Future-proofing Amsterdam's Sport Facilities: A Collaborative Governance Approach to Integrating Community Functions

MSc Thesis – Metropolitan Analysis, Design & Engineering (MSc MADE)

Siem van Staveren (1583115)

February – November 2026, Amsterdam



Academic supervisors:

Karin Peters – *Wageningen University & Research, Department of Environmental Sciences, Chair of Cultural Geography*

Roberto Rocco – *Technical University Delft, Faculty of Architecture and Built Environment, Department of Spatial Planning and Strategy*

Hosting organisation:

Innovation Clubhouse (AMS Institute)


INNOVATION
CLUBHOUSE


WAGENINGEN
UNIVERSITY & RESEARCH


AMSTERDAM INSTITUTE FOR
ADVANCED METROPOLITAN SOLUTIONS


TU Delft

Preface

I would like to thank my academic supervisors, Karin Peters and Roberto Rocco, for their guidance, constructive feedback, and for always asking the questions that helped sharpen this research. I greatly appreciate the opportunity and freedom Monique van Loon and Daan Bregman from Innovation Clubhouse have given me to work on this project and for sharing their ideas, network, and advice along the way. My thanks also goes to all organisations, interviewees and research participants. Doing research with/about (community) stakeholders inevitably meant relying on their openness, intrinsic motivation and own input; the success of this thesis is very much thanks to these collective efforts. Lastly, I wish to specifically thank the board and members of football club AVV SDZ. Their hospitality and extensive contributions in the Living Lab-pilot at the club have allowed me and my colleagues from Innovation Clubhouse to formulate an academic understanding that will effectively help the sports sector further in its ambition towards more community-integrated and future-proof facilities.

Doing this research, I have learned a lot about both the theoretical background and practical execution of (collaborative) governance and stakeholder management. Coming from an urban planning background and being highly interested in how local dynamics and cross-level stakeholder collaborations shape the urban environment and policy, I feel satisfied and grateful to have been able to do extensive research that has both contributed to my personal development and make a direct real-world impact. Rounding off my academic education (for now) with this research and continuing a professional career in urban development, I hope to carry the lessons and contacts I made through this process with me for a long and fruitful time, tackling the constant socio-spatial challenges urban environments face.

Copyright statement

© 2026 Siem van Staveren. This work is licensed under a **Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) Licence**. This means that (parts of) this work may be shared, copied, redistributed, and adapted for any purpose, including commercial use, provided that full and appropriate credit is given to the author, a link to the licence is provided, and any changes made are clearly indicated.

Disclaimer

This report is an academic exercise. The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of TU Delft, Wageningen University or associated stakeholders.

The report may include the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools (such as large language models and generative image tools) to support specific tasks, including language editing, structuring of text, and preliminary idea exploration. The author understands that all TU Delft and Wageningen University produced publications are subject to AI scanning and that all use of AI must be transparently disclosed in this report. All substantive content, including research design, analysis, interpretation, and product development, was produced by the author. AI tools were used as assistive instruments and not as a substitute for critical thinking, academic judgement, or original work. All sources have been independently verified by the author. Any content generated with the assistance of AI has been reviewed, edited, and validated to ensure accuracy, relevance, and compliance with academic standards. The author remains fully responsible for the content, integrity, and originality of this report.

Image and Data Credits

All maps, figures, and diagrams are produced by the author unless stated otherwise. External sources are acknowledged in captions and referenced in the bibliography.

Abstract

Amsterdam's sports facilities are under increasing pressure due to urban densification, structural underfunding in physical maintenance and declining volunteer-based organisational capacity. As these spaces tend to simultaneously be underutilised, opportunities arise where new community functions can be integrated and sports facilities can be future-proofed. A key knowledge gap is, however, how to coordinate the multi-level stakeholder environment in this ambition, ranging from sports clubs and community-building organisations themselves to their respective institutional stakeholders. This action research, part of research organisation Innovation Clubhouse, simultaneously facilitated and analysed perspectives, roles and efforts in the governance of community-pilot *Uit Eigen Keuken* at football club AVV SDZ, along with including other practice-based case examples. By examining various theorized elements of collaborative governance, it looked to answer what governance arrangements may enable integration of community functions into sports facilities.

Pilot-case insights demonstrated that the availability of underused sports facilities does not automatically make additional community activities operationally feasible. Unclear ownership and leadership, limited organisational capacity, differing stakeholder motivations and insufficiently defined responsibilities complicated implementation and raised concerns about overall feasibility. While co-creation proved a valuable means to mitigate such pilot-level challenges, further analysis focused primarily on broader systemic governance arrangements. It identified trade-offs in organisational integration, dedicated stakeholder (network) coordination and matchmaking, alongside the challenges of financing these roles and navigating fragmented municipal support structures. Transdepartmental collaborative support, along with civil empowerment and/or professionalisation of sports clubs, can help strengthen the organisation in/around sports facilities and enable new community functions.

Table of contents

1. INTRODUCTION 8

1.1 Problem statement 9
1.2 Research gaps, objectives & products 10
1.3 Research relevance 11
1.4 Reading guide 12

2. CONTEXT & STAKEHOLDER REVIEW 13

2.1 Innovation Clubhouse & Living Labs 13
2.2 Stakeholder descriptions 14

3. CONCEPTUALIZING COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE 20

3.1 Literature review 20
3.2 Conceptual model 24
3.3 Research questions 24

4. RESEARCH METHODS 26

4.1 Research design 26
4.2 Operationalisation 28
4.3 Data collection 29
4.4 Data analysis 32
4.5 Ethics & positionality 33

5. PILOT UIT EIGEN KEUKEN 35

5.1 Project description 35
5.2 System context 36
5.3 Collaborative drivers 44
5.4 Collaborative dynamics 49
5.5 Collaborative actions 54
5.6 Key takeaways 57

6. PRACTICE-BASED LESSONS AND IMPLICATIONS 60

6.1 Organisation descriptions 60
6.2 Operational integration & resource pooling 62
6.3 The role of matchmaker 63
6.4 Institutional support & transdepartmental collaboration 65
6.5 Professionalisation versus civil empowerment 67

7. DISCUSSION 72

7.1 Re-thinking functionality of sports facilities 72
7.2 Collaborative governance in practice 73

8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 75

8.1 Research conclusions 75
8.2 Policy brief & recommendations 77
8.3 Limitations & future research 80

9. REFERENCES 82

APPENDIX 1 – INTERVIEWING GUIDE 88

APPENDIX 2 – CO-CREATION SESSION UEK 92

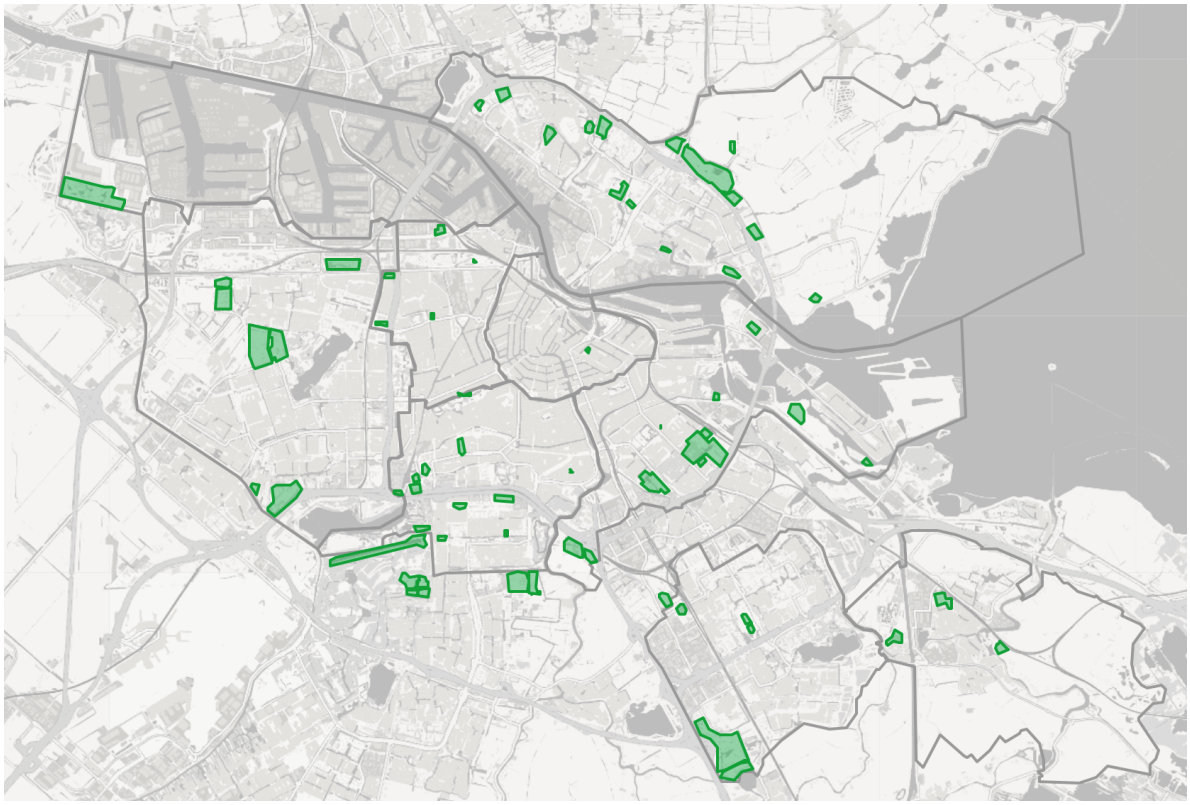
APPENDIX 3 – ACTION PLAN UEK (AVV SDZ) 101

1. Introduction

Sports facilities are best described as cornerstones of modern-day recreation, healthy lifestyles and places of social interaction. From a governmental perspective, they showcase clear value in public health measurements, but also tend to play a significant role in strengthening a local community (Gregori-Faus et al., 2025; Meulenbroeks & Ruikes, 2026). Sports club activities intrinsically function as social anchors for both members and residents living in proximity, for example through aspects of collective identity or social capital development (Seifried & Clopton, 2013).

In the Netherlands, sports facilities can be defined as civil-organised, club-based infrastructures that operate popular sport functions such as football pitches, hockey fields, tennis courts, and indoor halls (Meulenbroeks & Ruikes, 2026). They are often managed through volunteer-based organisation, and institutionally supported through municipal departments (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2024a; Kenniscentrum Sport & Bewegen, n.d.). Unlike in many other countries, they are typically not structurally integrated with health services, educational programmes, or broader social support functions. Instead, they attract relatively homogeneous user groups filtered by paid membership, active age levels, and recreational or higher-level competitions (Mulier Instituut, 2023). Spatially, they are frequently located at the urban periphery or in designated clusters, reflecting strict spatial zoning arrangements that guarantee land value efficiency, accessibility by bicycle or car, and separation from dense residential or mixed-use areas (see map 1 for the case of Amsterdam) (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2024a, 2024c).

Map 1: spatial distribution of sport facilities (in green) in the city of Amsterdam (source: Gemeente Amsterdam, 2026).



1.1 Problem statement

Beyond their value in public health through sports, it is key to consider how sports facilities (among other public amenities like community centres and libraries) can actively enable or constrain processes of community formation (Daly et al., 2025; Davies, 2016; Orr & Kellison, 2023; Wang et al., 2024). However, their spatial positioning within the city is increasingly pressured. For Amsterdam and much of the Netherlands, there is growing urban densification due to efforts to tackle extensive housing shortages (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2024a). Urban densification processes are not only physically transformative but can also be socially disruptive, often leading to tensions around sense of belonging, justice, and access to space (Skrede & Andersen, 2022). These dynamics subsequently threaten existing community spaces like sports facilities, particularly when such spaces are subjected to increasing land values and pricing, and consequently repurposed for other urban functions (Arundel & Ronald, 2017; Pinkster & Loomans, 2025; Sharp & Warner, 2018). The research by Urhahn (2025) showcases the pressured relationship in the Netherlands between spatial development and sport facilities, where increasing competition in spatial claims may eventually push sports facilities further away from the communities that interact with them.

Beyond this growing external threat, sport facilities also face two major internal challenges. First, as most Dutch sport clubs rely heavily on volunteer-based operational models, changing demographics and increasingly individualist lifestyles have resulted in declining volunteerism and therefore a smaller labour force to operate facilities with (Kenniscentrum Sport & Bewegen, n.d.; Santos et al., 2017). Second, ageing physical infrastructure of sports facilities has led to rising operational and/or maintenance costs borne increasingly by public authorities (KNVB, 2026; Vrieswijk et al., 2023). Consequently, the physical and operational maintaining of these spaces is prioritised over any public investments for accommodating to the ever-evolving functions of these facilities. Both challenges pressure the traditional operating and management of sport facilities and call for an active exploration of ways to secure long-term sustainability (Davies, 2016; Schep et al., 2024; Waardenburg, 2019).

To this end, several sports clubs, supported by knowledge institutions like Innovation Clubhouse, Mulier Instituut or NOC*NSF, seek to introduce new functions to increase the public value of the facilities and ensure wider institutional support (NOC*NSF, n.d.; Schep et al., 2024). However, these envisioned new functions span a multitude of domains and stakeholders, without a clear governance structure in place to coordinate objectives, facilitate executions or systemize outcomes (Orr & Kellison, 2023; Waardenburg, 2019). As a result, new and innovative ways of building public value within sports facilities often emerge informally, remain small-scale and often depend on isolated initiative rather than institutional support (Torfing et al., 2021; Waardenburg, 2019). The overall problem is therefore not a lack of innovative ideas or interested stakeholders, but an undefined governance understanding which can systemically coordinate and support execution-level innovative ideas and efforts. Without a clear governance framework in place, (shared) goals and opportunities remain fragmented, temporary, and difficult to scale up (Schep et al., 2024; Torfing et al., 2021).

1.2 Research gaps, objectives & products

Academic research may provide valuable guidance to understand and steer the governance arrangements through which new community functions within sports facilities can move from uncoordinated bottom-up efforts towards institutionally supported and scalable strategies capable of strengthening the public value and sustainability of sport facilities. Existing research provides insights into higher-level partnerships, stakeholder engagement and coordination, and the broader social value of sports facilities (Daly et al., 2025; Enjolras, 2009; Gbadegesin et al., 2021; Huhtanen et al., 2025). Yet, there is still a limited understanding of how various governance conditions impact the development of a real-world community project within a sports facility. This constitutes a scientific knowledge gap that is distinct from the real-world challenges described above: whereas sports facilities and their supporting organisations need a workable structure for developing and implementing pathways that add new public value to their current operations, this academic research seeks to understand and explain the governance arrangements through which such effective pathways can emerge and function.

The overall objective of this research is to develop an explorative understanding of the necessary governance arrangements through which new valuable functions in sport facilities can be achieved by integrating community activities. Rather than directly prescribing defined activities and measuring their impact, the research aims to include all the underlying governance elements under which these activities can be properly facilitated, institutionalized and sustained over time. In that sense, the research objectives encompass a necessary review of a pilot-case experimenting on the design and executing of community activities in sports facilities, which is followed-up by a translation of these piloting insights into key stakeholder implications and action-oriented pathways to structurally realise this ambition.

The outcomes of this research can thus be distinguished into two final products. A first, more practical product of the research is the project action plan of the community pilot-case *Uit Eigen Keuken* (UEK) with(in) football club AVV SDZ. Developed as part of the research process, the action plan translates the co-created governance arrangements into concrete strategies, roles, responsibilities, and joint actions for the pilot's continuing implementation and execution. As a collective product of the co-creation session, the action plan provides AVV SDZ and its collaborative partners (as well as potential other sports facilities in comparable contexts) with a practical basis for strengthening their public value through this sort of community activity.

The second product is a governance-focused policy brief, disseminating recommendations to institutional stakeholders, which may help create a more integrated and effective governance environment in which new community functions to sports facilities can systemically be explored and designed. Bringing together local authorities, sports club management, social organisations, and knowledge institutions, the research supports the creation of a broader base for collaboration that transcends monodisciplinary goals and their means.

1.3 Research relevance

Understanding what, and how, governance arrangements impact the integration of community activities with(in) Dutch sports facilities provides value for both the real-world innovative practices towards this ambition and the research-based understanding on (collaborative) multi-level governance, community-led development and sports facility management.

Relation to real-world innovation

This research is commissioned by and embedded within the research organisation Innovation Clubhouse – part of AMS Institute, which specializes in the practice-based research and testing of multidisciplinary urban innovations. As it is focused on exploring novel ways to use and future-proof sports facilities, Innovation Clubhouse has a novel yet growing place of influence in the sports sector of Amsterdam. This research specifically delves into a question of good governance dynamics in this ambition: generating an understanding on the governance elements under which community activities in sports facilities can be properly coordinated, supported, scaled and/or institutionalized.

