municipal context. This ambiguity can lead to inconsistent approaches, varying levels of commitment, and confusion both within the administration and among citizens. Defining a coherent participation framework—with clear principles, methods, and expectations—would help unify efforts and provide a stronger identity to Breda’s participatory approach. This would also allow the city to better assess impact, communicate its vision, and strengthen citizen trust in the participatory process.

The second testing action is action **1.2 Setting up a Diversity and Inclusion Group (DIG)**. The lessons learnt from this testing actions so far are as follows:

The **Diversity and Inclusion Group (DIG)** policy framework was formally adopted by the Breda Municipal Council in January 2025. The development of this framework involved close collaboration with key local partners, including representatives from newcomer communities, migrant organizations, the LGBTQ+ community, and accessibility advocates.

Following the adoption of the framework, this network of partners was granted a more structured role as an (informal) **value network**. It does not yet have formal status, as doing so would require amending the **Samen Doorpakken** policy framework, in which value networks are embedded—an extensive and currently unfeasible undertaking.

Since its formal establishment, the value network has met twice in its new composition. The current focus is on aligning efforts and advancing concrete connections and action points in line with the adopted DIGI framework. The network is diverse, and its members represent different target groups with distinct goals.

For example, while “**an accessible city for people with disabilities**” is a key priority for some, it is not a focus area for the LGBTQ+ community.

The task now is to identify and formulate **shared challenges and common ground**. One example discussed during the last meeting was **discrimination in the labor market and education**, which affects all represented communities.

For the next consultation, scheduled for the end of May, a **working session** is planned to sharpen the focus of the network’s objectives. As preparation, each partner has been asked to identify their **three most important goals**. Additionally, the group will assess whether the current composition of the network is sufficiently inclusive and whether any key partners are missing.

A particular challenge is the inclusion of **migrant groups who are unorganized or only informally organized**, which makes their involvement more difficult to ensure.

Over the next two years, the aim is to co-create a concrete framework that outlines **shared objectives and lines of action**, allowing the small available subsidy to be allocated effectively and transparently. The network currently meets every two months, with an evaluation scheduled in six months to review progress and revise agreements as needed.

SECTION 3

Action Planning details

IA1. Evaluation of internal practices and capacities related to citizen participation processes

Action 1.1: Mapping participation within the social domain in Breda and develop a framework for inclusive citizen participation	Action Owner: A graduation student who deliver this research Stakeholders: All residents of Breda, with a focus on underrepresented groups.	
Action summary: Aims to comprehensively analyse and improve the current state of citizen participation within the social domain in Breda. This initiative will investigate how effectively different participation methods are being utilized and whether they are reaching the intended demographics. It will focus on evaluating existing participation practices, identifying gaps, and proposing improvements to ensure inclusivity and alignment with Breda's social vision and the forthcoming policy framework diversity, equity and inclusion. This action will be conducted as a graduation project in Public Administration or Communication/Organization Studies, requiring thorough examination and stakeholder engagement. In its fully implemented version, this action will inform a structured framework for inclusive citizen participation within the social domain, integrated into Breda's policy-making process. This framework will be refined and updated regularly based on ongoing feedback.	Source of inspiration: AoCE partners, particularly the city of Genk, who have already implemented similar mapping and drafted a framework	Finance and resources: €10,000, which includes: Research and analysis: €2,000 Stakeholder workshops: €3,000 Data collection and surveys: €2,000 Report preparation and dissemination: €3,000
	Links to strategy: Linked to the guideline of the spatial domain, Social Vision Plan, DEI Framework, and the Participation Strengthening Act. ¹	Challenges-Mitigation: 1.Limited engagement: Difficulty in reaching marginalized communities./Partner with local organizations 2.Data collection: Ensuring comprehensive data collection./Use structured data methods 3.Time constraints: Completing the project on time./Set clear milestones

¹ <https://share.google/SCY2wCYUT1RbasBK9> (guideline of the spatial Domain), https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwi7nsuigJyRAXXRzglHHUeoMAkQFnoECBYQAw&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.breda.nl%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2F2024-12%2FBeleidsplan%2520DGI%25202025-2029%2520Inclusief%2520Samenleven%2520-%2520Gelijkwaardig%2520C%2520verbonden%2520en%2520toegankelijk_5075511_.pdf&usg=AOvVaw3Ma2x1k8bl40DBferpVZaN&opi=89978449 (social vision plan); <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwiEzuXwqZyRAXXFhv0HHQqFC6YQFnoECBoQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.breda.nl%2Fnieuws%2Fbeleidsplan-inclusief-samenleven-diversiteit-gelijkwaardigheid-en-inclusie-2025-2029-gelanceerd&usg=AOvVaw3cUktFRYpCo05ne3-lhQS&opi=89978449> (DEI Framework) <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwj16uyiqpyRAXWA9QIHQFCdQkQFnoECBUQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwetgevingsskalender.overheid.nl%2FRegeling%2FWGK010370&usg=AOvVaw3XT7a3CKNzccEMSIImViPZt&opi=89978449> (participation Strengtening act)

