So this is the way they garden

This research has been commissioned by the Association of Allotment Gardeners, Ede (called VAT-Ede), through the Science Shop. One of the allotment gardens in its management, which is named De Koekelt, will be transformed into a multifunctional park this winter. This involves combining the function of individual garden plots with recreation for the neighbourhood. In light of this transformation, VAT-Ede has commissioned the Science Shop to find out on one side in what way to involve the neighbourhood, and on the other hand, in what way to involve the gardeners in this change.

The first part of this question, concerning the neighbourhood, has been investigated by a group of seven students, and has been summarized in the report "Tuinenpark De Koekelt verwelkomt de wijk".



"Zo tuinieren zíj dus"

Gemeenschap en Participatie
Tuinenpark De Koekelt

Lise Alix, 2011 Msc Thesis Rurale Sociologie Dr. Ing. Ina Horlings, Rurale Sociologie Prof. Dr. Ir. Arjen Wals, Educatie en Competentie Studies



The second part of the question, concerning the gardeners, is the focus of this master's thesis. Goal of the thesis is to find out in what way sense of community and participation of the gardeners of De Koekelt can be strengthened. This question has been answered by means of qualitative research. Twenty-two in-depth interviews with gardeners have been carried out, several activities have been organized like a potluck and a feedback gathering, and a short movie has been made.

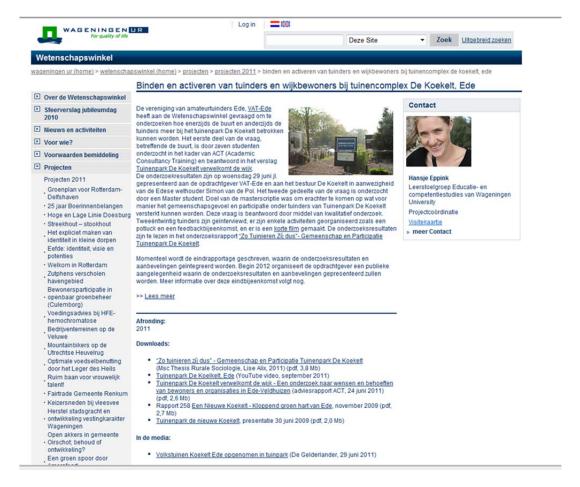
Through theories about farming, the Integral Farmwork, and farming styles, the way to capture diversity under the gardeners has been investigated. The way to strengthen sense of community and participation has been investigated through theories about sense of place, social capital, and the importance of meeting places.

It has been found that the gardeners of De Koekelt divide each other with help of five characteristics, including: the time the gardener takes to go to his/her garden, whether

the gardener is originally Dutch, the importance the gardener pays to the costs of gardening, the experience the gardener has with gardening, and whether the gardener is a man or a woman. Next to this, gardeners differ in the values they connect with the garden and in their motivation for having a garden. I have identified the People's Gardener, the Nice Place Gardener, the Experimental Gardener, the Food Gardener, and the Worker's Gardener. Furthermore, they differ in the way they interpret the problems they encounter while gardening in De Koekelt. In spite of considerable differences, the gardeners also share some common values.

To strengthen sense of community, it is important to strengthen mutual understanding for these differences between the gardeners. This can be done by stimulating social interaction. To involve the most possible gardeners, activities can be organized that connect to their individual values. Also it is important to organize activities that connect with their shared values, to strengthen the community identity.

To strengthen gardener's participation, it is important to acknowledge that gardeners can participate in several ways. They can participate by a formal and hierarchical way, for example by attending Member's Meetings and by completing a function within the Board. They can also participate by an informal way, for example by exchanging knowledge and plants with other gardeners, and by organizing an activity on a one-time base. By providing the space for this kind of initiatives and by showing appreciation for informal participation, the Board of De Koekelt can increase a sense of involvement under more gardeners, which is a motivation to be committed to De Koekelt.



Summary from the report: "Zo tuinieren zíj dus" (So this is the way they garden) by Lise Alix commissioned by the Agricultural University Wageningen, The Netherlands.

AVVN,

The Netherlands

The report is in Dutch and can be found here:

http://avvn.nl/gemeenten/algemeen/publicaties/