For football club AVV SDZ specifically, the research contributes directly to the organisation and execution of the pilot UEK. By supporting a positive development of the club's community value through this community project, the study effectively supports AVV SDZ's efforts to strengthen its public value and subsequently remain in its current location amid the area's expected spatial redevelopment of Haven-Stad (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2021). Beyond such direct contributions in this study, the research carries potential (in the form of research conclusions improving decision-/policymaking in the sports and/or social sector(s)) to help add new public-valued functions to any of the 21,892 sports facilities in the Netherlands (Mulier Instituut, 2023).

Academic relevance

Understanding sports facilities beyond their primary function, exploring for new forms of public value, requires a transdisciplinary academic approach bringing together insights from fields such as urban planning, social work, and public administration studies. From this perspective, the community value of local sport facilities (excluding large-scale cases like professional sports venues) has remained widely under-researched (Gregori-Faus et al., 2025). The research therefore aims to contribute to an emerging need for a better understanding of this growing public ambition (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2024c). Through analysing efforts made by Innovation Clubhouse and other involved stakeholders to develop community activity within sports facilities, the research aims to understand what governance elements may enable or constrain them.

The transdisciplinary scope of the research (as described above) aligns closely with the focus of the MSc Metropolitan Analysis, Design and Engineering (MSc MADE); the master's programme through which this research is executed. The programme is centred on addressing complex urban challenges through interdisciplinary collaboration, with a particular focus on the metropolitan context of Amsterdam. It brings together perspectives from various urban development studies to develop innovative and practice-oriented responses to issues of urban sustainability. This

research aligns closely with that focus, as it combines an examination of institutional, spatial and social conditions that currently shape sports facilities. The value of this lens lies in its capability of showing how an existing urban asset can be reimagined through an innovative and integrative approach, grounded in a combination of stakeholder management, practice-oriented thinking, and creative solutions.

1.4 Reading guide

To provide more context on this study's background, research context and involved stakeholders, chapter 2 provides an overview of Innovation Clubhouse's working method and all stakeholders included in this study. Following this, the third chapter builds a theoretical framework that established the academic embedding of the research, reviewing literature relevant to (collaborative) governance and building a conceptualization of relevant governance elements. Chapter 4 then outlines the adopted research methods, including operationalisation of the governance model, data collection, analytical techniques and ethical considerations. The first results chapter presents the insights from the main pilot-case UEK, systemically organised around the conceptualised governance elements. Chapter 6 reviews some of these governance elements again, yet beyond the case of UEK, focusing on wider stakeholder implications for the scaling and institutionalization of community activities within sports facilities. Finally, chapters 7 and 8 position the main findings within the existing academic understanding, concluding the study by answering its research questions, providing a set of real-world recommendations, and reflecting on research limitations and future studies.

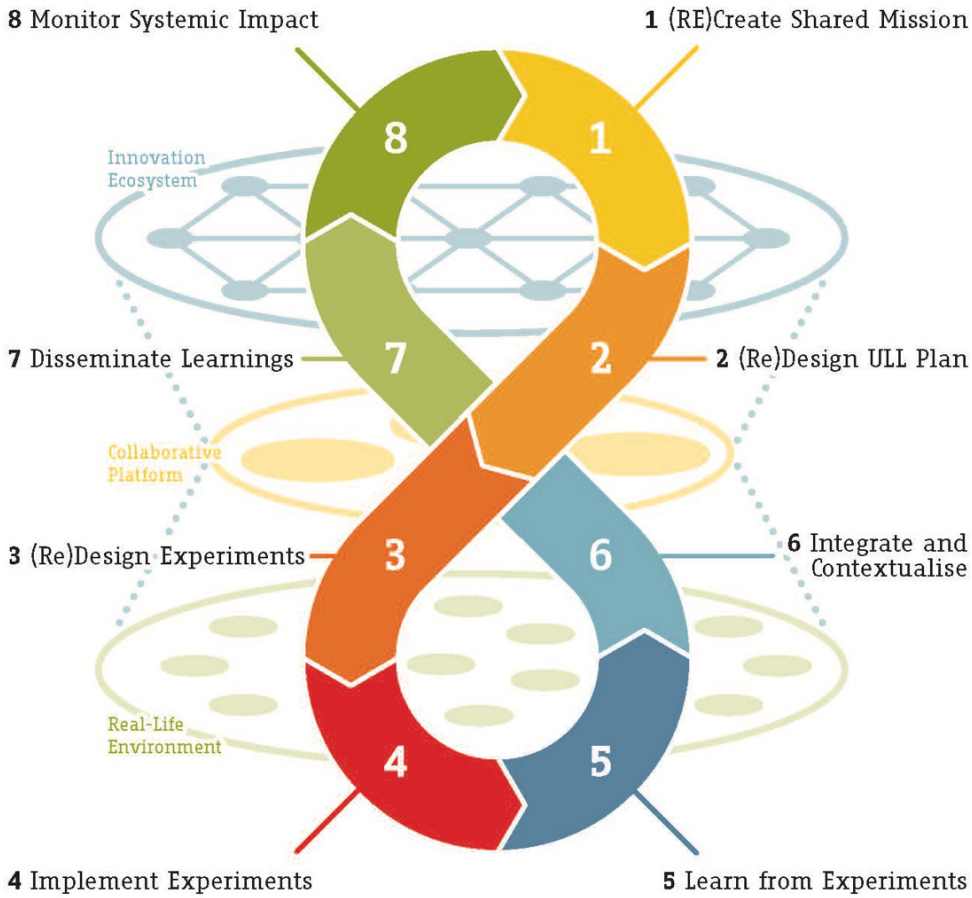
2. Context & stakeholder review

Innovation Clubhouse, and thereby this research, exists within a diverse network of public, private and civic organisations involved in sports management, spatial planning or social (community) services. Together, these stakeholders represent the institutional, organisational and local context within which the research takes place. This chapter first describes Innovation Clubhouse's working methods and position within the wider research context, followed by an overview of all stakeholders relevant to this research and project.

2.1 Innovation Clubhouse & Living Labs

Founded as a research consortium in 2022 between City of Amsterdam (Sports & Green), TU Delft Sports Engineering Institute, and the Royal Dutch Football Association (KNVB), Innovation Clubhouse explores how existing sports facilities can be used in ways that make them more accessible, inclusive and sustainable (Brester, 2022). Financed by the Ministry of Health, Welfare & Sports, the organisation operates as an experimental, practice-oriented and intermediary knowledge institute at the intersection of public administration, sports facility management and research.

Figure 1: visualization of the Living Lab research approach (Dijkstra & Joore, 2025).

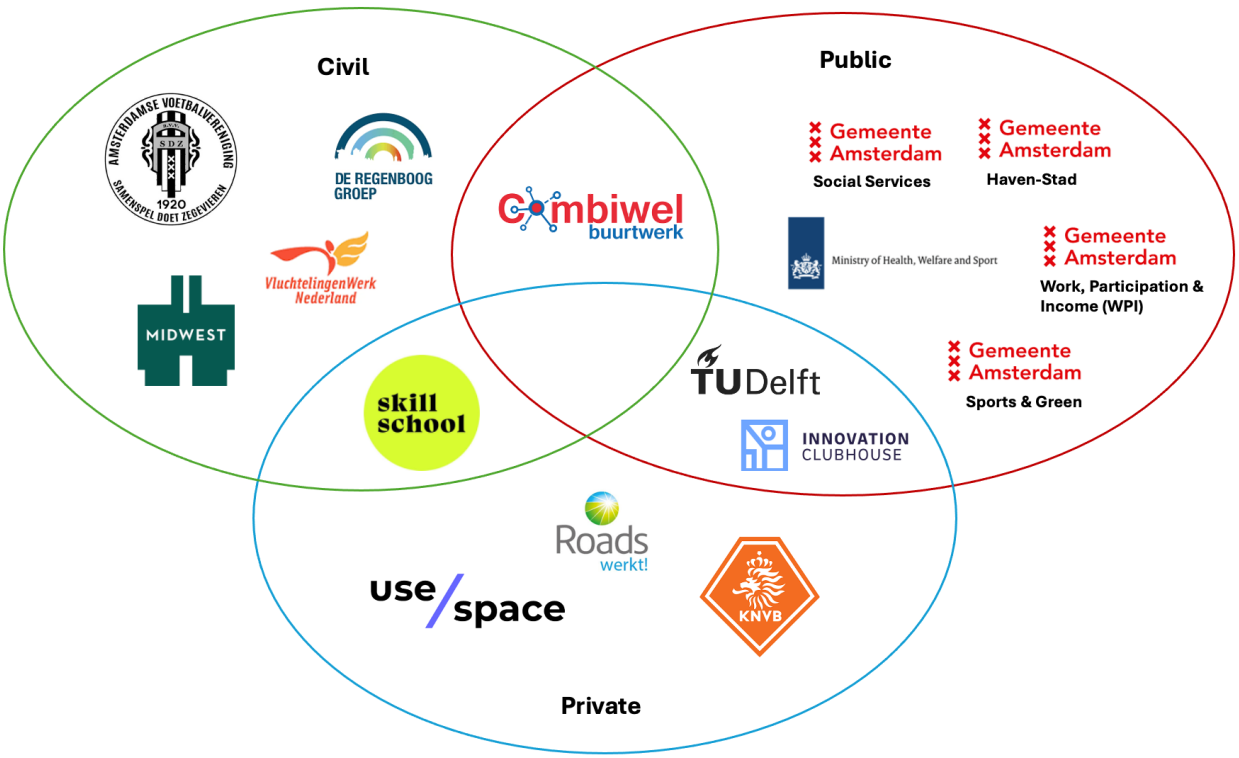


For its pilots, Innovation Clubhouse has adopted a Living Lab approach through which participating sports facilities function as experimental locations for pilot projects and cross-sector collaboration. Rather than developing solutions exclusively through desk research, the organisation works closely with the sports facilities and other stakeholders in practical settings to test innovations. The approach follows an iterative process, allowing projects to be repeatedly adapted based on experiences and learnings (Dijkstra & Joore, 2025). The Living Lab cycle presented in figure 1 visualizes this process through eight interconnected steps, moving from ideation to experimentation, learning, disseminating and measuring impact. The cycle is embedded within an innovative ecosystem and collaborative platform, which emphasizes how experimentation takes place through interaction between different stakeholders and within a real-world environment. The Living Lab approach allows ideas, activities and their implementation to be continuously revisited in response to practical experience and stakeholder input.

2.2 Stakeholder descriptions

This stakeholder overview describes the background, characteristics and ambitions of key organisations involved with Innovation Clubhouse and/or relevant to the research topic. Figure 2 below presents a stakeholder mapping as a starting point for this overview, positioning each organisation across the public, civic and private sectors.

Figure 2: stakeholder mapping (in research) across public, private, and civil sectors.



AVV SDZ

AVV SDZ is an amateur football club in Amsterdam-West with roughly 1700 members. It served as the first Living Lab location for Innovation Clubhouse and hosted the community pilot UEK. The club is a volunteer-based sports organisation with an organised board and several task-specific commissions responsible for its daily operations. AVV SDZ is the practical setting in which the research examines the development of a community activity within a sports facility. For the pilot of UEK, the club is represented by its executive manager, canteen team and communications/PR lead. The club's role in the research is both as the hosting organisation for the Living Lab and the practical executioner of the pilot-projects.

What is particularly striking about AVV SDZ as a Living Lab for future-proofing sports facilities is the immediate risk posed to the club. Since it is located in the centre of a proposed city expansion plan called Haven-Stad (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2021). This large-scale redevelopment may significantly increase land pressure in the area, making it more likely that existing space-consuming functions such as sports facilities will be reconsidered, reduced, or relocated in favour of housing, infrastructure, and other functions (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2024b). It exemplifies the earlier-described challenge facing many sports facilities in terms of locality in a densifying environment, where both local authorities and sports management are encouraged to rethink the role of AVV SDZ in relation to its surrounding community.

Royal Dutch Football Association (KNVB)
(Dutch translation: Koninklijke Nederlandse Voetbalbond)

The KNVB is the national governing body for football in the Netherlands and, with over 1.2 million members, the country's largest sports association (KNVB, n.d.). As one of the founding partners of Innovation Clubhouse, it contributes a sectoral perspective on the future of sports facilities and the role of football clubs within their local communities. Its connection to the AVV SDZ Living Lab reflects its stake in the ambition to explore how sports (football) facilities across the country can develop beyond their primary function and future-proof their sports operations.

TU Delft – Sports Engineering Institute

The Sports Engineering Institute, part of Dutch university TU Delft, is a multidisciplinary platform for research, education and innovation in sports engineering (TU Delft, n.d.). Bringing together expertise from several TU Delft faculties, it focuses on developing technological and engineering solutions that can improve athletic performance, health and sustainable sports participation. As a founding partner of Innovation Clubhouse, the institute provides a research and innovation perspective, connecting academic expertise with real-world experimentation in sports facilities. Innovation Clubhouse is part of this broader research institute.

City of Amsterdam – Sports & Green
(Dutch translation: 'Sport & Bos')

Sports & Green is the municipal department responsible for the institutional support and policymaking on sports facilities (along with public green spaces) in Amsterdam. Its

responsibilities include stimulating sports participation, supporting physical maintenance and development of sports accommodation, and managing aspects such as the external rental of sports fields and halls. The department therefore represents the main municipal counterpart to sports clubs in the management and development of sports facilities. Unique to Amsterdam is how this relationship commonly exists within an ownership structure in which the municipality owns the land while sports organisations own/manage the buildings and sporting activities. Within Innovation Clubhouse and the UEK project, representatives of Sports & Green regularly participate in discussions concerning experimentation of new community activities within AVV SDZ and other sports facilities.

City of Amsterdam – Haven-Stad

Haven-Stad is a municipal urban development programme concerned with the large-scale transformation of the (former) port area in Amsterdam-West in which AVV SDZ is located. The planned development is expected to introduce substantial changes to the local urban environment, including up to 60,000 new homes and 50,000 new workspaces (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2021). In the context of this research, Haven-Stad is actively working on developing some initial community infrastructure in the development area; part of which is the potentially increasing role of football club AVV SDZ as a community hub (aligning with the mission of Innovation Clubhouse). Representatives of the department are therefore deeply invested with the pilot-project of UEK as a potential starting point to this larger role for the football club, even co-funding the pilot.

City of Amsterdam – Social Services
(Dutch translation: 'Maatschappelijke Voorzieningen')

Social Services is the municipal department concerned with the provision and operation of public amenities across Amsterdam's neighbourhoods. These include facilities such as community centres, libraries and schools. Its policy area therefore overlaps with the community-oriented functions that can be associated with sports facilities, although sports facilities themselves are institutionally administered solely by Sports & Green. Yet, the department is still relevant to the research since the envisioned new community activities (within sports facilities) can be positioned right between the domains of sports provision and wider neighbourhood amenities. This places Social Services in a relevant institutional position with a strong relationship to the broader community function being explored through pilots like UEK. Due to this, Social Services also provides funding for the project UEK and is closely engaged within the network of Innovation Clubhouse.

City of Amsterdam – Work, Participation & Income (WPI)
(Dutch translation: 'Werk, Participatie & Inkomen')

Work, Participation & Income (WPI) is the public department concerned with the execution of the Participation Act, which enforces governmental support for labour participation and social (re)integration. In contrast to community organisations that work directly with individual residents, WPI primarily has an organisational and coordinating role in this field, maintaining an overview of social programmes and

referral pathways across the city. Its connection to Innovation Clubhouse and UEK relates to envisioned social programmes (i.e. with labour market reintegration as the goal) as an interpretation of public value to be integrated with sports facilities. WPI was approached by the UEK-team for their vast knowledge and experience of (labour) participation, (re)integration programmes and corresponding stakeholder network, to be integrated in projects like UEK.

CombiWel

CombiWel is a semi-public organisation involved in community and resident support in Amsterdam on a neighbourhood scale. In the area surrounding AVV SDZ, for example, CombiWel manages community centre De Horizon. Its operations combine individual resident support through *Buurtteam* with community project-based support through *Buurtwerk* with. With the latter, CombiWel supports local initiatives by helping develop business plans, providing spaces, connecting initiatives within local networks, and directing initiatives towards relevant funding or subsidy opportunities. Its approach emphasises supporting initiatives while leaving ownership with the initiating organisation or residents. CombiWel is approached by Innovation Clubhouse for involvement on a project-level; for instance, to help position pilot UEK in the local neighbourhood network around AVV SDZ.

Regenboog

Regenboog is an Amsterdam-wide grassroots (yet government-supported) organisation that provides shelter alongside rehabilitation and participation programmes for people who are or have been homeless. The organisation is directly connected to the physical context of AVV SDZ since one of its shelter locations is situated adjacent to the football club. This creates an existing relationship between the organisation, the sports club and the immediate surroundings of the project location. In the context of Innovation Clubhouse, Regenboog is relevant as an organisation working with residents who may participate in developmental or participation-oriented activities. A Regenboog representative was thus involved in the stakeholder environment surrounding the pilot UEK.

VluchtelingenWerk Nederland

VluchtelingenWerk is included in the stakeholder environment on a project-level (particularly UEK) for their central position within a demographic group that shows clear need of further integration in local communities: refugees. The government-supported civil organisation helps refugees in the Netherlands integrate through coordination and facilitation of a variety of (national and local) programmes and activities. Although groups of refugees have thus far participated in the pilot UEK, no organisational relationship between VluchtelingenWerk and Innovation Clubhouse/AVV SDZ has yet been established.