Action steps	Timeframe	Outputs
1.Project planning: Define project scope and objectives.	September 2024	Implementation Plan
2.Data collection: Gather data on participation efforts through surveys and interviews.	October 2024	Dataset about participation practices and their successes, challenges
3. Stakeholder workshops: Organize workshops to gather input.	October 2024	Qualitative data collected
4.Analysis: Analyse data to identify gaps and successes.	November 2024	A list of gaps and success identified
5.Draft recommendations: Prepare a report with recommendations.	December 2024	Report incl. a set of recommendations
6.Review findings: Present findings to stakeholders for feedback.	January 2025	Presentation, and an SH meeting organized
7.Final report: Finalize and disseminate the report.	May 2025	Final Report including a set of recommendations
8.Implementation planning: Develop a plan to implement recommendations.	June 2025	Framework for inclusive citizen participation

Action 1.2: Setting up Diverse and Inclusive Group (DIG) to create strategies that effectively engage all community members		Actie-eigenaar: DIG-netwerkgroep, ervaringsdeskundigen, AoCE-projectmanager Belanghebbenden: Alle inwoners van Breda, met speciale aandacht voor ondervertegenwoordigde groepen zoals etnische minderheden, vrouwen, LGBTQ+ personen en mensen met een beperking.	
Action summary: This testing action focuses on ensuring that participation processes within Breda's social domain are inclusive and diverse. The testing action will involve a Diverse and Inclusive Group (DIG) with network partners and experts by experience as a feedback group to assess and improve current participation practices.		Source of inspiration: AoCE partners, particularly the city of Gdansk	Finance and resources: The estimated budget is €11,000, which includes: Community needs assessment: €3,000 Inclusion workshops: €2,500 Development of participation tools: €2,500 Outreach and communication: €1,000

The aim is to create strategies that effectively engage all community members, particularly those from underrepresented groups, aligning with the goals of the new Participation Act in the Netherlands.		Budget for appreciation DGI feedback team: €1,000 Contingency fund: €1,000
	Links to strategy: Supports the DEI Framework, the Participation Strengthening Act, and principles of Verbeter Breda by fostering inclusive decision-making. ²	Challenges-Mitigation: Willingness to cooperate/Engage stakeholders early Resistance to change/Clear benefits communication Resource limitations Interests of various minority groups differ The effectiveness of their organizations is not always equally strong. There is no partner within the network that naturally takes the lead, as this largely depends on the municipality's direction.

Action steps	Related activities	Timeframe	Outputs
1. Project initiation: Define scope and establish the DIG stakeholders team.	Network is currently discussing concrete actions for 2025, namely an inclusive network meeting, more visibility in the city, perhaps at a joint location.	2024 September – December	Diversity, Equality and Inclusion informal value network set up, meets once a month
2. Community needs assessment: Conduct surveys and focus groups to identify participation barriers.	A first step has now been taken within the municipality to bring the ambassadors together again, who are representatives from these target groups, to discuss with	Mid-October 2025	Participation barriers identified in diverse target groups

	them what they are up against.		
3. DIG workshops: Collaborate with the DGI group to develop and test inclusive participation strategies.	Series of workshops organized by Diversity, Equality and Inclusion value network, municipality of Breda	Second half 2025	Workshops organized and participation strategies tested
4. Pilot implementation: Test strategies in selected communities.	1 st pilot about accessibility is under implementation by the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion value network, municipality of Breda	Second half 2025	At least one accessibility pilot implemented
5.Feedback collection: Gather and evaluate feedback from the testing action	Feedback included into the IAP	from 2025 May	Feedback collected and presented in the IAP
6. Strategy refinement	Adjust strategies based on feedback from the DGI and broader community.	2025 May	Next steps identified based on the refined strategy
7.Broader implementation plan	Prepare for social domain adoption of refined strategies.	2025 May – September	DIG Implementation Plan
8. DIG meetings organized	Members invited, venue booked, catering organized	in every 2 months	Minutes of the meetings including next steps of the DIG work
9. Evaluation of the operation of the DIG	Joint discussion with the members	in every 6 months	List of recommendations for improvements for the future work of the DIG

Action 1.3: A **PARTICIPATION OFFICER** position is established to oversee and coordinate all participatory processes within the municipality.

Action Owner: AoCE project manager supported by the ULG members

Stakeholders: A decision-maker who has the authority to establish a new position and approve the creation of a new office.

