

Samenvatting scriptie 'Rebuilding Trust: Housing Associations in Groningen's Reinforcement Task' (Maaike Creusen, 2024) t.b.v. aanmelding voor scriptieprijs Aedes

Abstract – On April 16, 2024, the Senate voted with a large majority in favour of the final closure of the Groningen gas field. The decision marked the end of six decades of gas extraction in Groningen and, simultaneously, the commencement of a new chapter in the earthquake file; the post-closure phase. Beyond the enormous task of reinforcing over 27,455 addresses, there is much immaterial damage that requires recovery. As a result, the liveability of the province is under severe pressure. Given that **30% of the homes in the reinforcement task are owned by housing associations**, they play a crucial role in rebuilding Groningen. Yet, we seldom see or hear anything about them in the coverage of the earthquake issue. To investigate their often-overlooked role, this thesis aimed to answer the question: *'What strategies could housing associations employ to address both material and immaterial damage and enhance liveability in the earthquake-affected region of Groningen?'*

To address this question, a comprehensive literature review delved into three primary domains: the impact of earthquakes in Groningen, the role of housing associations in the Netherlands and strategies for enhancing liveability. Building upon this theoretical foundation, practical insights were gleaned through an internship at Kr8 – the partnership between 6 housing associations in the earthquake-affected area and the Huurdersplatform Aardbevingen Groningen (HPAG). During the internship, supplementary research methodologies were employed, including a data analysis of existing questionnaires and explorative talks with relevant stakeholders. Additionally, a thorough document analysis of the Woonactieplan was conducted. Towards the culmination of the research, a focus group session was convened to validate findings and chart future directions.

The research findings reveal that, despite not being legally obligated to address either material or immaterial damage, housing associations in Groningen express willingness to do so and show great competence in their efforts. While the specific strategies that the Kr8 associations (aim to) employ to enhance liveability can be found in the Woonactieplan, **the answer to the main question is not so much a substantive list of strategies as it is the delineation of a process through which housing associations can discern the most appropriate strategies to employ.** This thesis argues that enhancing liveability demands the adaptation of an area-based approach and collaborative efforts. **The contribution of this research lies in its provision of a step-by-step guide to area-based working.** While rooted in experiences from the reinforcement task, it is believed that this framework is also applicable in other contexts - Dutch or international - where liveability enhancement is required. Beyond housing associations, other entities involved in large-scale neighbourhood improvement efforts could also benefit from the guide.

Key words – Gas Extraction, Earthquakes, Groningen, Material Damage, Immaterial Damage, Housing Associations, Liveability, Strategies