Roads

Roads is a social care firm, operating regionally in and around Amsterdam, involved with providing various developmental and labour participation-oriented programmes. Its relevance to the Innovation Clubhouse context emerged through its overlapping

network and operations to other organisations that coordinate programmes in which individuals can develop useful skills and work towards (labour) participation (CombiWel and Gemeente Amsterdam – WPI). One programme-location is situated close to AVV SDZ, and the organisation was brought into the wider stakeholder network through a connection made via CombiWel. Roads has had no collaborative relationship(s) with Innovation Clubhouse or a sports club, yet shows potential as a contributor to the development of a social programme within a sports facility.

Skill School

Skill School is an initiative focused on knowledge transfer and skills development in the grey space between education, labour and social care. Its programmes provide adolescents with opportunities for orientation, activation and motivation through practical skills, with examples including music, sewing, carpeting and creative crafts. Within the Innovation Clubhouse network, Skill School represents a project initiative that has explored the possibility of working with(in) sports facilities. At the time of the research, the relationship between Skill School and Innovation Clubhouse is stalled at the exploration of this potential collaboration.

Use/Space

Use/Space is a private matchmaking organisation that connects (community) organisations and projects with underutilised (office) spaces. The organisation identifies the primary use of a building, considers when the space is occupied, and facilitates secondary use during time periods of vacancy, positioning itself between the social and real estate sectors. Its services can include activities such as language courses, music rehearsals, theatre performances, neighbourhood activities and weekend schools. In addition to matching organisations with space, Use/Space also coordinates practical arrangements such as access, hosting, insurance and agreements concerning shared use. The organisation is included in the stakeholder mapping of Innovation Clubhouse for its unique commercial position in facilitating multifunctional use in underutilized spaces; a position for which it is also considered a key source of insights. Apart from this research, Use/Space holds no (collaborative) relationships with Innovation Clubhouse or any sports facilities.

City of Amsterdam – Stadsloods

Stadsloods is an established municipal initiative (part of the department Space & Sustainability) focused on connecting (community) organisations and initiatives to available space in city-owned buildings. It holds potential value as a stakeholder in the network of Innovation Clubhouse as an experienced matchmaker – similar to Use/Space but from a governmental position – in temporary and adaptive (re)use of underutilized spaces. Stadsloods has thus far had no (collaborative) relationship with Innovation Clubhouse or any sports facilities.

MidWest

MidWest is a grassroots initiative operating an independent ‘social enterprise’ (community space) in Amsterdam-West; developed through bottom-up volunteering and civil funding rather than the municipal financing many other community spaces are

dependent on. It has operated from a repurposed sports hall since 2014 and is primarily focused on providing a platform for local activities and social cohesion in the neighbourhood. Within the stakeholder context of this study, MidWest provides a lively example of a community initiative that has developed outside the institutional support structure that characterises many other public community programmes. Its relationship to the research and stakeholder network is therefore primarily as a source of knowledge and inspiration rather than as a direct contributor to integrating community functions within sports facilities.

3. Conceptualizing collaborative governance

This chapter establishes the theoretical and conceptual framework of the research by relating the topic of community project development within sports facilities to relevant academic literature. It identifies and links the theories of collaborative governance, adaptability and co-creation to the real-world context of Dutch sports facilities and community projects, as they will guide the further analysis in this research.

3.1 Literature review

This research examines how community activities can be developed and facilitated as additional functions within sports facilities. In this context, community activities are understood as efforts and practices embedded in a local context that contribute to the welfare and quality of life of local residents, particularly by strengthening social cohesion and neighbourhood identity (Arundel & Ronald, 2017; Misener & Mason, 2006).

Several past studies have illustrated how the traditional functions of sports facilities can already strengthen such elements of community. Super et al. (2018), for example, identify positive relationships between sports participation and a range of youth-developmental outcomes such as pro-social behaviour and school performance, indicating the wider social value of sports as a community resource. Davies (2016) similarly explores sport facilities as community hubs within cases of neighbourhood regeneration, showing how they provide spaces for social interaction, and strengthen capacity in the voluntary/informal labour sector. However, the untapped potential of sports facilities' public value mainly extends beyond existing functions (Orr & Kellison, 2023; Waardenburg, 2019).

Collaborative governance

Integrating new community activities within sports facilities requires engaging with a wider range of stakeholders than those traditionally involved in sports facility management (NOC*NSF, n.d.; Schep et al., 2024). However, coordinating and facilitating such an extensive stakeholder environment, as presented in the previous chapter, can be considered a challenging task. It calls for a collaborative approach, including community-based organisations alongside supporting public and private stakeholders (Gbadegesin et al., 2021; Misener & Mason, 2006).

As is a common approach in stakeholder collaborations, the study by Waardenburg et al. (2019) analyses the ambition of multifunctionality within sports facilities through the lens of public-private partnerships (PPPs). Here, governmental stakeholders work together with private organisations, sharing responsibilities, risks and resources, to achieve a higher-value utility of sports facilities. However, what is missing to this exploration is the inclusion of any real bottom-up coordination and input, looking only at the ways public value within sports facilities can be achieved through the collaboration of organised and higher-level stakeholders. Bottom-up inclusion refers to the philosophy in which individual citizens or local small-scale organisations, like sports clubs or community initiatives, are involved in higher levels of decision-making too

(Gbadegesin et al., 2021). PPP's and other more professional-circle governance arrangements can be criticized for focusing too heavily on effectiveness and organised stakeholder coordination, while paying insufficient attention to who is actually mainly responsible for and/or affected by local (community) dynamics (Ansell et al., 2024). From this perspective, governance approaches such as PPPs risk overlooking the inclusive importance of local, volunteer-based participation in sports facility management and community project management.

Ensuring that all levels of stakeholder environments are included, collaborative governance emerges as a potentially more fitting approach. Ansell & Gash (2008, p. 554) define collaborative governance as "*a governing arrangement where one or more public agencies directly engage non-state stakeholders in a collective decision-making process that is formal, consensus-oriented, deliberative and that aims to make or implement public policy or manage public programmes or assets"*. Here, collaborative governance should be understood as the arrangements through which stakeholders may engage constructively in pursuit of the public goal of developing community activities within sports facilities.

A systemic review by Emerson et al. (2012) further conceptualises collaborative governance into a logic model (see table 1 below). This model defines various elements which could prove crucial to understand and shape the collaborative stakeholder environment in this research (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Ansell & Torfing, 2021). Although the impacts and adaptations will be difficult to analyse in this research's timeline, all other dimensions (system context, drivers, collaborative dynamics and collaborative actions) reveal relevant elements to include in the research analysis.

Table 1: the collaborative governance model by Emerson et al. (2012).

A Diagnostic or Logic Model Approach to Collaborative Governance

Dimension and Components	System Context	Drivers	The Collaborative Governance Regime				Collaborative Outcomes	
			Collaborative Dynamics			Outputs Collaborative Actions	Impacts	Adaptation
			Principled Engagement	Shared Motivation	Capacity for Joint Action			
Elements within Component	- Resource Conditions - Policy Legal Frameworks - Prior Failure to Address Issues - Political Dynamics/ Power Relations - Network Connectedness - Levels of Conflict/Trust - Socio-economic/ Cultural Health & Diversity	- Leadership - Consequential Incentives - Interdependence - Uncertainty	- Discovery - Definition - Deliberation - Determinaton	- Mutual Trust - Mutual Understanding - Internal Legitimacy - Shared Commitment	- Procedural/ Institutional Arrangements - Leadership - Knowledge - Resources	Will depend on context and charge, but might include: - Securing Endorsements - Enacting Policy, Law, or Rule - Marshalling Resources - Deploying Staff - Siting/ Permitting - Building/ Cleaning Up - Enacting New Management Practice - Monitoring Implementation - Enforcing Compliance	Will depend on context and charge, but aim is to alter pre-existing or projected conditions in System Context	- Change in System Context - Change in the CGR - Change in Collaboration Dynamics

System context
Within the model by Emerson et al. (2012), the system context refers to the wider institutional and socio-economic conditions characterising the stakeholder environment. It includes factors such as policy frameworks, stakeholder networks, and the socio-economic character in which the stakeholder environment finds itself in. In the context of this research, this means that projects by Innovation Clubhouse are embedded within a broader landscape of governmental and research ambitions, institutional responsibilities, formal rules and regulations, and local socio-spatial dynamics. These elements influence which parties are able/willing to participate, whose interests are prioritised, and how much experimental room can be built to new functions within sport facilities.

Beyond these contextual elements given by the collaborative governance model, community activities within sport facilities may also depend on the adaptability of the sports spaces, which will usually relate to the spatial adaptability. Spatial adaptability can be understood as the capacity of buildings to accommodate changing uses, demands, and conditions over time (Schmidt III & Austin, 2016). Prior research already established an understanding towards the adaptability to sports facilities through design flexibility. However, Adams & Tiesdell (2012) criticize how this focus of adaptability on spatial dimensions may overlook other key element in building use: time. In the context of how sports facilities in Amsterdam are often criticized for low utilisation rates, this temporal angle to adaptability proves just as important to understand when re-thinking the use of these spaces. Furthermore, Toprakli (2025) nuances another applicable dimension to adaptability by reviewing how sports club managers and designers may interpret functionality within sports facilities differently. This suggests that adaptability can also be understood as through an organisational dimension. Together, all these factors create another key element to the applied model's system context in the form of spatial-temporal adaptability; the ability of a (sports) building to respond not only to changing spatial demands, but also to changing temporal rhythms and opportunities of use.

Collaborative drivers, dynamics and actions
Following the contextual elements to collaborative governance, stakeholder collaboration can be further conceptualised under three main dimensions: drivers, dynamics and actions. Collaborative drivers refer to starting factors that trigger and sustain the willingness of parties to engage in collaboration, such as ownership and leadership, shared motivations, underlying uncertainties, and respective dependencies among stakeholders on one another (Emerson et al., 2012). Reviewing and understanding these factors within this research may showcase key reasons on what, and why, stakeholders may (not) want to engage with the integration of community activities within sports facilities.

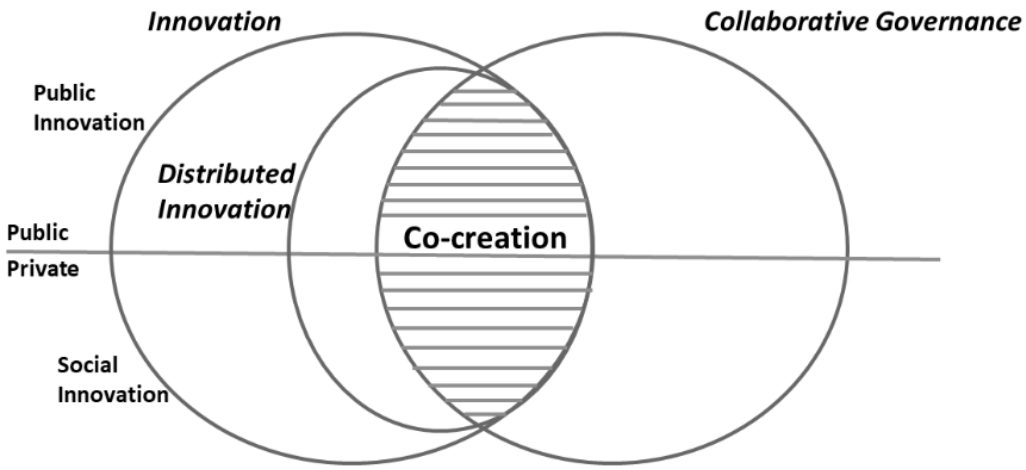
Collaborative dynamics include factors that show what happens once stakeholders are brought together: the ways they interact, formulate their respective roles and contributions, negotiate actions and responsibilities, develop a mutual understanding, and work towards a joint capacity for action (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson et al., 2012). The stakeholder environment in this study is expected to be characterized by various of

these factors and processes, moving from possible fragmented interests and undefined contributions to collective negotiation and, in the end, coordinated collective action to innovate. As also stated in table 1, the type of such collaborative actions is dependent on the context of the project (Emerson et al., 2012). Here, several governance elements to the development and piloting of community activities can be hypothesized: allocated actions, resources and/or finances among stakeholders, formulation of a joint timeline, and formalised agreements between stakeholders. For the latter, Wang et al. (2024) highlight the common application of joint use agreements in sports facility management. These types of agreements formalise how spaces are shared across different users and time slots by contractional documenting of matters like liability, access, and maintenance. Hence, they may help translate the potential of shared use into a clear and actionable arrangement for the pilots by Innovation Clubhouse, rather than leaving it dependent on informal or ad hoc agreements.

Co-creation

As a means to both analyse and steer many of the presented governance elements – including an understanding of drivers, facilitation of collaboration dynamics and coordinating actions and resources – a co-creative approach may be most effective (Ansell & Torfing, 2021). As visualised in figure 3 below, co-creation is a type of collaborative governance that seeks to leverage distributed innovation and bring together public and social innovation for the proactive purpose of building public value (Ansell & Torfing, 2021). In its general form, it brings stakeholders with diverse perspectives and roles together in an organised activity and seeks to collectively define an idea, product, service, or solution through brainstorming, knowledge sharing, discussion, design, etc.

Figure 3: co-creation in relation to innovation and collaborative governance (Ansell & Torfing, 2021).



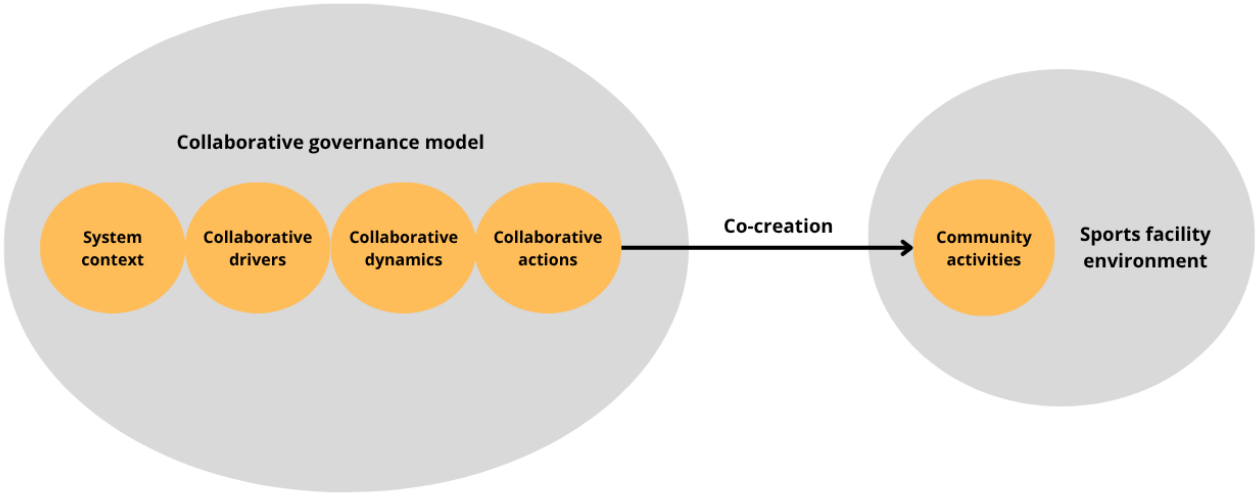
In contrast to more conventional collaborative governance approaches, which often primarily involve organisational and institutional stakeholders, co-creation also incorporates lay actors, such as users, citizens, and local communities (Torfing et al., 2021). In the context of Dutch sport facilities, the development of new community functions depends not only on collaboration between formalised stakeholders, but also on the inclusion of knowledge and actions by informal actors like sports facility

volunteers and active residents in the community. For Innovation Clubhouse and similar innovation coordinators, co-creation therefore can provide a fitting working method. It offers a way to structure collaboration in highly dynamic and uncertain multi-stakeholder settings, while simultaneously fostering the development of innovative and context-sensitive solutions.

3.2 Conceptual model

This literature review has examined how collaborative governance, by understanding its various elements and methodology of co-creation, may help Innovation Clubhouse and its stakeholders better understand the integration of sport facilities with community activities. There is a very limited amount of existing research that applies a collaborative governance model to this ambition, particularly in the context Dutch sport facilities. This research therefore addresses a knowledge gap by examining how such a governance model can be understood in its real-world effect. Figure 4 below visualises the research's conceptual model, which connects the collaborative governance dimensions reviewed in this chapter – relevant to the stakeholder environment in this research.

Figure 4: conceptual model for this research.



3.3 Research questions

The conceptual model in figure 4 translates theory-based concepts into a scoped empirical framework for this research. It establishes system context, collaborative drivers, collaborative dynamics and collaborative actions as arrangements that influence the feasibility of developing community projects, like those of Innovation Clubhouse, within sports facilities. It consequently structures how the development of community value in sport facilities will be examined here. This results in the following main research question:

How and under what conditions do collaborative governance arrangements enable or constrain the integration of community functions with(in) Amsterdam's sports facilities?