Activity summary: A Participation Officer position is established and maintained long-term to coordinate all participatory processes and provide guidance to civil servants across all departments in designing and implementing participatory elements in their respective projects. As a result, the Participation Officer holds a horizontal role within the municipality contributing also to cross-department collaborations . Additionally, there is consideration to not rely solely on one individual for this task. Instead, a Participation Office could be created to handle the growing number of participatory actions.		Source of inspiration: AoCE partners, particularly the city of Genk, already have a Participation Officer in place.	Challenges-Mitigation: The relevant decision-maker is not yet convinced of the necessity of establishing such a position and office. Lobbying to achieve this goal.
		Links to strategy:	Finance and resources: Municipality's own budget
Action steps	Related activities	Timeframe	Outputs
1. Demonstrating the added value of a participation officer	presenting the need for a participation officer to decision makers justified by the result of the mapping participation research testing action	2026 March – June	The mapping participation testing action research which turns decision-makers attention to participatory processes
2. Specifying the overall tasks and specific upcoming tasks of the participation officer and demonstrating to decision makers	A list of tasks noted, a list of challenges noted which occur in the case this position is not established.	2026. June - September	Decision makers decide on the position of a participation officer
2. Establishing the position and hiring a person or contracting an external expert	Publishing a call for the position, selecting the right candidate	2026. October	There is at least one person in the municipality who makes sure that participatory processes go according to the plans

IA2. Improving skills and knowledge of civil servants

Action 2.1: Inclusive training program covering the topic of inclusive citizen engagement		Action Owner: AoCE project managers supported by the ULG members Stakeholders: Civil servants of the municipality who are or should be involved in citizen engagement actions	
Action summary: The ongoing inclusive training program will include a dedicated session focused on citizen engagement , aimed at equipping participants with practical tools and strategies to foster meaningful public involvement. This session will cover best practices for engaging diverse community members, including methods to reach underrepresented groups effectively. Participants will explore case studies highlighting successful citizen engagement initiatives, enabling them to draw insights applicable to their own projects. Interactive components, such as role-playing exercises and group discussions, will allow participants to practice engagement techniques in a collaborative setting. By the end of the session, attendees will have a clearer understanding of how to incorporate citizen voices into decision-making processes to build stronger, more inclusive communities.		Source of inspiration: the idea came from the ULG	Finance and resources: 1-day long training session for 50 participants– 1000 euro
		Links to strategy:	Challenges-Mitigation: To find the right focus of the training being relevant for the participants. Motivating civil servants to participate and apply the knowledge and practices learnt during the training. The unit leaders need to be convincing and dedicate working time for the participation in the session.
Action steps	Related activities	Timeframe	Outputs
1. Identifying and inviting the external expert(s) who can design, coordinate and deliver the training	The participation officer from Genk is invited as external speaker to present Genk's assessment framework of participation	2026. January – February	Decision has been made about the training and the expert(s) are contracted for the assignment

2. We are utilizing the Participation Consideration Framework that was developed within our network	The developed approach will be integrated into the training program.	2026	A document produced by the experts and implementation in the workflow
3. Designing the training modules	The training material is designed, the date of the training sessions fixed, the participants invited, the external even international speakers invited	2026. March - April	A document produced by the expert(s) which includes the training materials and the technical details of the training sessions.
4. Training sessions organized	Providing meeting venue, catering, organizing the participation of external speakers, ensuring the participation of civil servants, providing follow-up of each session	2026. May – September	A series of training sessions organized.
5. Internal meeting between participation officer and department leaders to discuss the role and contribution of each department to participatory actions	A meeting is organized where the participation officer and department leaders discuss and agree on how the lessons learnt from the training sessions will be applied by civil servants in practice during the ongoing and upcoming participatory actions of the city	2026. September	A minute of the meeting is drafted including the joint decisions made during the meeting.

Action 2.2: Establishing centre of innovation in Breda

Action Owner: Initiated by AoCE project managers, implemented by the relevant decision makers

Action summary: The Center for Innovation in Breda will be established to enhance cross-departmental cooperation and address future challenges strategically, supporting the city's ambitious growth and development goals. Supported by a cross-departmental fund, the center employs three full-time consultants—process facilitators and design thinking experts—who drive innovation across projects. The center features a dedicated physical space with workshop areas and temporary office facilities for city employees involved in collaborative, cross-departmental initiatives. This setup fosters a creative environment where staff can co-design solutions, share expertise, and develop smarter approaches to complex challenges. Ultimately, the center aims to transform Breda's municipal operations through innovative, cooperative problem-solving.	Stakeholders: Civil servants of the municipality can propose innovative solutions through the Center for Innovation and directly benefit from the resulting initiatives. The center empowers them to address complex challenges by providing resources, expertise, and support for their ideas. Additionally, they can utilize the center's dedicated spaces to facilitate cooperation and joint actions with other departments.	Source of inspiration: the city of Aarhus where the innovation centre was visited during CNM4	Finance and resources: staff cost of full-time consultants investment cost for creating the space maintenance cost of the space
Challenges-Mitigation: The primary challenge is to establish a clear concept for the Center for Innovation that defines its role and functions within the municipality. A series of consultations needed with the different departments. The social domain is developing rapidly, more and more programs are being offered in a neighborhood-oriented way, which means that the social domain is being organized closer to home, but this can hinder a city center of innovation			
Action steps	Related activities	Timeframe	Outputs
1. Contributing to the design of the new vision of the social department (domain) of the city of Breda	Implementing changes in the management and operation of the department	2025. October – 2026. December	New management system set up with new operational method
2. Initiating a collaboration of the 3 departments of the city of Breda	First meetings organized to discuss how to improve citizen engagement and	2027. January - March	Agreement made about setting up long-term cross-department

	discuss the idea of centre of Innovation		collaboration in the form of a centre of Innovation
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IA3. Introducing new participation initiatives and tools to reach citizens from marginalized groups

Action 3.1: Digital participation platform	Action Owner: participation officer who maintain and update the platform on long-term Stakeholders: All residents of Breda, with a focus on underrepresented groups		
Action summary: A digital participation platform will be established to serve as a centralized hub for all participatory processes, streamlining engagement and accessibility for the community. The platform will be designed with inclusivity at its core, incorporating features to ensure active involvement of marginalized groups, women, and youth. Tools such as multilingual support, mobile-friendly interfaces, and accessibility options will remove barriers and foster equitable participation. Additionally, targeted outreach campaigns and user-friendly content will encourage diverse community members to contribute their perspectives and ideas, strengthening the platform's impact on decision-making processes. As part of this action, we are working on further developing the value networks by digitizing them, as we are convinced that digitization can significantly improve connectivity and participation—especially for smaller partners. The participation process can be closely linked to this development.	Source of inspiration: inspired by Banska Bistrica, who applies such platform called DECIDIM. We learnt about this platform during CNM2.	Finance and resources: 5000 euro to develop the platform or adapt the DECIDIM platform which is free but requires staff cost to design it for Breda	
	Links to strategy:	Challenges-Mitigation: It can be challenging to centralize all the platforms which are currently operating in parallel with eachother. The added value of such a centralized hub should be	

			demonstrated by good practice examples.
Action steps	Related activities	Timeframe	Outputs
Designing a new policy plan for 2028 including the action of setting up a digital platform to support the work of the value networks	Consultation with decision makers, designing a proposal for the structure and content of the platform	2027. January - December	Decision made about setting up a digital participation platform

Action 3.2: Equal Opportunities Centre	Action Owner: participation officer Stakeholders: All residents of this neighbourhood especially marginalized groups, including women, youth, and ethnic minorities		
Action summary: An Equal Opportunities Centre will be established within the newly created library in one of Breda's disadvantaged neighbourhoods. This centre will serve as a community hub, offering resources, workshops, and support programs to promote social inclusion and equal opportunities for all residents. Special emphasis will be placed on providing services tailored to the needs of marginalized groups, including women, youth, and ethnic minorities, to foster empowerment and community cohesion. By leveraging the library's accessibility and central role in the neighbourhood, the centre aims to create a welcoming space for learning, collaboration, and personal growth. Through partnerships with local organizations, the centre will		Source of inspiration: inspired by the Equal Opportunities Centre of Gdansk visited during CNM3	Finance and resources: Excluding budget for renovating and creating the new Library building, the actual interior design of the Centre can cost 10.000 euro Monthly maintenance cost: 600 euro

also connect residents with job training, education, and participatory initiatives to enhance their opportunities and quality of life.			Yearly fund provided for the local organization who organize the life of the Centre
		Links to strategy:	Challenges-Mitigation: The lack of financial resources to set up and operate the centre on long-term. Decision-makers need to be convinced to dedicate fund for the centre. Independent role of the location and organization, everyone must feel safe and welcome to participate.
Action steps	Related activities	Timeframe	Outputs
As decision hasn't been made about creating such a space in the library, action steps could not be identified yet.	The possibility will be discussed within the DGI network. Perhaps one of the partners would like to take the lead and open their house for this.	2026	well-considered decision whether or not to do this