To ensure a structured analysis, providing insights to every dimension in of collaborative governance, the research process adheres to these sub-questions:

1. System context:
What key underlying policies and practical considerations shape the development and organisation of community functions, and how?

2. Collaborative drivers:
What moves relevant stakeholders to engage in the development and organisation of community functions, and how?

3. Collaborative dynamics:
What collaborative dynamics between involved stakeholders shape the (re)development and organisation of community functions, and how?

4. Collaborative actions:
What responsibilities, actions and agreements (may) come out of the collaborative processes towards integrating community functions?

4. Research methods

This chapter discusses the adopted research design, operationalisation, forms of data collection, analytical techniques, positionality and ethical considerations that together form the empirical core of the research.

4.1 Research design

Understanding governance arrangements for integrating new community functions within sports facilities will be mainly based on learnings from the Living Lab-case *Uit Eigen Keuken* (UEK) for this research. The study generally addresses a complex and relatively underexplored development. UEK, as part of a collaborative partnership between Innovation Clubhouse and football club AVV SDZ, is subsequently approached by Innovation Clubhouse as a pilot through which numerous aspects to this development are to be tested, researched, and potentially scaled. One such aspect forms the empirical core of this research within a larger set of studies by/for Innovation Clubhouse: the lens of collaborative governance to understand elements ranging from institution-level influences to operational dynamics across multiple levels of stakeholders. To capture and understand these collaborative governance arrangements in depth, a qualitative case study on UEK provides a fitting empirical research design (Bryman, 2016).

However, the purpose and impact of this study is not merely analytical: it directly informs, iterates and alters the ongoing execution of UEK within AVV SDZ. To fit this dual approach, applying an *action research approach* is fitting here. As Hespo (2008) argues, action research is closely connected to stakeholder engagement and coordination in development processes, as it combines analytical research and active participation through involving stakeholders directly in defining problems, generating knowledge and action steps, and interpreting outcomes. Here, stakeholder management in action research is seen as a process of mobilization, negotiation, and alignment between different parties and interests, rather than as a static mapping exercise. To achieve this, a predominantly exploratory character to the research is needed.

Given the dynamic and complex nature of governance as a research topic and circumstances of a practical Living Lab-environment, the research also must look beyond the scope of UEK as a single case study to ensure academic validity and scalability. Although the study will not include any other full-sized pilot-cases like UEK, the research continues through an iterative cycle by including new governance elements or engaging with new stakeholders like Skill School, MidWest and Use/Space. These stakeholders may not (yet) be involved with the pilot-case of UEK itself, yet are valuable complementary sources of insights into certain governance arrangements which cannot be fully understood by only analysing one case.

Case selection logic
AVV SDZ provides a relevant and logical case for studying the development of community projects within sports facilities. The amateur football club is relatively large,

serving approximately 1,700 members, with a membership base extending across the city but particularly into surrounding neighbourhoods like Spaarndammerbuurt, Zeeheldenbuurt and Houthavens (see map 1 below). Its size, established position and familiarity within the neighbourhood, and strong organisational capacity make it a useful setting for examining how new community activities can be integrated into an existing sports facility. Its experience among its board and members with hosting activities beyond its core sports function provide a necessary executional capacity within the club to develop new projects, through which the research team can step in a more supporting and analytical role.

Map 2: Location of AVV SDZ and surrounding neighbourhoods.



Vice versa, the football club also has much to benefit from hosting a pilot for this research. Like many Dutch sports clubs, AVV SDZ has an organisational structure that relies substantially on volunteers. As is common, this structure is under increasing pressure from changing volunteer capacity and a growing membership base (Kenniscentrum Sport & Bewegen, n.d.). This makes the club a proper case example of the organisational pressures affecting amateur sports clubs across the Netherlands.

Also relevant here is AVV SDZ's locality within the surrounding area. As mentioned in chapter 2.2, the club is situated within the proposed redevelopment plan of Haven-Stad, creating increasing pressure for the club and other local stakeholders to strengthen the public value of the sports facility to tackle doubts about land efficiency and contesting spatial claims urban planners may have (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2021; Urhahn, 2025). On the other hand, this urban transformation creates opportunities for the club too: as new residential areas develop in Coenhaven/Minervahaven and

Sloterdijk-West, AVV SDZ could significantly contribute to building community infrastructure in new housing districts. Due to this ambitioned value, the pilot UEK is co-funded by the department of Haven-Stad.

In short, the case of AVV SDZ is relatively typical to Dutch sports facilities in terms of its character as an amateur football club, while also possessing unique characteristics that make it extra relevant for both the club and the research team to pilot community projects here. Its large membership base and proximity to several lively and developing neighbourhoods further strengthen its relevance for studying how sports facilities may fulfil broader community functions.

4.2 Operationalisation

As conceptualised in previous chapter, the integration of community projects within sport facilities can be examined through the lens of collaborative governance, consisting of various elements under four main dimensions: system context, collaborative drivers, collaborative dynamics, and collaborative actions (Emerson et al., 2012). Below, in table 2, these concepts are further broken down, based on discussed literature and their hypothesized relevance to the research topic. Each governance element includes measurable indicators and data points as to which research method will collect these indicators.

Table 2: operationalisation of collaborative governance elements.

Dimension	Element	Indicator(s)	Data point(s)
System context	Policy framework	Presence and content of relevant policy goals & regulations Assessment of degree of policy alignment Formalised elements concerning the function of sports facilities within a community	Policy review
	Sports facility management	Existing governance arrangements among stakeholders co-managing sports facilities Described organisational structure within sports club Perceptions and assessment of legitimacy and capability of sports club management	Policy review & stakeholder interviews
	Network connectedness	Presence and assessment of existing relationships among stakeholders	Stakeholder interviews
	Community activity management	Described existing operations by social sector stakeholders Described stakeholder ambitions for sports facilities' role in community development	Stakeholder interviews & co-creation session
	Neighbourhood profile	Described character of neighbourhood(s) around sports facility Described neighbourhood (social) demands Positioning of sports facility within local environment	Stakeholder interviews & co-creation session
	Spatial-temporal adaptability	Patterns in utility of envisioned project space Review of required material resources Formal requirements for access, scheduling, liability, and user agreements	Stakeholder interviews & co-creation session
Collaborative drivers	Interdependence	Perceived reliance on other stakeholders to move forward Identification of missing roles/tasks among stakeholders	Stakeholder interviews & co-creation session

	Shared motivation	Overlap between stakeholder goals and ambitions Degree of agreement on project purpose	Stakeholder interviews & co-creation session
	Ownership & leadership	Clarity of project ownership among stakeholders Degree to which stakeholder recognizes own expected role / contribution (if any)	Stakeholder interviews & co-creation session
	Risks & uncertainties	Perceived risks (financial/legal/reputational) Perceived belief in project continuity Extent to which uncertainty reduces commitment	Stakeholder interviews & co-creation session
Collaborative dynamics	Negotiation processes	Presence of conflicting perspectives or ideas Patterns to discussions among stakeholders Movement towards consensus	Stakeholder interviews & co-creation session
	Willingness to contribute	Stated organisational conditions to partake in project Expected outcomes at end of pilot period	Stakeholder interviews & co-creation session
	Capacity for joint action	Identification of collaboration barriers Identification of required joint resources or actions	Stakeholder interviews & co-creation session
Collaborative actions	Action points	(Implied) stakeholder roles and tasks Identified governance instruments needed (meetings, agreements, roles)	Stakeholder interviews & co-creation session
	Resources and financing	(Implied) allocation of resources and financing in project action plan Expected resources and financing required to further develop project	Stakeholder interviews & co-creation session
	Timeline	(Implied) timeline within pilot action plan Expected length of time period to further develop project	Stakeholder interviews & co-creation session

4.3 Data collection

This following section further explains the collection methods needed to gather data and insights for the operationalized governance elements from the previous section.

Policy review

Reviewing institutional documents in sectors like sports, social programmes, and spatial planning is an essential first step in the data collection, as the collaborative governance model assumes that new functions are heavily shaped by the wider policy and legal context (Emerson et al., 2012). It helps identify the ambitions, (public) responsibilities, and rules that influence how both sport facilities and community activities or organisations can be administered, and how they may integrate. To this end, the research will review the following documents:

- *Strategic Housing Plan – Sports & Physical Activity: 2023-2027* (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2023);
- *Vision for Amsterdam's sports facilities: hospitable & connected. Movement towards 2035* (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2024c);
- *Vision for Amsterdam's sports facilities: hospitable & connected. Movement towards 2035 – progress report October 2025 (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2025);*
- *Amsterdam's Reference Standards: for social services, green and play* (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2024a).

Semi-structured interviews
Individual interviews with key individuals in the development of pilot UEK, but also the larger ambition to integrate community activities within sports facilities, were conducted to build an empirical understanding of how they shape and/or reflect upon the various governance elements in this research environment. Ten stakeholder interviews were subsequently conducted, as presented in table 3 below. Some of these interviewees were mainly questioned on their (possible) involvement with UEK (#1-7 in table 3), while others were interviewed for their insights and perspectives on the broader ambition to integrate community projects within sports facilities (#8-10 in table 3).

Table 3: overview of semi-structured stakeholder interviews.

#	Interviewee (role/organisation)	Date
1	Aziz (AVV SDZ club manager)	12 May 2026 19:00
2	Judith (freelance project chef for UEK)	13 May 2026 10:00
3	Shirley (Regenboog)	18 May 2026 14:00
4	Monique V. (City of Amsterdam – WPI)	20 May 2026 14:00
5	Romy (City of Amsterdam – Sports & Green)	25 May 2026 10:00
6	Grethil (City of Amsterdam – Social Services)	2 June 2026 13:00
7	Leander (Combiwel – Buurtwerk Spaarndammerbuurt)	10 June 2026 12:00
8	Anita (MidWest)	1 July 2026 12:00
9	Mare (Use/space)	24 August 2026 11:30
10	Carlijn (Skill School)	16 September 2026 10:30

In form, these interviews were semi-structured, which allowed the interviews to stay within the governance scope, yet also remain open to other topics and insights that may also be relevant to the research and/or development of the community projects. A list of open-ended questions was pre-formulated for every operationalized governance element (see appendix 1). After, they were selected for each interview based on the expected relevance of the question in relation to the expertise of the stakeholder. All interviews were conducted, transcribed and analysed in Dutch; the working language of all involved stakeholders. Interview quotations directly used in this report were translated into English.

Co-creation session
As discussed in the literature review, co-creation provides a fitting approach for both facilitating and examining collaborative governance, as it brings together involved stakeholders in a structured setting to reflect, (re)define, ideate, discuss and innovate their joint responsibilities and actions (Ansell & Torfing, 2021; Torfing et al., 2021; Toukola et al., 2023). Co-creation particularly fitted within the development of UEK; a multi-stakeholder effort in which stakeholder engagement, shared commitment, and the division of roles and tasks remained under constant need of alignment.

Hence, one co-creation session of approximately 2.5 hours on the continuing development of UEK was organised on 25 May 2026 at the project location AVV SDZ. The timing of this session dictated the session's topics, as the project was at this time in a redevelopment phase after an earlier execution period in January – February 2026.

Uncertainty remained about long-term continuity, stakeholder roles, and the practical conditions for the projects' restart, establishing various topics to be covered during the session. The aim of this session was threefold: first, to gain further research insights into the experiences of stakeholders involved with integrating a community within a sports facility, similar to the stakeholder interviews; second, to strengthen the collaborative environment itself by initiating contact between stakeholders; and third, to collectively identify bottlenecks and risks in the project operations, upon which to co-create new directions and solutions for the restart of the project. To this end, the session was mainly intended to help clarify mutual dependencies and generate concrete follow-up actions towards the intended pilot restart in September 2026.

The invitees to the co-creation session, which are presented in Table 4 below, represent a diverse and multi-level stakeholder group, including the operating-team of UEK, Innovation Clubhouse**,** active members within AVV SDZ, various city officials, and employees of social organisations CombiWel and Regenboog.

Table 4: stakeholders invited to co-creation session UEK.

Name	**Organisation - function**
Daan	TU Delft – Innovation Clubhouse programme director
Monique L.	AMS Institute – Innovation Clubhouse Living Lab coordinator
Marcel*	AVV SDZ – board
Andries*	AVV SDZ – communications and PR
Aziz	AVV SDZ – club manager & project lead for Innovation Clubhouse projects
Elke	AVV SDZ – canteen manager
Judith	AVV SDZ – freelance chef for UEK
Lubbert*	City of Amsterdam – Haven-Stad
Anita	City of Amsterdam – Haven-Stad
Monique V.	City of Amsterdam – Work, Participation & Income (WPI)
Romy	City of Amsterdam – Sports & Green
Evelien	City of Amsterdam – Sports & Green
Dirk	City of Amsterdam – Sports & Green
Grethil*	City of Amsterdam – Social Services
Leander*	Combiwel – Buurtwerk Spaarndammerbuurt
Shirley	Regenboog

* *Unable to attend session*

The co-creation session followed a structured programme (see also appendix 2). After an initial welcome, introduction, and presentation of the project mission, participants were given a short tour of the facility grounds, canteen space and kitchen; introducing a collective experience of the physical context and club activities as a starting point to the discussion. After, the group was divided into three thematic tables, each reflecting a key dimension of the project in separate discussions:

- *Club & organisation:* addressing matters such as piloting agreements, practical roles and responsibilities, and organisational risks;
- *Participants & guidance:* focusing on target groups for the social programme, their engagement, development, and required strategies to support;

- *Neighbourhood connection & impact:* identifying new potential interpretations of community value UEK could adopt, as well as potential barriers to an open-club philosophy, and the project's role in local developments such as Haven-Stad.

This set-up allowed stakeholder to more deeply discuss the subtopics that best matched their expertise and (envisioned) role within the project. The subgroups, consisting of 4-6 members each, worked with a joint worksheet to collectively formulate ideas and answers to six open-ended questions or discussion statements (see appendix 2). These were formulated based on past experiences within the project team, as well as the stakeholder interviews from this research. After the thematic tables, all participants reconvened in plenary to present their worksheets. Collectively, the group discussed the outcomes of every worksheet briefly; identifying remaining missing elements, reflecting on feasibility, and moving towards shared priorities and a consensus for the overall action plan.

4.4 Data analysis

As collaborative governance research looks into the often-chaotic real-world nature of stakeholder dynamics, the analysis of collected data must structurally disentangle the scoped elements within this environment (Hespo, 2008). The analytical strategy for this research therefore consisted of a thematic coding approach for all studied policy documents, interview transcripts and co-creation session products. Atlas.ti was used to organise and systematically code the collected material. The operationalisation presented in Table 2 served as the initial deductive codebook, through which relevant passages could be identified across the different data sources. Coding was iterative, meaning that codes were continuously reviewed against the collected material and refined where necessary to ensure they adequately captured the insights emerging from the data. However, no substantive adjustments to the codebook were ultimately required, as sufficient and relevant insights were found for all operationalised elements.

The coded quotations were subsequently reviewed within and across the full data collection. Results from different data sources were compared and triangulated to identify where findings converged, complemented one another, or revealed differences in practice, experience or interpretation (Bryman, 2016). Contradictory or divergent insights were retained rather than excluded, allowing the analysis to account for how varying perspectives and experiences may influence the stakeholder environment. In this way, this analytical technique could systematically retrieve, organise and compare relevant insights, through which a grounded understanding could be built on how each collaborative governance element affects the development of community projects within sports facilities.

Validity, trustworthiness & generalisation

The chosen research design, data collection and analytical techniques ensured a strong internal validity for the project-case UEK, as it reflects the real-world situation well through close engagement with the ongoing stakeholder dynamics around Innovation Clubhouse and AVV SDZ. Through the researcher's position within Innovation Clubhouse, the study benefitted from continuous involved perspective to relevant meetings, interactions, and practices. This close involvement strengthened a detailed

and context-sensitive understanding of the pilot-case UEK, to some extent resembling an ethnographic research lens. This ensured a trustworthiness of the findings by allowing insights from interviews and co-creation sessions to be interpreted in light of observed practices and developments over time, rather than relying solely on participants' retrospective accounts.

Nevertheless, the reliability of these insights remained partly dependent on the openness and honesty with which interviewees and co-creation participants shared their experiences and perspectives, as well as the researcher's ability to interpret them critically and impartially. The researcher's close involvement simultaneously created a risk of becoming too closely aligned with particular organisational perspectives or expectations. It therefore required maintaining a reflexive and critically distanced research stance, continuously reflecting on how the researcher's involvement and assumptions may have influenced the research process and interpretations, while actively considering alternative perspectives and questioning initial interpretations. This stance helped to avoid privileging certain outcomes and supported a balanced interpretation of the findings.