Action 3.3: Neighbourhood Mothers	Action Owner: Initiated by AoCE project managers Stakeholders: women from marginalized groups
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Action summary: The Neighbourhood Mothers initiative in Breda is a community-based program designed to support local families and strengthen social ties within neighbourhoods. The key challenge addressed by the action: children and/or the husband support the family. While the family may appear self-reliant, the wives often are not. There is typically a traditional family dynamic where the woman is not economically or socially independent. They speak little or no Dutch and do not know how to navigate Dutch society. When the family breaks apart for any reason, these women are left completely vulnerable. To prevent this, the Municipality of Breda has asked its social partners to develop a project aimed at activating non-participating (former) female status holders in order to promote their self-reliance These Neighbourhood Mothers are community volunteers, often local women who have a deep understanding of their community's social dynamics and are well-positioned to provide peer support. They work closely with families to offer guidance, help connect residents with local resources, and organize community events that foster neighbourhood connections. This initiative plays a vital role in empowering residents, promoting inclusivity, and creating a trusted support network within neighbourhoods. Additionally, Neighbourhood Mothers serve as a bridge between residents and the city administration, providing feedback on community needs and helping to identify areas where further support may be required. We have already organised a meeting with a small group of women (October 2025) to investigate what they need and how it works. We found this first pilot very inspiring and it will certainly lead to the inclusion of the democratic value component in the programme.	Source of inspiration: example of the city of Aarhus which we learnt from CNM4 Links to strategy: Linked to <i>Verbeter Breda</i>'s focus on "Togetherness and Self-reliance" and the DEI Framework's emphasis on promoting inclusion and community cohesion.	Challenges-Mitigation: It can be a challenge to identify and convince the potential neighbourhood mothers to cooperate with the City – Looking for such persons who are already acting as neighbourhood mothers without having the official title. Finance and resources: Total first year E. 103,000,- Second year E. 82,000,- Third year E. 82,000,- Fourth year E. 82,000,-
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Action planning details of Action 3.4: Neighbourhood Mothers

On top of the testing actions, Breda has decided to already fully elaborate one of the actions from their action plan which is the Neighbourhood Mothers project learnt from the AoCE partner the city of Aarhus.

Breda build up this project from 3 stages:

1. **Contact and Connection (Isolation)**

It is important to identify the target group through local contacts in neighborhoods and communities and connect them to the initiative. It is essential to actively encourage the status holders in question to join the initiative.

2. **Social Encounters (Social Contacts Outside the Home)**

Once the target group has been identified and actively approached, they are connected to activities we organize. The idea is to host enjoyable and educational gatherings. Examples include coffee mornings with informational sessions for women, arts and crafts afternoons, language coaching for older adults, parenting information, etc. All of this will take place in a welcoming environment—relaxed, but guided by trained facilitators.

We aim to make these gatherings regular, with each participating organization contributing to the program based on its expertise. Importantly, the gatherings will also involve contact with other residents.

3. **Sustainable Participation (Participation in Organized Activities or Unpaid Work)**

To ensure sustainable participation of these status holders in Breda, we also focus on personal development. We will assess which level of the participation ladder is achievable and desirable, primarily focusing on development along the first four steps of that ladder.

Even if status holders are not required or able to join the paid labor market, it is important that they become lasting members of the local community. Therefore, through our network and local initiatives, clubs, and associations, we will encourage participation in organized activities or unpaid work.

Integrated Approach

Investing in this group ultimately leads to sustainable integration and participation for the entire family.

We aim to empower the participating women to become independent, resilient, and articulate; their self-confidence will grow. Through ongoing support, participants are encouraged to take the next step. They will become role models for their children—after all, we are a society of two active parents.

Integration and participation of a newcomer is a process that must be addressed holistically. Investing solely in the participation of male newcomers, without follow-up support and without considering the home situation, does not lead to sustainable integration and participation for the whole family.

Ultimately, a comprehensive approach involving the entire family is a crucial factor.

Objective

Through a six-month program, women will be mobilized to become active in society. After six months to one year, these women will have reached step 3 on the participation ladder and be able to act independently and with resilience.

Actions

Experience shows that activating these women is an intensive and complex process requiring an integrated approach. We do this by:

- Rapid intake, by selecting participants from groups already known to us.
- Support: Setting goals together, monitoring progress, and actively contributing to successful integration. We focus on language classes, language coaching, coaching and assistance in filling out forms, making appointments with institutions, financial planning, and training about the role of women in Dutch society and intercultural communication, aiming also to expand their social networks and break social isolation.
- The success formula in this approach is structured, daily guidance of these women, with the help of volunteers supervised by professionals from Hello-Breda, Buddy-to-Buddy, and VluchtelingenWerk. These professionals are also responsible for initiating and monitoring the process in terms of quality, quantity, and continuity.
- We work with groups of maximum 12 female participants, each following a 6-month program.
- There are only female participants and mostly female facilitators.
- The intake is based on six life domains:
 - Finances (income, debts, savings)
 - Housing
 - Health
 - Education
 - Social network
 - Employment
- The goal of the intake is to determine the individual's need for guidance.
- In the first 3 months of the group program, this forms the foundation. It begins with resilience, well-being (physical and mental), and motivation.
- At the same time, participants receive individual guidance tailored to their specific needs, based on the six life domains.
- At the end of the first 3 months, an action plan will be drawn up for the follow-up phase of the program.

The Outcome for the Participants:

The goal of the programme is to begin with health, resilience, and self-awareness, and where possible, to take the next step on the participation ladder.

- Participants feel seen and heard in the programme, experience mutual support, and those who are ready to move forward serve as role models for the other women and their families.

Group Programme – PHASE 1:

3 months of thematic workshops, each lasting half a day

Week	Theme
1	Getting to know each other, programme introduction
2	The role of women in society
3	Money
4	Making appointments (with the municipality, GP, housing association, etc.)
5	Forms
6	Communication with Dutch women
7	Content based on the group's needs
9	Content based on the group's needs
11	Content based on the group's needs
13	Closing session, presentation of personal development

Individual Programme – PHASE 1:

3 months of coaching

Alongside the core programme, individual coaching sessions are offered to discuss pain points identified during the intake (based on the six life domains) and to provide tailored guidance. The assigned coach and the content of the sessions depend on the support needs identified during the intake.

Group Programme– PHASE 2:

3 months of thematic workshops, each lasting half a day

Week	Theme
1	What would you like to do outside the home?
3	How does Dutch society work?
5	How can you use your experience from your home country?
7	How do you make social connections?
9	Content based on the group's needs
11	Content based on the group's needs

Individual Programme – PHASE 2:

3 months of coaching

In parallel with the group programme, individual sessions are provided to tailor the group experience to the personal context of each participant.

Ongoing Meetings

During and after the 6-month programme, participants can meet each other weekly at a coffee/hobby/inspiration morning. Participants will be encouraged to organise and sustain these sessions themselves, including welcoming future groups. Ultimately, the aim is for the project to become self-sustaining—by, for, and with refugee women.

Plan and Milestones



Co-funded by
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Project Preparation – 3 months:

1. Selection and briefing of the project team.
2. Invitation and selection of 12 participants in consultation with the municipality. Intake interviews, setting goals, and recording them in an individual Action Plan (PVA) for each participant. Establishing contact with chain partners and collaboration partners. Recruiting volunteers.
3. Preparing for the start of the first 10-week programme.

Evaluation and Measuring Results (Performance Indicators)

Outcomes – Hard and Soft Factors based on final interviews:

- Is there an individual Action Plan (PVA) for each participant?
- Results based on each PVA (individual KPIs).

Success Conditions

- Chain partners and participants recognize the importance of the programme and the collaboration.
- Motivated women who understand the purpose of the programme ("What's in it for me?").
- Good collaboration with chain partners.
- Provision of childcare.
- Duration and Funding

Duration and Funding

Preferably, we aim to run this service for four years to allow for further development.

It may be considered in the future to incorporate this service into the participation segment of the Z-route³. For now, the focus will be on establishing the service and limiting it to the target group of women who are no longer enrolled in an integration programme or are not engaged in paid employment.

Process Step	Who	Duration	Costs
Project plan including Action Plan and schedule	Project leader under supervision of Emma, Ahmed, Joep	6 months	€ 24,000
Implementation of the programme	Project leader, trainer, interpreter, volunteers	6 months	€ 33,000
Out-of-pocket expenses	Volunteer costs, office supplies, reimbursement of expenses, contingencies	6 months	€ 5,000
Total cost per group (max. 12 participants, 6 months)			€ 62,000

³ The **Z-route** in the Netherlands refers to the "**Zelfredzaamheidsroute**" (in English: **Self-Reliance Route**), which is part of the **Dutch civic integration system** ("inburgering") introduced under the new **Civic Integration Act (Wet inburgering 2021)**.

Each subsequent or additional group | | | € 41,000 |

| Total first year | | | € 103,000 |

| Second year | | | € 82,000 |

| Third year | | | € 82,000 |

| Fourth year | | | € 82,000 |

(Excluding indexation)

Commitment and Results

The goal of the project is to develop a self-sustaining programme by, for, and with refugee women.

The project is initially launched by the professional partners of VWN (Dutch Council for Refugees), Buddy to Buddy, and Hello Breda. After four years, it is handed over to the women themselves as a volunteer-led initiative.

When the subsidy is granted, an annual report on the programme's progress will be required.

If the project yields no or insufficient results, it will be terminated in consultation with the providers, and consequently, the funding will also be discontinued.