Due to the context-specificity of the pilot case UEK, the generalisation of this case study's learnings inherently became somewhat limited. Besides the many possible interpretations of community functions beyond the one envisioned for UEK, Dutch sports facilities differ substantially in terms of size, organisational structure, spatiality, local stakeholder networks, and institutional embedding (Mulier Instituut, 2023; Schep et al., 2024). The insights drawn from the case of UEK are therefore difficult to generate much empirical generalisation with (Bryman, 2016). However, the research does provide an overview of analytically relevant insights that may be transferable to comparable contexts. The overall policy review, several stakeholder interviews and some co-creation discussion topics went beyond the specific context of UEK by examining the development and management of community activities in sports facilities across Amsterdam more broadly. The wider focus of these insights makes them more applicable to stakeholders working on similar ambitions across Amsterdam and even other Dutch contexts.

4.5 Ethics & positionality

As the research involved multiple individually represented stakeholders in a localised environment who shall remain engaged in ongoing collaborative processes during and after the research, some ethical considerations for this research were necessary. To start, participants in interviews and the co-creation session were anonymised and given pseudonyms where preferred. Second, (sensitive) information that could affect working relationships, both on the institutional level and the highly localized operational level, was handled with particular care. Through nuanced descriptions of findings, the omission or generalisation of potentially identifying details, and careful selection and contextualisation of interview quotations, the research sought to prevent participants or organisations from being portrayed in ways that could harm their public image or (future) working relationships.

In terms of researcher positionality, active involvement as both a researcher for Innovation Clubhouse and a project (co-)developer of the pilot UEK creates both advantages and challenges. Besides conducting this research, the researcher's daily tasks within Innovation Clubhouse included reporting on pilot execution, engagement of (local) stakeholders, communication management, and taking meeting minutes. On one hand, this dual position provided close access to the involved stakeholders and their relevant insights for the research, making it possible to occasionally include biographic experiences as data. On the other hand, the researcher's position within Innovation Clubhouse meant that the research was conducted from within the organisational context being studied, rather than from an entirely external perspective. This positioning inevitably shaped the researcher's access, interactions and understanding of the case and data, which required careful consideration when interpreting the collected data (see also previous section).

5. Pilot Uit Eigen Keuken

This chapter presents the findings of the collaborative governance analysis of the Living Lab-pilot *Uit Eigen Keuken* (UEK), developed with(in) AVV SDZ. It presents key insights from analysing the underlying policy and pilot context, stakeholder interviews and co-creation session. The main narrative here, rather than the actionable outcomes of the pilot development, is how the collaborative governance elements have shaped the project and subsequent understanding of (integrative) pathways to develop community activities within sports facilities.

5.1 Project description

The general idea behind Uit Eigen Keuken (UEK), translated as "*from our own kitchen*", was creating a community kitchen in the sports club canteen (see figure 5 below). Here, socially vulnerable or isolated residents – particularly those with a distance to the labour market – could simultaneously develop practical skills under the guidance of a professional chef (Judith). By preparing and selling meals to both club members and local residents, these participants could gain relevant experience and skills, while given a low-threshold opportunity to socially integrate in the local community. In addition, community residents are given the opportunity to connect more with the football club, as both club members and nearby residents could easily buy an affordable meal.

Figure 5: the canteen space of AVV SDZ (source: AVV SDZ, 2024).



This idea originated from a similar project set up years earlier by AVV SDZ; organised independently by the football club yet successful in its small-scale execution. For the Living Lab pilot, Innovation Clubhouse adopted and re-initiated the concept. However, another key project aspect was added: facilitating community participation (*buurtlidmaatschap* in Dutch) so that the project would also provide inclusionary value

for neighbourhood residents, apart from the usual visitors of AVV SDZ. The executing project team consisted of the Living Lab coordinator (Monique L.) and researcher (author) from Innovation Clubhouse, the AVV SDZ project lead (Aziz) and the professional chef (Judith) employed by AVV SDZ.

To simultaneously execute and research this weekly community kitchen, Innovation Clubhouse has pooled and allocated a budget of roughly 65,000 euros to the project, consisting of subsidies from municipal departments Social Services and Haven-Stad, as well as research funds from TU Delft and the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport. It is important to consider here that this means – in comparison to any future community project that is similar in character yet not higher-level financed – that financing for UEK is not as big of a limiting factor as it would likely be in a non-research setting. This influences the results slightly but also allows to look beyond common financial limitation towards other development lessons appear when developing a community activity with(in) a sports facility.

At the time of this research, a prior piloting phase in January-February 2026 already showed some relevant first insights: the community kitchen activities generated interest from many club members, and offered a low-threshold setting for participants in developing practical skills, teamwork and familiarity with Dutch work culture (van Staveren, 2026). At the same time, this phase also exposed several bottlenecks. The project remained strongly dependent on key individuals, while limited resources, practical issues like language barriers, unclear communication and an insufficient organisational structure made continuation unfeasible. This led to a pause in executing the piloting days, in which the focus re-shifted (iteratively) to explore and steer the multi-level (collaborative) governance arrangements needed before the pilot could properly restart. The next four sections will cover the insights obtained during this redevelopment phase.

5.2 System context

This section reviews the contextual conditions which have shaped the development of UEK. It presents key insights to five key governance elements: policy framework, sports facility management, community activity management, neighbourhood profile and network connectedness.

Policy framework
Reviewing the broader policy context in which UEK operates significantly shaped the understanding of the general institutional opportunities as well as roles and ambitions of many stakeholders involved (Emerson et al., 2012). In general, there are no policies in Amsterdam which directly lead to or incentivize any stakeholder to link community activities with(in) sports facilities (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2023). However, several policy documents within the City of Amsterdam do help position both sports facilities and their public function, as well as community activities like UEK, within the administrative status quo of Amsterdam.

As a starting point, sports facilities are recognised as vital neighbourhood amenities through Amsterdam's sports norm, meaning they are publicly administrated to be in relative proximity and accessible for all residents (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2024a). The spatial zoning and planning (together with prescribed public functions) of sports facilities is regulated by the *Strategic Housing Plan – Sports & Physical Activity: 2023-2027* (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2023; Kenniscentrum Sport & Bewegen, 2025). Here, spatial planning departments (like Haven-Stad) become responsible for the integration of sports spaces into the wider spatial fabric of the city. Meanwhile, the department of Sports & Green is responsible for the policymaking and day-to-day support for sports facilities, and therefore plays a central role in how such facilities are enabled and developed long-term. For instance, the 2035-vision for Amsterdam's sports facilities by Sports & Green (2024b) presents four main ambitions:

1. Sufficient and diverse sports facility supply for every resident;
2. Intensified use of sports facilities;
3. Sports facilities which contribute to resolving societal challenges;
4. Sustainable, climate-adaptive and ecologically friendly sports facilities.

These municipal ambitions likely reflect how competing spatial claims in ever-densifying urban environments have pressurized the traditional spatial provision of sports facilities, mainly in terms of their monofunctional use value (Urhahn, 2025). Amsterdam's sport facilities are subsequently no longer institutionally approached only as spaces for sports, but where social and/or environmental objectives may additionally be manifested (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2024c). Ambitions two and three are especially relevant to social (community) functions, including UEK. Both specifically encourage better (spatial) integration between sport facilities and public space, including a reconsideration of physical barriers and strategies to create a more open, accessible and inviting appearance (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2024b). This ambition is dubbed the *open club philosophy*. UEK's objectives directly stemmed from this in the form of neighbourhood participation (*buurtlidmaatschap*).

A specific interpretation of intensified use, also mentioned in the 2035-vision, is to offer more opportunities through sports facilities for population groups to socially (re)integrate and/or discover pathways towards the labour market (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2024c). This form of public value-creation, subsequently adopted into UEK, indicates an overlap in policy domains between Sports & Green and Work, Participation and Income (WPI). The policy framework of WPI is namely shaped by (national) social-domain legislation like the Participation Act, where the department publicly administers programmes facilitating routes to paid labour (Gemeente Amsterdam, n.d.e). If such programmes are materialised with(in) sports facilities, like for UEK, they become settings where both sports and social care functions and institutional involvement would co-exist.

A similar overlap in policy domains was also identified for Sports & Green and Social Services. The document *Amsterdam zoning reference standards for social facilities, green space and play*, issued by Social Services, addresses both public amenities (like schools, libraries, and community centres) and indoor sport facilities as the responsibility of Social Services (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2024a). However, the zoning

standards do not specify any requirements for outdoor sports, which indicates a clear administrative boundary with Sports & Green. Projects like UEK, however, seem to blur this boundary when they introduce community activities, which tend to typically materialise with(in) public amenities like community centres or libraries, to outdoor sports facilities like AVV SDZ.

Sports facility management

Generally, there will be two parties who shape the organisation and management of a sports facility in Amsterdam: a sports club organisation (like AVV SDZ in this case) and the municipal department Sports & Green. The latter facilitates sports functions across the city in various ways: from stimulation strategies of sports participation and physical maintenance funds to external renting-out of sports spaces to public schools (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2024c). It is also important to note here that, like most parcels in Amsterdam, all land upon which sports facilities operate is owned by the City of Amsterdam (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2023). Meanwhile, facility buildings will usually be owned by the sports clubs themselves (including AVV SDZ), resulting in a form of shared ownership (Waardenburg, 2019). As such, responsibilities and decision-making on what functions sports facilities publicly serve are inherently shared between Sports & Green and sports club management.

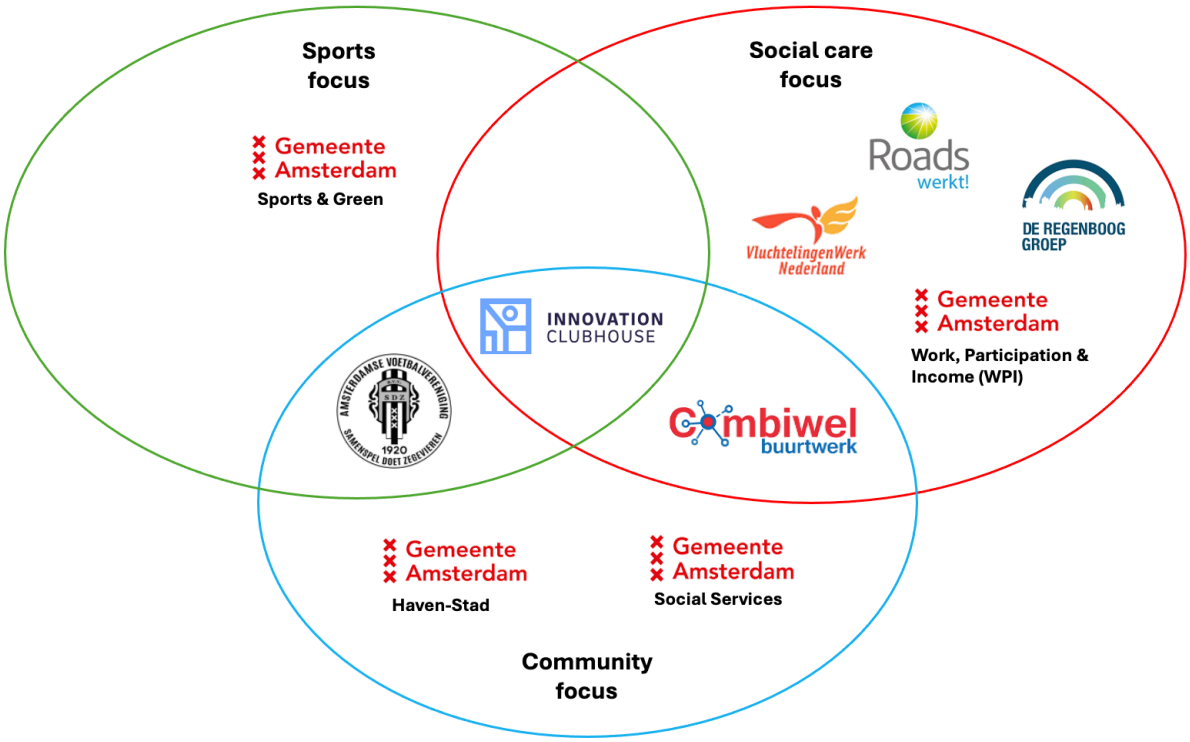
A key characteristic to sports club management and operations relates to its volunteer-based nature. Like for most Dutch sports clubs, AVV SDZ proved heavily dependent on volunteer efforts, making its organisational capacity (including its role within UEK) vulnerable to broader trends of declining volunteer availability (Kenniscentrum Sport & Bewegen, n.d.; Mulier Instituut, 2023). Although the club has experienced increasing pressures, AVV SDZ was described by multiple stakeholders as comparatively well-staffed and organisationally resilient. An important means to achieving such resilience may be the *verenigingswerker* [club employee] scheme in its business model, through which club members can reclaim part of their yearly membership fee (€110) by contributing at least twelve hours of volunteer work. Aziz identified this as an effective resource for UEK too, getting members to assist with numerous project tasks while simultaneously strengthening volunteer engagement for the club in general.

Although this *verenigingswerk* scheme can help provide a well-equipped pool of volunteer labour, the governance structure of volunteer-based organisations can create universal coordination challenges (Enjolras, 2009). For example, responsibilities are distributed across numerous board members and commissions who may not convene as structurally and frequently as in professional roles, making it difficult to maintain a collective oversight on projects such as UEK. Both Aziz and Judith emphasised that successful contribution within the club would depend on clearly assigned roles, with explicit task descriptions, and well-defined arrangements between UEK activities and regular club operations. Volunteers especially cannot be expected to independently identify their contribution without clear instruction and internal coordination (Enjolras, 2009; Nagel et al., 2026). In sum, effective contributions by AVV SDZ to UEK would not merely depend on direct volunteer efforts but also on strong organisational coordination within the sports club.

Network connectedness

For any collaborative project, it is necessary to understand well beforehand how stakeholders are related to one another (Emerson et al., 2012). This concerns all levels of stakeholder relationships; both through horizontal connectedness like Regenboog and VluchtelingenWerk, who work in a similar level within the same sector but for different target groups, and through vertical coordination, such as between AVV SDZ and its higher-level sectoral partner Sports & Green. As visualised in figure 6 below, all stakeholders for UEK were reviewed and positioned across spheres with specific focus on sports, social care and/or community, each with a different form or degree of mutual connectedness.

Figure 6 visualizes a stakeholder mapping for UEK based on each stakeholder's focus on sports, community and/or social care.



This stakeholder network involved a multitude of municipal departments. According to Grethil (Social Services) and Romy (Sports & Green), within the City of Amsterdam there will generally be many different departments and teams working on overlapping goals related to either sports facility management or community spaces/activities, yet rarely both. There is also no effective umbrella structure among these focuses, apart from occasional director meetings between departments, coordinating and aligning these efforts. This made it rather unclear who exactly would be responsible for which aspect of the ambition to integrate community activities within sports facilities. Many efforts to institutionally support this goal have been incidental and/or isolated in their own support channels, thereby often lacking the full proper support to make them successful. As someone who has both worked in both, Grethil reflects on how the sports sector and social sector are so often complementary to each other, yet remain separated islands in professional circles and collaborations. In response, she

expressed her ambition of an integration of all support channels into one collective institutional environment, for which a pilot like UEK may possibly pave the way.

In terms of the social care-focused stakeholders, relevant to the social programme in UEK for kitchen skills development, WPI, Regenboog, VluchtelingenWerk and Roads can all be described as relatively well-connected within the sector but rarely outside it, especially with the sports sector. Only AVV SDZ and Regenboog were familiar with one another before UEK due to their neighbouring locations, where Shirley (Regenboog) had been involved in some small-scale collaborations with AVV SDZ in the past.

CombiWel occupied a potentially important bridging position across the various sectoral focuses displayed in figure 6, since its working method largely revolves around connecting and coordinating local (community) networks. This made it a potentially important boundary-spanning organisation for linking community initiatives and social programmes to other local facilities and organisations, including AVV SDZ. However, despite the close proximity between AVV SDZ and community centre *De Horizon*, run by CombiWel, collaborative relations between the two organisations had thus far been remarkably limited. In fact, Leander (CombiWel) explained that her visits to the sports facility were generally limited to using its free parking facilities for activities elsewhere. Although AVV SDZ technically falls outside the formal jurisdiction of CombiWel's community centre, the limited interaction between these two neighbouring public amenities illustrates a broader disconnect between the sectoral focus groups of community/social care and sports.

Community activity management
Based on the envisioned concept, UEK would both require (for its success) and seek to build a level of connection with the surrounding neighbourhood (*neighbourhood participation*). Also, collaborations with social (care) sector stakeholders for its skills development programme would be favourable. The subsequently approached stakeholders for these project aspects included CombiWel, Regenboog, City of Amsterdam – Work, Participation and Income (WPI). This governance element reviewed how such stakeholders operate in local community activity organisation along with how their practices and ambitions may translate to the development of UEK.

The nearest venue where many community activities take place near AVV SDZ is community centre *De Horizon* in Spaarndammerbuurt. Here, CombiWel (Buurtwerk) provides community initiatives with use of De Horizon's spaces, help in connecting to local networks, and pathways to activity funding. In this supportive role, the ownership and direction of these initiatives always remains with the initiating citizens themselves; Combiwel itself never gets involved in terms of ownership or financing.

Regenboog is a similarly active stakeholder in the area, operating shelter locations and rehabilitation/participation programmes for (formerly) homeless citizens. Since Regenboog co-operates a shelter directly adjacent to AVV SDZ, Shirley is closely familiar with both the club and the local neighbourhood. She foresaw several opportunities for UEK to complement to existing rehabilitation trajectories for Regenboog-clients looking to further develop practical skills and work towards (re-)entering the labour market.

Lastly, the municipal department of WPI can be described as a central coordinator for labour participation and (re)integration programmes across the city. Unlike the previous organisations, WPI operates limited social programmes itself but rather maintains and coordinates a vast network of programmes and development pathways along with a more facilitative role of entities like Regenboog and CombiWel – Buurtteam. Together, this overview of social care organisations (also including non-involved stakeholders like Roads and VluchtelingenWerk) forms a participant pool for UEK, while sector-experts like Shirley and Monique provided necessary insight for the diverse needs of support that the project may have to accommodate.

From a more strategic perspective, the involvement of the City of Amsterdam's Haven-Stad programme introduced a broader vision for the (future) role of AVV SDZ in local activity management. During the co-creation session, Anita (Haven-Stad) described UEK as a potential step towards developing AVV SDZ into a long-term established community space for the future neighbourhood around it as well. Aligning with Davies (2016), the football club and its community function would be valued as pillars building social cohesion and local identity in the ongoing redevelopment of the area, which according to many it already (partly) contributes to. Haven-Stad's involvement in UEK suggests that community spaces like AVV SDZ could already extend their local functionality towards community-building even before future residential neighbourhoods are completed, especially since such neighbourhood elements will often take longer to flourish than the physical neighbourhood itself (Gbadegesin et al., 2021; Misener & Mason, 2006; Sharp & Warner, 2018).

Neighbourhood profile

In order to put the concept of neighbourhood participation (*buurtlidmaatschap)* into practice for UEK, an ongoing understanding of the character and dynamics of the community in and around AVV SDZ was warranted. As Leander (CombiWel) explained, community initiatives should ideally start amidst a good understanding of local demands and resident perspectives, after which relevant organised stakeholders can be approached and involved. While the development of UEK did prioritize an inclusive role for community initiatives and organisations, its understanding of local demands in early phases was rather only coming from within AVV SDZ and higher-level stakeholders than through direct local input. Confirmative to this, multiple interviewees noted that the first execution phase paid insufficient attention to resident involvement and community engagement (van Staveren, 2026). Therefore, reviewing this governance element practically served the project development by looking to better understand the community around AVV SDZ, as well as the football club's position within it.

The closest residential neighbourhoods to AVV SDZ are Spaarndammerbuurt and Houthavens, which interviewees consistently described as having relatively strong communities. Spaarndammerbuurt can be characterized as a historically working-class neighbourhood with a large share of social housing that has slowly gentrified over the past years, resulting in a relatively diverse community nowadays. Houthavens, by contrast, is a much newer residential area consisting largely of households with higher socio-economic status (Gemeente Amsterdam, n.d.a). It is a neighbourhood which frequently gets praised for its human-centred urban design, which actively facilitates

encounters between residents and supports social cohesion (González-González, 2026). Despite their similarities and proximity to one another, Leander (CombiWel) argued that the social character of both neighbourhoods differs in ways that influence their respective demand for community activities. According to her, Spaarndammerbuurt is much more engrained with neighbourhood centres and community activities, whereas Houthavens' residents tend towards more individual lifestyles and subsequently participate less in community activities. At the same time, she argues that community activities can generate value for residents across all socio-economic groups by creating opportunities for social interaction, participation, and mutual support. Therefore, UEK should by no means exclude resident engagement with Houthavens

Within AVV SDZ, stakeholders already recognise a strong foundation for community activities. Romy (Sports & Green) describes AVV SDZ as a highly localized organisation with a clear commitment to fostering a sense of local belonging among its members and visitors. Many involved emphasised the club's diverse membership, representing a broad range of income levels, ethnic backgrounds, and age groups, as one of its major strengths to this. According to Aziz (AVV SDZ), this diversity within the club "*truly mirrors Amsterdam as a city*".

Nevertheless, there are also several identified factors that may have a rather challenging effect on UEK's feasibility. First, when reviewing the direct physical environment of AVV SDZ, the club is relatively isolated from residential neighbourhoods, with no one living within a +/- 800-meter radius of the sports facility. Several interviewees emphasised that this physical distance between AVV SDZ and the nearest residential areas may create a hard-to-overcome barrier to resident engagement. Based on her experiences, Leander sees how most successful community activities are typically situated within only a few minutes' walking distance from residents' homes, easing overall accessibility. Many also described the club's immediate surroundings as an area lacking a warm or inviting atmosphere. Accordingly, Romy (Sports & Green) observed that AVV SDZ therefore has a fundamentally different dynamic with its surrounding community than many other sports clubs, where residential environments directly border the sports facilities. Consequently, this spatial isolation may require additional efforts in outreach, communication, and accessibility to encourage residents to visit UEK activities.

Lastly, the analysis looked into AVV SDZ's physical barriers in relation to the envisioned open club philosophy (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2024c). Although the football club has generally embraced being open to the community, the sports facility is physically enclosed by high fences that indicate strong separation from the surrounding environment (see Figure 7 below). Such physical barriers may raise doubts among non-club members about how accessible and welcoming the facility truly is, even when a community activity is hosted here. Reason for these fences could be undesired free use of football pitches (typical for many outdoor sports facilities), but also in regard to the adjacent homeless shelter. Shirley (Regenboog) described an ongoing problem among user groups of the neighbouring facilities, as AVV SDZ-members regularly reported complaints about feelings of unsafety and nuisance by some shelter visitors.

Figure 7 shows the gated entrance of AVV SDZ (source: own material).



Spatial-temporal adaptability

Already during the pilot preparations, it became clear that AVV SDZ's existing facilities would provide a suitable spatial fit for setting-up a community kitchen. The club's canteen can accommodate approximately 60 visitors and includes a well-equipped kitchen for everyday food preparation. Nevertheless, the previous pilot period of UEK demonstrated that some additional equipment and materials would be necessary to run the activities with a more independent, project-own inventory. During these first few pilot days, Judith would personally supply or borrow much of this inventory, making the project too dependent on personal contributions and goodwill (van Staveren, 2026).

Besides these physical characteristics, the analysis also identified the canteen's broad temporal availability as a main opportunity. Club manager Aziz, Judith, and several others observed that the club building was considerably underutilised prior to the introduction of UEK. On most weekdays before four o'clock, the space was generally quiet, with only occasional maintenance and cleaning activities taking place. Activity within the canteen would gradually increase later in the afternoon and early evening as football activities began. This utility pattern allowed for the canteen and kitchen to be used exclusively for UEK during the morning and early afternoon, providing a setting for Judith and participants to start the social programme in a calmer environment before it would gradually get busier. In this sense, the temporal rhythm of the football club naturally aligns with a desired atmosphere for UEK's team and participants.

Although the spatial-temporal fit of UEK within AVV SDZ has so far generally been regarded as fitting, some expressed concerns about the potential blurring of operational boundaries between UEK and the club's regular canteen activities. Judith, for example, emphasised that project-specific equipment and materials may have to be stored separated from materials used for regular canteen operations to avoid confusion or theft. Also, canteen staff were initially left uninformed on arrangements around the UEK-ordering system for meals and the related sales administration. Several stakeholders noted that operational issues like this, rather than spatial-temporal

limitations, proved to be the primary challenges during the first implementation of UEK (van Staveren, 2026).

This broader understanding of adaptability was also emphasised by Grethil (Social Services), who argued that institutional organisations should view adaptability not merely as the physical fitting-in of new functions to existing buildings, but also as the operational capacity to facilitate these functions effectively. On the subject of supporting space owners accordingly in this, questions remained for UEK's development on strategies and micro-policies (within the sports facility) concerning the open club philosophy. For instance, how should liability (in the event of accidents or damages) be organised when non-members will increasingly access AVV SDZ? And what changes will occur for the traditional canteen staff and users when a new activity is frequently hosted here? What impact will/should these perceptions have on the project development?

5.3 Collaborative drivers

This section examines the interdependencies and motivations that brought the UEK stakeholders together, patterns and dynamics surrounding ownership and leadership in the pilot environment, and the perceived risks and uncertainties among the stakeholders.

Interdependence & shared motivation
Within collaborative governance, interdependence refers to the extent to which stakeholders rely on one another's resources, expertise, networks and organisational capacities to achieve objectives they could not realise independently (Emerson et al., 2012). For UEK, it became clear early on that although stakeholders worked towards overlapping goals, none independently possessed the power, knowledge or resources needed to develop and deliver the pilot. Interdependence thus explains why stakeholder collaborations were necessary, while stakeholders shared and individual motivations help explain why they were willing to engage with the pilot. These two elements proved closely connected: stakeholders may recognise a mutual need to collaborate, but their willingness to do so also depends on whether the project offers value that is meaningful to their own organisation or objectives. The following section therefore considers both the aspects of the pilot project in which the stakeholders were interdependent, and the motivations that led them to become involved in these aspects.

The most fundamental interdependence was how all stakeholders would rely on AVV SDZ as a physical and operational host for UEK. The club provided access to its facilities and largely carried the responsibility for piloting operations, without which the project and underlying Living Lab-research simply would not have taken shape. In this, Aziz (AVV SDZ) also acknowledges that motivations within AVV SDZ itself were rarely uniform. Some (board) members were simply motivated to host the social programme and help those with a distance to the labour, while others focus more on the possibility of creating an affordable weekly dinner for members and community residents. Meanwhile, others may extend these desired outcomes as a strengthening of the club's argument for further (financial) support for its traditional operations or for retaining the club in its current location given possible (re)development plans (Gemeente

Amsterdam, 2024b). Romy (Sports & Green) emphasised how it was favourable that AVV SDZ continued to contribute ideas and play a part that went beyond their traditional role a football club, helping to explore a broader use for their facility. Nevertheless, the club's existing expertise and organisational structure primarily supported the organisation of sports activities, not community kitchens. Hence, AVV SDZ depended on Innovation Clubhouse and contributing departments like Social Services and Haven-Stad for the organisational and financial support needed to develop and pilot UEK. Such municipal stakeholders thereby also depended on one another in realizing the community pilot; their own involvement and investments created a mutual dependence which extended beyond the traditional responsibilities of any single department. Joint involvement enabled these departments to explore a shared opportunity that falls between their individual departmental responsibilities, thereby generating insights that may inform future interdepartmental approaches to community provision and sports facility management.

The main shared motivation among these core stakeholders – Innovation Clubhouse, AVV SDZ, Sports & Green, Social Services and Haven-Stad – concerned both understanding and realizing the untapped potential (public value) of more community-valued functions to AVV SDZ's spaces. Through the Living Lab approach, which focused on building an understanding of how to steer and scale the development of community activities within sports facilities, the pilot's learning and outcomes could serve as a proof of concept. The ambitioned impact was thereby not purely limited to a potential value for just AVV SDZ, but would serve as a learning process that could inform similar added functions to other Dutch sports facilities.

The motivation for UEK as proof of concept also extends to the influence it could have on higher-level decisionmakers. As Romy (Sports & Green) pointed out: there remained a structural shortage of public investment in sports facilities to maintain and further develop them for new functions. A success story of UEK could therefore serve as an exemplary case through which the broader (potential) value of sports facilities is brought to light within higher-level decision-making. Similarly, Grethil (Social Services) describes the reasoning behind the involvement of her department as follows: *"I would find it valuable for the future if this [project] could demonstrate that you do not need separate community centres if you position your sports parks and, with them, your clubhouses in central locations in the community and have them fulfil this integrative function."* This reason also strongly aligns with the involvement of Haven-Stad, in which UEK is seen as a possible starting point of AVV SDZ serving a combined sports-and-community function in the heart of their planned redevelopment (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2024b).

Another key interdependence pattern involved the UEK project team and various social care sector organisations, including Gemeente Amsterdam WPI, Regenboog, Roads and VluchtelingenWerk Nederland. At the start of UEK's development, the core stakeholders identified groups such as refugees and people who had experienced long-term unemployment or homelessness as potential participants for the social programme. For these groups, accessible and informal environments such as a sports canteen could provide suitable opportunities to participate, develop skills and build social

connections. Supporting these residents therefore constituted a shared motivation among the UEK-team and these social care organisations, whose work already revolved on social participation and supporting people facing such challenges. At the same time, realising this ambition made UEK dependent on these organisations. They could help connect the pilot team with residents who might benefit from the programme, while also providing expertise and guidance for participants facing more complex social or personal challenges. Coordination with professionals in these organisations was therefore considered important to provide appropriate support beyond what the UEK team could offer independently.

Besides this social care aspect, local knowledge and community engagement proved to be another important aspect that was lacking within the UEK-team. Involving an organisation like CombiWel, which possesses vast knowledge about needs, networks and dynamics in the local community (complementary to AVV SDZ's own), could help UEK identify whom to reach and how its activities might complement with other community initiatives. Yet, reaching and maintaining relationships with external organisations required active engagement and relationship-building efforts by the UEK-team. After initial efforts of engagement were made with stakeholders like VluchtelingenWerk and Roads, both the pilot-team and these organisations deemed it unfeasible to accomplish collaborations within the (remaining) pilot period.

Besides limited time for relationship-building, this difficulty in engaging with external stakeholders can be partly explained by the asymmetric interdependencies between these organisations and the UEK-team. Stakeholder dependence theory argues that sometimes organisations with shared goals may depend on one another to differing degrees (Ansell et al., 2025). In this case, the UEK-team appeared to depend substantially on external organisations for help in community engagement, local insights and social programme participants, while these organisations experienced much less immediate dependence on the impact UEK would have on their operations. This asymmetry is an interpretation of the relationships observed, rather than hard evidence that these external organisations had no real incentive or overlapping motivation to collaborate with the UEK-team. For instance, stakeholders did see how neighbourhood centres and social organisations already support numerous activities similar to UEK and may face increasing pressure on available space and their own organisational capacity as the area continues to densify. AVV SDZ could therefore turn into a useful additional location and organisation for increasing operations by these stakeholders. In this longer-term scenario, the interdependence would become more reciprocal as local organisations gain something of more direct value from UEK.

Overall, interdependence within the UEK stakeholder environment was for most instances found to be multidirectional, but not necessarily equal. The project relied on the combined facilities, funding, coordination, expertise and networks of its stakeholders, while those stakeholders differ in the benefits they expect and the extent to which the project relates to their core responsibilities. These differences matter because dependence alone does not guarantee commitment: an organisation may control resources that UEK needs without having an equally strong reason to contribute them. Conversely, shared motivations can provide a basis for engagement, but do not

necessarily create equal interdependencies. Stakeholders must see a meaningful reason to participate through a contribution that is (directly) compatible with their own capacities and priorities (Ansell et al., 2025). The extent to which these interests and contributions can be aligned through the collaborative process is explored in the following section.

Ownership & leadership

The governance arrangements around UEK combined several forms of ownership. AVV SDZ, functioning as Living Lab, was the practical owner and host of UEK, organising and facilitating the community kitchen activities. Meanwhile, Innovation Clubhouse was primarily responsible for the research surrounding the pilot and they provided institutional and organisational support to AVV SDZ. Municipal departments Haven-Stad and Social Services contributed financially to the pilot and consequently held influence over the direction and prioritisation of its mission. Ownership was therefore distributed across organisations with substantially different organisational forms, capacities and interests: a volunteer-based sports club, a research organisation, and governmental departments. Consequently, no single organisation carried overall accountability for the project. While distribution of ownership is consistent with the principles of collaborative governance, it may also create an ambiguity when joint responsibility is not accompanied by explicit decision rights and accountability (Ansell & Gash, 2008). This section will explain how this occurred for UEK.

The ownership ambiguity already became strongly noticeable during the first execution phase of UEK (van Staveren, 2026). Although the collaboration between Innovation Clubhouse and AVV SDZ had been formally documented beforehand, practical responsibilities had not been sufficiently translated into instructions and agreements within the pilot-team. Several tasks, including stakeholder and community engagement and organising communication around activities, remained insufficiently assigned. Interviewees described this as a situation in which both AVV SDZ and Innovation Clubhouse were looking towards one another to take control. Aziz (AVV SDZ) felt that too many unresolved issues ultimately came back to him, despite Innovation Clubhouse having initiated the pilot. Judith similarly observed that Aziz became the default contact for resolving an increasing number of practical issues, while simultaneously carrying his regular responsibilities for the football club.

The UEK-case therefore suggests that joint ownership should be prevented from leading to diffuse leadership. Rather, it requires a clearly defined coordinating role within one organisation. This is consistent with collaborative governance literature, which has long identified facilitative leadership as a condition for coordinating stakeholders with varying operating levels, resources and interests (Ansell & Gash, 2008). The piloting experience furthermore indicated that such leadership would need to operate across, rather than within, organisational boundaries. Innovation Clubhouse was able to facilitate the higher-level connections and support needed, but on the operational level pilot executors like Aziz (AVV SDZ) needed an explicit mandate to translate this input into day-to-day decisions in the project environment. The operational leadership role was discussed explicitly during the co-creation session's subgroup of Club & Organisation, where stakeholders pointed towards a more explicit and better enabled

‘driving force’ for the upcoming piloting phase. Crucially, this driving force would also need sufficient operating freedom to efficiently make decisions without requiring approval from higher-level stakeholders.