SECTION 4

Implementation framework

Governance

To ensure the effective implementation of the Integrated Action Plan (IAP), Breda will embed governance processes within the city's evolving policy framework. In the new framework for value networks, the DG&I network will be established as a structural network, providing a permanent platform for coordination and oversight of participatory governance actions. This network will bring together representatives from relevant municipal departments, the participation officer, and external stakeholders involved in participatory initiatives.

The Urbact Local Group (ULG) will continue to operate beyond the URBACT project period, likely in an adapted form aligned with the city's new value network structure. The final governance model will depend on the decision of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, expected by the end of this year, regarding the configuration of value networks.

The policy framework *Moving Forward Together* (which includes the working methods of the value networks) expires on December 31, 2027. AoCE project team of Breda have now been tasked with mapping possible scenarios for the Value Networks beyond 2027. In doing so, they will take into account all other developments within the social domain. The DGI network will also be included and consolidated in this process.

Regardless of its exact form, the continuation of the ULG's collaborative spirit and stakeholder engagement will remain central. The group's accumulated expertise and established partnerships will serve as a foundation for sustained citizen involvement and cross-sectoral collaboration in implementing and monitoring the IAP.

As the Participation Act takes further shape at the national level, the municipality of Breda will define how to align local practices with the requirements of this upcoming legislation. The new law is expected to provide a legal foundation and clearer guidance for implementing participation in municipal governance. Breda is closely monitoring its development and will integrate the necessary adjustments once the framework is finalized.

Monitoring framework

The timeline below presents the planned schedule for implementing the actions outlined in Breda's Integrated Action Plan. It illustrates the sequence and duration of activities from 2024 to 2027, ensuring a structured and coordinated approach to strengthening democratic governance and inclusion in the city. The timeline reflects the interrelation between preparatory measures—such as mapping participation and establishing a participation officer—and the rollout of inclusive initiatives, digital tools, and community-based programs. By following this timeline, the municipality can effectively monitor progress, allocate resources, and adjust implementation as needed to ensure that actions contribute coherently to Breda's long-term participation goals.

ACTIONS	2024	2025												2026												2027
		Jan	Febr	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Febr	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	
Action 1.1: Mapping participation																										
Action 1.2: Setting up Diverse and Inclusive Group																										
Action 1.3: Participation officer position is established																										
Action 2.1: Inclusive training program																										
Action 2.2: Establishing centre of innovation in Breda																										
Action 3.1: Digital participation platform																										
Action 3.2: Equal Opportunities Centre																										
Action 3.3: Neighbourhood Mothers																										

The table below presents key indicators, monitoring mechanisms, baseline, and target values for implementing Breda's Integrated Action Plan. It provides a structured approach to track progress, measure results, and ensure accountability. Monitoring will be coordinated by the participation officer or a colleague who is responsible for this with support from ULG members and municipal departments to ensure that actions effectively strengthen inclusion and participatory governance.

ACTIONS	Indicators (output, result)	Mechanism of monitoring	Baseline (Date)	Target (Date)
Action 1.1: Mapping participation	Framework for inclusive citizen participation	Implemented as an AoCE testing action, but updated regularly by the participation officer	0 framework - 2025	1 framework - 2025
	Improvements in participatory processes getting more inclusive	Monitored by the participation officer during updating the framework	0 improvements	4 improvements - 2027
Action 1.2: Setting up Diverse and Inclusive Group	DIG set up with an implementation plan	DIG meetings organized in every 2 months, the implementation plan updated in every 6 months	0 DIG and 0 implementation plan - 2024	1 DIG and 1 implementation plan - 2025
	Increase in the number of community members from underrepresented groups	Monitored during DIG meetings organized in every 2 months	0% increase - 2025	20% increase - 2027
Action 1.3: Participation officer position is established	A participation expert contracted	Core members of AoCE ULG continuously lobbying until achieved	0 expert - 2025	1 expert - 2026

ACTIONS	Indicators (output, result)	Mechanism of monitoring	Baseline (Date)	Target (Date)
	IAP actions are realized	Participation officer monitor IAP implementation on monthly bases consulting with ULG members	2 actions (testing actions) – 2025	8 actions - 2028
Action 2.1: Inclusive training program	A series of training sessions are organized.	Participation officer/AoCE core ULG members follow-up the implementation of the training during 2026.	0 training organized - 2025	1 training organized - 2026
	New participatory actions are started to be developed, or existing ones are improved thanks to the lessons learnt from the training.	The participation officer and department leaders will meet to agree on how training lessons are applied in upcoming participatory actions.	0 participatory action initiated/improved - 2025	4 participatory actions initiated/improved - 2028
Action 2.2: Establishing centre of innovation in Breda	Agreement made about setting up long -term cross-department collaboration in the form of a centre of Innovation	Participation officer/AoCE core ULG members follow-up the implementation	0 agreement - 2025	1 agreement - 2027
	Set up and operation of the centre of innovation	Participation officer/AoCE core ULG members operate the centre	0 centre of innovation - 2025	1 centre of innovation – 2027
Action 3.1: Digital participation platform	Website for participatory processes created	Participation officer and IT expert design, set up and maintain the platform	0 website - 2025	1 website - 2027
	Increase in the number of residents involved in participatory processes	Monitored at each participatory process published on the website	0% increase - 2025	30% increase – 2028