These same principles applied to AVV SDZ’s internal organisation. Judith identified the club’s micro-politics and bureaucracy as constraints on the UEK-team’s ability to act. Relatively simple decisions, for example, such as introducing a wholesaler ordering system for kitchen ingredients and materials, required approval from both the board and the canteen manager. Existing research on volunteer-based sports organisations shows that strengthening internal management processes, communication and leadership can improve organisational functioning, while structuring leadership and autonomy-supportive practices are particularly relevant to volunteer teams (De Clerck et al., 2024).

In retrospect, the main challenge discovered here does not steer the governance arrangements towards eliminating the form joint ownership in UEK, but rather to make its resulting form of leadership more actionable. A workable arrangement would distinguish responsibilities between ownership, coordination, facilitation and execution, assign each responsibility clearly (co-creation session proved helpful in this), with one overall with the right level of authority and flexibility to oversee the pilot on multiple levels (institutional, stakeholder and executional).

Risks & uncertainties

Several matters of uncertainty emerged in UEK’s development on various levels: from the expected contribution of AVV SDZ and the continuity of some stakeholders’ involvement, to unclear definitions of pilot successes, the availability and suitability of participants, and many practical issues.

A first factor creating uncertainty among stakeholders concerned the volunteer-based organisation of AVV SDZ. Roles filled in by Aziz or others within AVV SDZ could hardly be considered equivalent to professional roles. While there was a contract in place, which would indicate formalization of these roles, this agreement was between AVV SDZ as an organisation. Generally, non-formalised contributions are prone to easily change or disappear, especially when major responsibilities may be allocated to individuals who already carry several other tasks within the club (Nagel et al., 2026). Some non-civil stakeholders therefore expressed doubt whether the club could provide a sufficiently predictable contribution, especially in light of these stakeholders possibly being expected to account for public investments in the pilot. This reasoning does not necessarily showcase a form of mistrust between the stakeholders and AVV SDZ, but rather the expected difficulty of guaranteeing organisational capacity within a largely voluntary structure (Enjolras, 2009).

From an alternative perspective, however, this uncertainty of volunteer-based responsibilities can also be seen as a strength. Monique (WPI) viewed UEK’s relatively informalised setting for a social, due to its partly volunteer-based contributions, as an advantage when comparing it to the formalised municipal pathways to social programmes. These pathways are constrained by more extensive procedures and

eligibility requirements, on top of which they include an inherent power-level difference between programme provider (WPI) and user (participant). Leander (CombiWel) similarly argued that volunteer-based social projects can be far more effective than formalised ones, as long as program volunteers receive the appropriate (public) support, a level of patience and tasks that match their skills and interests.

A second uncertainty relates to the lack if clarity as to under what circumstances the stakeholders would regard the UEK-pilot as a success. Aziz, who became largely responsible of AVV SDZ's functioning in the Living Lab, often questioned how the club would be evaluated in upholding its Living Lab agreement with Innovation Clubhouse. Few measurable performance criteria (KPIs) were included in this agreement and there were no other Living Labs to compare AVV SDZ to, meaning there would always be little indication of whether the club would meet set expectations. This insight can be best described as an accountability gap: when other stakeholders may change or discontinue their involvement in a project without the executing party (AVV SDZ) clearly understanding what expectation was not met (Waardenburg et al., 2025).

A third, more practical uncertainty involved the challenges of maintaining a consistent level of participants and community visitors showing up to the community kitchen. During the first pilot, weekly turnout of both community residents and social-programme participants was highly inconsistent (van Staveren, 2026). The co-creation session would explicitly need to address community engagement and participant recruitment, along with their proper guidance strategies. Lastly, it long remained unclear what insurance and liability arrangements were in place for participants and club visitors, for example when injuries occur or club property would be damaged. Proper documentation of this, like in the form of action plans or joint use agreements, would help clarify such uncertainties (Wang et al., 2024).

5.4 Collaborative dynamics

This subchapter reviews how the UEK stakeholders would define their (willingness towards) contributions, and negotiate these roles and responsibilities amidst the pilot's development towards an overall capacity for joint action. Particular attention is given to the challenges of stakeholder engagement and coordination, and how the role of the co-creation session as a solving means in this.

Willingness to contribute

Naturally, stakeholders looking to engage with UEK could be expected to have certain expectations regarding their own contributions and/or the pilot's outcomes and impact (Emerson et al., 2012). At the onset of UEK, Innovation Clubhouse and AVV SDZ had defined some goals, including an ambitioned number of social programme participants, total meals sold, and new AVV SDZ-visitors from surrounding neighbourhoods. However, both parties also acknowledged that these should not be understood as 'hard' success criteria, but rather as ambitions to work towards. Among all municipal and research stakeholders, the universal goal was that UEK would demonstrate a pioneering ability to get developed and executed through a collaborative approach that creates new public value for both the sports club and local community.

AVV SDZ's club management realistically acknowledged that executing community activities like UEK had and likely always will have a secondary priority on a club board's agenda. As Romy (Sports & Green) argued, the primary responsibility of a sports club is to ensure that its sports activities continue to run well: organising the club's daily training sessions and games, staffing the canteen, maintenance of pitches, etcetera. According to Aziz (AVV SDZ), for many within the club, UEK was often perceived as an additional responsibility rather than a core task. This matter was extensively reflected upon after the first piloting phase, in which (preparations for) UEK-activities would be postponed several times when more pressing matters required the football club's attention. Aziz even noted that these added responsibilities for AVV SDZ could inevitably compete with the operational demands of running the club. Nevertheless, this should not be interpreted as a lack of ambition from the club. According to numerous stakeholders, AVV SDZ does have a long-standing commitment to contributing to broader societal goals and has historically both operated and supported initiatives that extend beyond football itself.

Beyond these higher-level ambitions on the impact of UEK, different project-level factors influenced stakeholder willingness to further engage and contribute concretely. For Regenboog and City of Amsterdam – WPI, their willingness was primarily connected to setting up a collaboration in which they could refer fitting clients/residents to UEK. Both organisations indicated that this would require a clear participants profile and project programme, including learning objectives, a curriculum, and a long-term activity schedule. By establishing this, they would be able to make accurate and effective referrals. Thus, both stakeholders expressed the criteria for the project action plan to include a set-out route for programme participants from intake meetings and planning, towards skill development, certification and coupling to a network of potential future workplaces within the food industry.

All stakeholders – from both the institutional and project level – expressed a collective desire to learn and understand what others were simultaneously expecting and willing to contribute, looking towards creating win-win situations for all parties involved rather than merely pursuing own interests. The co-creation session, substantially set-up to define and facilitate such win-win situations, proved particularly valuable in this regard. As will be further explained in the next section, it provided a setting in which stakeholders were able to develop a collective understanding of one another's motivations for participating and consider how these could be accommodated within the project, before formulating the resulting action plan elements.

Negotiation processes & capacity for joint action

Stakeholder negotiations, along with the formulation of strategies towards joint action, became most apparent during the co-creation session. The session, organised roughly halfway through the pilot period of UEK, provided a setting in which stakeholders could discuss uncertainties, explore joint ambitions and resources, and clarify how the project could be (re)developed accordingly. In post-session evaluations with Innovation Clubhouse and AVV SDZ, the co-creation was described as an opportunity for open dialogue, supported by a format that scoped and directed discussions towards the most urgent topics. Consensus and progression were reached on most pressing

matters, demonstrating the value of co-creation in building a shared understanding and calling contributions to action. This reflects an importance of face-to-face dialogue and deliberation in collaborative governance processes (Ansell & Torfing, 2021; Torfing et al., 2021; Toukola et al., 2023). This sub-section will summarize the discussion topics and dynamics of each thematic table in the co-creation session, reflecting on both negotiation processes and capacity for joint action.

Subgroup Club & Organisation
A main discussion topic in this subgroup concerned the internal organisation behind the UEK pilot and the respective responsibilities of AVV SDZ, City of Amsterdam – Sports & Green, and Innovation Clubhouse. During the co-creation session, Aziz (AVV SDZ) contested the sports club's position and expected role as Living Lab, explaining that its responsibilities in the development of UEK has so far been insufficiently clear. In practice, this had resulted in a considerable reliance on certain individuals within AVV SDZ, without sufficiently accounting for the time and capacity they could realistically contribute. Aziz also highlighted a broader difference in working approaches between the volunteer-based football club and the more professionalised organisations involved in the project. In his view, some stakeholders approached AVV SDZ as though it were a professional company with the capacity to accommodate business-like expectations and broader policy ambitions. As he explained, their approach felt too much like "*doing business with a [professional] company*" rather than working with a volunteer-based civil organisation.

The co-creation session provided an opportunity to revisit these expectations and consider how responsibilities for AVV SDZ could be distributed more effectively and supported by others. One practical solution raised by Romy (Sports & Green) was to establish a commission of active club members rather than relying on a few single individuals to carry all project responsibilities from AVV SDZ's side. Such an arrangement could make participation more manageable within the time constraints of a volunteer-based organisation, although it would still require clear coordination.

Subgroup Participants & Guidance
This subgroup focused primarily on building a working relationship between the UEK-team and the social sector organisations of City of Amsterdam – WPI and Regenboog. Discussions centred on formulating an appropriate participant profile for the social programme, clarifying learning goals and a curriculum, possibilities for programme certification and personal guidance. The UEK-team welcomed the expertise of Monique (WPI) and Shirley (Regenboog), seeking to understand which approaches from existing social care practices would be suitable for UEK. An important point of discussion was how to balance educational and developmental objectives with the broader ambition of facilitating community engagement. Positioning UEK as a *community-based programme offering developmental opportunities*, rather than a formal educational one, helped clarify that its purpose extended beyond acquiring kitchen-related skills or preparation for a specific occupation. Instead, it more so supports the development of general workplace skills, social interaction and wider participation in society. This illustrates how negotiation can involve jointly defining a project's purpose and scope,

combining different forms of professional knowledge to develop a context-sensitive programme (Ansell & Torfing, 2021; Torfing et al., 2021).

The discussion also highlighted the importance of translating this shared understanding into a clearly defined programme and concrete expectations for each partner. For WPI and Regenboog, whose primary contribution would be to refer suitable participants to UEK, confidence in the programme's value needed to be accompanied by clarity about its content, the intended participants and the further support expected of them. Although these organisations were willing to contribute, effective collaboration depended on providing sufficiently clear action points to translate this commitment into practice. Interviewees regarded co-creation as valuable in this respect, as it enabled stakeholders to hear one another's perspectives directly and jointly translate their knowledge and expectations into an action plan. Compared with having one individual collect stakeholder input and formulate the plan independently, this process allowed partners to clarify uncertainties together and develop a shared understanding of how they could contribute.

Finally, the discussion turned towards the importance of preserving UEK's low-threshold, informal and bottom-up character when engaging participants. The relationship between a municipal department (like WPI) and a resident is shaped by an institutional role and an inherent difference in power, which may influence the trust residents place in such organisations. A bottom-up strategy can help create a more accessible setting in which residents are approached as participants in a shared initiative rather than simply as clients referred by an institution. For future iterations of UEK, this suggests that collaboration with WPI and Regenboog should combine clear referral arrangements with a community-oriented approach to engaging and guiding residents. In this way, formal coordination between organisations can support the programme without displacing the informal, inclusive character on which its intended social value partly depends.

Subgroup Neighbourhood Connection & Impact

The *Neighbourhood Connection & Impact* subgroup primarily explored strategies to strengthen the connection between UEK, and thereby AVV SDZ, and the surrounding community, local activities and organisations. Several ideas for and strategies emerged, such as combining the community kitchen with a participation event related to the spatial development of Haven-Stad, making more creative use of local (social) media, and developing themed UEK activities addressing local matters like nuisance around the adjacent homeless shelter or the development of a new nearby refugee centre. Representatives in the subgroup expressed enthusiasm towards such possibilities, seeing them as opportunities to respond to local needs by positioning UEK as a means to connection, involving local organisations/initiatives and strengthening the project's apparent community value.

At the same time, the subgroup carried diverging perspectives on how openly accessible AVV SDZ's facilities should be made during UEK activities. The discussion brought together the experiences of the football club's existing community, represented by canteen manager Elke, and the ambitions of stakeholders such as Haven-Stad,

Sports & Green and Innovation Clubhouse to develop the facility into a more accessible community space. Although both perspectives recognised the community value in UEK, they approached a realization of an open club philosophy from two inherently opposing sides. Anita (Haven-Stad) and Evelien (Sports & Green) emphasised the potential public value of a more open sports facility in the context of the area's redevelopment, whereas Elke defended the established social identity of AVV SDZ and the lived experiences of its traditional users. Her more cautious position towards an open club philosophy reflected concerns among a larger group of members that introducing new user groups and activities could affect the club's existing social character.

Unlike the other two subgroups, this discussion did not result in a definitive consensus or an agreed practical solution. Instead, participants recognised that the implications of different approaches to open accessibility would need to be explored through further piloting and collecting of experiences. This left room for continued learning and adaptation, rather than requiring either perspective to prevail from the session onwards. From a collaborative governance perspective, this illustrates how negotiation does not necessarily require all differences to be resolved in advance; it can also establish a shared willingness to test possible approaches and address competing interests as the project further develops (Emerson et al., 2012).

Following the three thematic tables, a plenary part of the session brought the main findings and proposed directions together. Participants were invited to reflect on the outcomes and confirm whether these remained consistent with their initial reasons for engaging in UEK. The resulting action plan subsequently incorporated the agreements and insights developed during the session (see appendix 3). The overall experience suggests that the format and facilitation of the co-creation session played an important role in shaping the negotiation process of UEK's development. Facilitating discussions around specific themes helped stakeholders focus on relevant issues and unclarities, while the opportunity to engage directly with one another allowed a leap forward to be made. At the same time, the outcomes should be understood in relation to the particular timing and framing of this co-creation session. The meeting took place while the pilot was between execution phases, meaning that stakeholders were reflecting on earlier experiences and considering how the project might continue. Furthermore, the way topics were introduced and translated into discussion questions inevitably influenced which issues received attention.

Overall, co-creation as a means proved useful in the UEK case because it brought stakeholders from different institutional and community backgrounds together to discuss the pilot's organisation, programming and impact, clarifying roles and identifying actionable steps towards execution. This was particularly valuable in a context where stakeholders had different perspectives and responsibilities, and where no single party had sufficient authority or knowledge to develop the initiative independently. Co-creation in this particular collective ambition enabled involved stakeholders to establish a shared basis for continued collaboration and piloting. At the same time, the experience revealed several practical limitations. Only eleven of the sixteen invited stakeholders attended, illustrating a practical difficulty of bringing everyone together at the same moment. Organising the session also required

considerable preparation and coordination, while the discussion itself did not always remain focused on the immediate task of developing concrete action points. Individual interviews, by comparison, often generated more detailed and nuanced insights into stakeholders' perspectives. This suggests that co-creation in this multi-level format was valuable for collective alignment and joint decision-making, but may not necessarily be the most efficient format for gathering detailed input or call stakeholders to action.

5.5 Collaborative actions

This section analyses the (disseminated) actions taken and contributions made by UEK-stakeholders during the pilot period, covering agreed action points, resources, financing, and timeline. The review is primarily guided by the co-creation session on 25 May 2026, which was positioned as the research's focal point for both studying and coordinating project-related actions.

Action points
The co-creation session insights were translated into a (revised) action plan for UEK's next piloting phase which started in September 2026 (see appendix 3 for the full action plan), turning negotiations into concrete responsibilities and tasks. For the *Club & Organisation* aspects to the project, these would include establishing a dedicated AVV SDZ committee to distribute operational tasks alongside club-manager Aziz and kitchen chef Judith, and a more enabling (rather than merely researching) role for Innovation Clubhouse. Innovation Clubhouse – with executive support of AVV SDZ – would become responsible for coordinating the community connection and engagement strategies. The core responsibilities and actions are thereby split through the middle: AVV SDZ essentially held responsibility for UEK-matters within the sports facility, while Innovation Clubhouse concerned itself with stakeholder management and involving the local community.

For the (social) skills programme, the action plan assigns Innovation Clubhouse the task of facilitating social care organisations, including WPI, Regenboog, VluchtelingenWerk and Roads, to collectively refer and support individuals looking to participate in UEK. Judith and/or Aziz will organise and conduct introductory meetings with prospective participants (and supervisors if needed), followed by individual agreements on suitable enrolment, support and learning goals. The programme defines learning objectives spanning basic kitchen techniques, teamwork, communication and familiarity with sports-club culture. Participants, Judith and their possible supervisors will also evaluate progress during and after participation.