ACTIONS	Indicators (output, result)	Mechanism of monitoring	Baseline (Date)	Target (Date)
Action 3.2: Equal Opportunities Centre	Set up Equal Opportunities Centre	Participation officer/AoCE core ULG members follow-up the implementation	0 Equal Opportunities Centre - 2025	1 Equal Opportunities Centre - 2028
	Increase in the number of residents from underrepresented groups involved in participatory processes	Monitored at each participatory action organized in the centre	0% increase - 2025	30% increase – 2030
Action 3.3: Neighbourhood Mothers	Neighbourhood Mothers program launched	Participation officer and ULG members set up and operate the program	0 NM program - 2025	1 NM program - 2027
	Increase in women from marginalized groups involved in public issues	Participation officer monitor at each participatory process	0% increase	20% increase

Funding strategy

Breda plans to finance the actions outlined in this Action Plan primarily from its own resources. Many existing subsidy schemes will continue to be provided through national government programmes. In addition, upcoming national and local elections may offer aldermen the opportunity to allocate extra funds to specific policy portfolios, potentially supporting the implementation of selected actions.

Risk assessment

The following table presents a risk assessment for the implementation of Breda's Integrated Action Plan. It identifies potential challenges that may arise during the execution of each action, assesses their likelihood, and outlines corresponding mitigation measures. The risks reflect a range of factors, including organizational readiness, stakeholder engagement, financial resources, and time management. By systematically identifying and addressing these risks, the municipality can anticipate obstacles and take proactive steps to ensure smooth and effective implementation. The mitigation strategies emphasize collaboration, communication, and capacity building across departments, ensuring that the city's participation objectives remain achievable and sustainable.

ACTIONS	RISK	Probability	Mitigation
Action 1.1: Mapping participation	1.Limited engagement: Difficulty in reaching marginalized communities 2.Data collection: Ensuring comprehensive data collection 3.Time constraints: Completing the project on time	Medium	1.Collaborating with local organizations to reach marginalized communities 2. Use structured data methods 3. Set clear milestones
Action 1.2: Setting up Diverse and Inclusive Group	1. Willingness to cooperate 2.Resistance to change 3. Resource limitations 4. Interests of various minority groups differ 5.The effectiveness of their organizations is not always equally strong. There is no partner within the network that naturally takes the lead, as this largely depends on the municipality's direction.	Low	1.Engage stakeholders early 2. Clear benefits communication 3. Lobbying at decision-makers 4. Co-creating an Implementation Plan which harmonize the interests 5. Working on the long-term operational structure of the Group
Action 1.3: Participation officer position is established	The relevant decision-maker is not yet convinced of the necessity of establishing such a position and office.	High	Lobbying to achieve this goal.
Action 2.1: Inclusive training program	1.To find the right focus of the training being relevant for the participants.	Medium	1.Training program should be adapted to the specific needs of the city of Breda

	2.Motivating civil servants to participate and apply the knowledge and practices learnt during the training.		2.The unit leaders need to be convincing and dedicate working time for the participation in the session
Action 2.2: Establishing centre of innovation in Breda	The primary challenge is to establish a clear concept for the Center for Innovation that defines its role and functions within the municipality. The social domain is developing rapidly, more and more programs are being offered in a neighborhood-oriented way, which means that the social domain is being organized closer to home, but this can hinder a city center of innovation	High	A series of consultations needed with the different departments elaborating the concept of a centre of innovation clarifying which activities are implemented on neighbourhood level and which ones on city level.
Action 3.1: Digital participation platform	It can be challenging to centralize all the platforms which are currently operating in parallel with each other.	Medium	The added value of such a centralized hub should be demonstrated by good practice examples.
Action 3.2: Equal Opportunities Centre	The lack of financial resources to set up and operate the centre on long-term. Independent role of the location and organization	High	Decision-makers need to be convinced to dedicate fund for the centre. Appointing such organization and location where everyone feel safe and welcome to participate.
Action 3.3: Neighbourhood Mothers	Identify and convince the potential neighbourhood mothers to cooperate with the City	Medium	Looking for such persons who are already acting as neighbourhood mothers without having the official title.