Reflecting on the value of this action plan in the piloting phase, it should not be understood as a fixed blueprint for implementation. As Leander (CombiWel) also emphasised, a community-project action plan is a *living document*: some actions may need to change, while others may prove unnecessary as circumstances evolve. The plan provided clarity about responsibilities and immediate next steps at a time of desperate need for that. Yet its eventual value depended on stakeholders continually assessing what would best work in practice, simply ignoring a lot the made agreements. Important to consider here is how none of the plan's content was (or could be made) legally

binding or obligatory for any stakeholders to carry them out. This characterises many grassroots- and volunteer-based collaborations, where contributions uncontrollably depend on goodwill, available time and capacity of those involved rather than on enforceable agreements (Choi & Robertson, 2019).

Resources & financing

In terms of material resources for UEK, little issues or key factors were found. Part of the Living Lab-budget (by Innovation Clubhouse) for AVV SDZ was used to upgrade kitchen equipment within the canteen, which could subsequently be used for both regular canteen activities and UEK. This shows a good example of the win-win situations which stakeholders would pursue during the pilot. One key governance arrangement which proved to be needed was clear distinguishment between materials belonging to AVV SDZ's usual operations and those reserved specifically for UEK. During pilot days, it became at-times difficult to establish which kitchen materials were shared and which were purchased specifically for the project. Following consensus between canteen manager Elke and the UEK-team during the co-creation session, materials acquired for UEK would remain identifiable as project-specific resources rather than becoming indistinguishable from the club's existing supplies. Such a distinction helped clarify responsibilities for purchasing, storage, maintenance and replenishment, while reducing the concern by some of the canteen staff that UEK would place unanticipated demands on the club's regular resources.

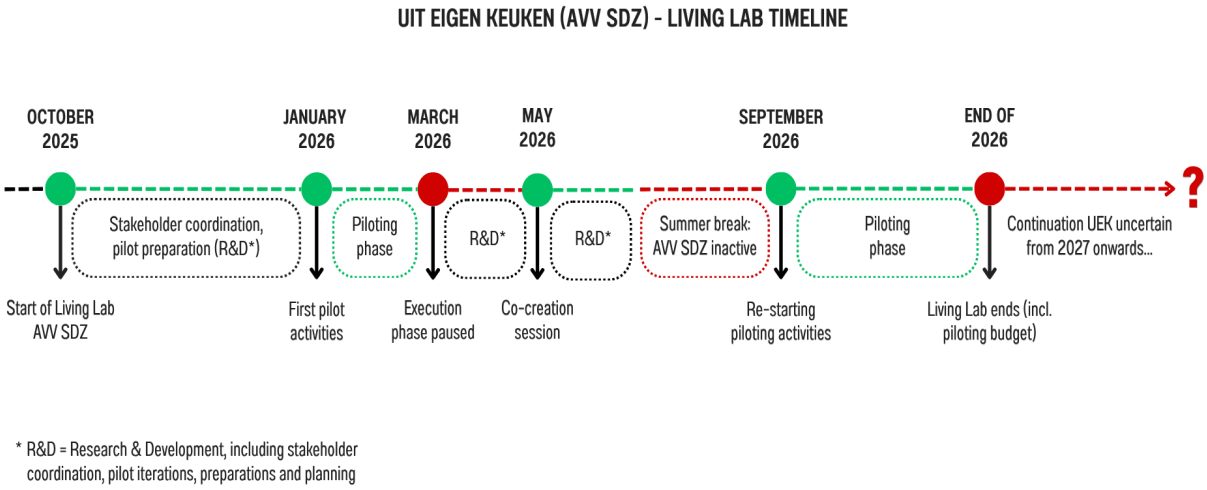
Unfortunately, reviewing UEK's financial model has led to no clear understanding of what it implies for future efforts to integrate new community functions. Since the project largely relied on research subsidies and a dedicated piloting budget created by Innovation Clubhouse, it differs from 'normal' circumstances of a new function expected to operate without such financing. Consequently, the project's current financial model offers limited analytical insights into how UEK and similar activities could be structurally financed.

Timeline

Reviewing the full (prospective) timeline of UEK shows noticeable delays, an unexpectedly long phase for stakeholder coordination and preparation, and uncertainty in continuity of the community kitchen after the pilot ends. Visualized in figure 8 below, UEK's development began in October 2025 with an ambition of piloting the community kitchen as soon and frequently as possible. Frequent pilots and iterations were desired to allow the UEK-team to test, evaluate and refine the concept and Living Lab research (see iterative Living Lab cycle in figure 1, p. 12). In practice, however, UEK remained a concept for much of the first half of 2026. Only three pilot days took place before the summer break, which eventually required the team to pilot a simplified version of the community kitchen after September 2026 (without the social programme for skills development). This meant that the project's practical execution had progressed far more slowly than initially anticipated by most stakeholders, mainly due to a need to set-up organisational capacity with(in) AVV SDZ and engagement of external organisations like Regenboog, WPI and CombiWel. The delay in piloting resulted in reduced time available for testing and iterating executional aspects to UEK within the funded pilot period (until the end 2026). Nevertheless, this extensive pre-execution phase did

showcase many pressing matters that hinder stakeholders to integrate new community functions within sports facilities, mainly in the scope of unfitting governance arrangements which have been presented in this chapter.

Figure 8 presents the UEK timeline of the full Living Lab period, including the anticipated continuation of activities beyond this period.



More in-depth reasons for this slowed progression of the pilot were identified as the at-times low availability and senses of urgency among the UEK-team members. The absence of a strong external pressure for piloting progression, which can even be considered somewhat atypical to Living Labs according to Tercanli et al. (2024), provided plenty room to explore the concept and accommodate different perspectives, but it may have simultaneously slowed progress when immediate responsibilities and the next steps were not sufficiently clear. This illustrates a tension between allowing time for collaborative development and maintaining momentum towards implementation (Ansell et al., 2024; Torfing et al., 2021).

The timing of the co-creation session showcases another governance aspect in the delayed timeline. Some stakeholders felt that it should have taken place much earlier, allowing the project's key questions to be discussed and negotiated sooner. In practice, bringing the relevant stakeholders together at an earlier stage simply had not been feasible in light of the necessary initial engagement efforts it took to bring them all together. This delaying factor (again) highlights the importance of planning stakeholder coordination and co-creation as integral parts of the project timeline.

Furthermore, the timeline of UEK must be considered in relation to AVV SDZ's own periodic rhythm. The level of core activities at the facility fluctuates throughout the football season, for example with the months-long summer and winter breaks typical to Dutch outdoor sports. It can be argued that such periods of little activity provide opportunities for other community activities that do not co-depend on the presence of regular club members. However, for UEK, hosting a community kitchen when the club would be largely inactive would likely limit clientele and was therefore deemed as undesirable.

The UEK timeline also showcases a key limitation to its financial model. Since the execution of UEK fully depended on its allocated research budget by Innovation Clubhouse, its operational period effectively tied into the duration of the Living Lab-pilot. Hence, the continuation of UEK afterwards remained highly uncertain. If AVV SDZ would realistically look to continue operating the community kitchen, it would require external financing from a new source. For this, Aziz explored several potential funding options through municipal subsidies. These included the *Evenementenfonds* (events fund)*, Buurtbudgetten* (Neighbourhood budgets*)* and *Subsidie Maatschappelijke Initiatieven* (social initiatives subsidy) (Gemeente Amsterdam, n.d). Such new financial sources may provide a window of opportunity to sustain the project, but will likely also raise similar risks which already have become clear in this analysis. Namely, the long-term stability and reliability of financing a community project through subsidy schemes, accordingly to Leander (CombiWel), will be constricted by fixed subsidy timeframes and thereby heavily influenced by departmental priorities, underfunding and politics.

5.6 Key takeaways

The analysis of governance elements influential to the development of UEK in this chapter has resulted in ten main takeaways. Rather than a verdict on UEK alone, these takeaways indicate what future stakeholder efforts to integrate new community functions into sports facilities may have to take into consideration.

- **UEK reaffirms how an array of possible sports facility-based win-win situations can be explored beyond the sports domain.** Involvement of parties with sectoral focuses on community (Socal Services, CombiWel, Haven-Stad) and/or social care (WPI, Regenboog, Roads, VluchtelingenWerk) has produced a fruitful example of how sports facilities can be used and valued for more than their traditional functions.
- **Spatial-temporal availability of a sports facility space does not automatically translate into an operationally fitting additional function.** AVV SDZ's canteen offered a well-equipped space and temporal fit for hosting UEK. However, the pilot exposed practical difficulties concerning project-specific equipment, alignment with canteen staff, as well as uncertainty about liability when non-members accessed the facility. Such insights show that the potential for multifunctional use depends not only on absolute spatial-temporal availability, but also on how added functions can be organised alongside the club's existing operations.
- **The physical accessibility of a sports facility influences its potential to engage with the surrounding neighbourhood.** AVV SDZ, like many other sports facilities, is not located as centrally in local neighbourhoods when compared to spaces where community kitchens and similar activities would typically be organised. This physical distance, along with indicative barriers like high fencing showcasing separative access between a sports facility and the targeted community are key barriers to consider.
- **Even when involved in overlapping broader ambitions, stakeholders may fundamentally differ in their respective levels of interdependence and**

motivations. UEK demonstrated how stakeholders with overlapping objectives differed in their immediate interests and dependence on the project. In particular, the project team relied heavily on external social organisations for participant recruitment and community engagement, while these organisations had less immediate dependence on UEK. Aligning motivations and securing contributions consequently required substantial coordination.

- **Shared ownership without clear coordination leads to diffuse leadership and accountability gaps, leading to potential incapacity for joint action.** Although AVV SDZ and Innovation Clubhouse both played central roles in UEK, the division of responsibilities between them was not always clearly defined. This created uncertainty about who was responsible for coordinating the project, following up on agreed actions and addressing practical issues. The pilot thereby highlights the importance of clear agreements on leadership and accountability, especially for a future scenario where an external community organisation (instead of Innovation Clubhouse) seeks to host activities within a sports club. Both parties need to establish who takes the lead, which responsibilities each assumes and how their contributions are coordinated.
- **Volunteer-based sports clubs have limited capacity to absorb additional organisational responsibilities.** UEK competed with AVV SDZ's existing operational priorities and depended heavily on a few individuals, thereby often remaining an additional responsibility for the club rather than one it could embrace. The substantial coordinating contribution of Innovation Clubhouse demonstrated the importance of external organisational support and realistic expectations of what volunteer-based clubs can deliver. Institutional support and perspective of the sports club's capacities are key; the open-ended involvement of the volunteers at the club (informalised) is a major point of uncertainty for more professional stakeholders, yet can be overcome if managed correctly by supporting stakeholders.
- **Co-creation supports shared understanding and coordination, but requires sufficient time to translate discussion into action.** The UEK co-creation session helped stakeholders discuss differing expectations, clarify contributions and formulate an action plan. However, the lengthy preparation and coordination process left limited time for practical experimentation. Moreover, the action plan remained an evolving, non-binding document, and some agreed actions were not implemented. Co-creation therefore needs to balance stakeholder alignment with implementation momentum, while ensuring that responsibilities and follow-up actions are clearly established.
- **Institutional resource allocation to towards sports facilities in this ambition remains uncharted territory**. The resources which were allocated to UEK by Social Services and Haven-Stad showcased some possible similarities to a real-world, non-research setting in which the function would have been added to AVV SDZ. However, if you take away Innovation Clubhouse, these resources likely would not have reached AVV SDZ at all, showcasing that institutional navigation for a lot of sports clubs will be a major hurdle if they are to be the driving force behind setting up these activities instead of Innovation Clubhouse.

Refocusing on these major insights now leads the analysis towards building a deepening analysis of the broader mission: how the ambition of integrating new community functions with(in) sports facilities may materialise without the pilot-based support that guided UEK. This deepening analysis, along with new practice-based examples and stakeholders, which will be presented in the next chapter.

6. Practice-based lessons and implications

Analysis of the governance elements in *Uit Eigen Keuken* (UEK) has so far provided several valuable insights to what arrangements enable or constrain the complex, multi-stakeholder and multi-level ambition to integrate community functions within sports facilities. Yet, several key questions still remain after this case study, for instance whether integrating new community functions like UEK into sports facilities would be truly transferable, scalable, and systemically sustainable beyond a Living Lab format. To fully answer these questions, the founders of three additional organisations related to this mission were interviewed: Carlijn (Skill School), Anita (MidWest) and Mare (Use/Space).

6.1 Organisation descriptions

This section will provide a brief overview of the three extra organisations, and their respective interviews, which were included in the analysis. It presents relevant background information, objectives and practices of each organisation along with the reasoning for its analytical value in answering the research question.

Skill School
Skill School was explored by Innovation Clubhouse as another potential Living Lab-pilot to better understand the dynamics behind linking social organisations with(in) sports facilities. This skills-development organisation looked to expand its operations into Amsterdam's community spaces, favouring sports facilities in particular. In the interview, founder Carlijn explained how Skill School focuses on operating personal development programmes overlapping education, employment and social care. Its programme aims to help adolescents explore their interests, become more socially engaged and develop useful (career) skills. Examples include music classes, sewing, cooking, food service, carpentry and artistic crafts.

Interestingly, Skill School was not just simply looking for space in their motivation towards working with(in) a sports facility. Rather, the social programme valued the compatibility between its activities and the low-threshold social environment of sports facilities. As similarly argued by Super et al. (2018), sports (facilities) can offer unique social settings in which one engages with others and develop skills outside conventional education or skills development settings. For Carlijn, seeking to integrate non-sports skills and developmental aspects within this favourable environment thus became a favourable strategy. Although Skill School had good connections with AVV SDZ and had piloted some activities at another football club in Amsterdam, an intended full sports facility-based pilot through Innovation Clubhouse has not materialised. Despite encountering challenges in building collaborations, Carlijn and Skill School remain open and optimistic towards future joint ventures with sports facilities.

Use/Space
Use/Space operates as a private matchmaking and service organisation in Amsterdam that turns underutilised spaces (mainly office buildings) available to social programmes

and community initiatives. It employs a proven working method by gaining vast knowledge about the primary use of real estate and its underlying stakeholder network, assessing the spatial-temporal adaptability and opportunities per building, and facilitating a fitting additional use for social organisations and initiatives. Exemplary cases of this are office spaces lending access to music groups (see figure 10 below), language courses, theatre schools, and neighbourhood panels (Santema, 2023). The organisation deliberately focuses on office buildings because of a recent structural mismatch between available spaces and their 'traditional' demand. Mare described commercial real estate as a sector which experienced vast changes in (future) use and market value during and after the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent growth of remote working and home officing (Hou et al., 2021). This transition kickstarted an opportunity to activate otherwise underutilized space for social purposes.

To this end, Use/Space's operations have originated in a (market) value gap which can be compared to the underutilisation patterns in sports facilities that Innovation Clubhouse and related stakeholders seek to exploit. Concerning Use/Space's relation to this research topic, it showcases how an established matchmaking model can offer insights into the organisational and operational arrangements needed to link underutilised sports facilities with additional community uses.

Figure 10 shows an example of Use/Space's matchmaking in the form of an organised orchestra event hosted in the lobby of an office building (source: Use/Space, n.d.).



MidWest

To gain a better understanding of the role of civil, grassroots initiative-taking in developing community spaces, and what this may imply for role of sports facilities in this ambition, the analysis turned to a case where civil empowerment, rather than an institutional driving force, has shaped the success of developing a community space: MidWest. Operating from a repurposed sports hall in Amsterdam-West (see Figure 11 below), MidWest has developed into a "social enterprise" community centre through pure bottom-up (volunteering) efforts and civil funding/subsidies, rather than mainly

relying on the public financing schemes that support many other community centres and programmes (e.g. CombiWel or Regenboog). The case offers an alternative lens to this research on how community activities in sports facilities can be initiated and sustained.

MidWest founder Anita stressed the idea that developing a community space should always start and end through a major role for local initiatives (bottom-up) rather than a higher-level institutional ambition (top-down). Following neighbourhood unrest in 2013, Anita and other residents started organizing themselves to strengthen the local community and support neighbourhood businesses. This initiative contributed to the development of MidWest as a community-run space where people with different talents, resources, and ideas would come together. Anita thereby highlights key criteria for the community-building in sports facilities; to always build on existing community concerns, networks, and motivation.

Figure 11 shows the re-functioned cafe space of MidWest in a school gym (source: MidWest, n.d.).



6.2 Operational integration & resource pooling

Through the remaining question of whether sports clubs can accommodate additional community activities into their facilities, a key consideration concerns how closely these activities should be integrated into the existing operations of sports clubs. While closer organisational integration may create opportunities for sharing resources and responsibilities, like in the case of UEK, it also introduces additional demands on both parties. The experiences of Skill School illustrate the other side to this apparent trade-off well. In its previous pilot within a sports facility, Skill School operated independently of the club's management and daily operations. The sports club simply provided access to its grounds without becoming involved in the social programme itself. Carlijn (Skill School) appreciated the simplicity and operational independence of this arrangement, which she described as a *shop-in-shop* collaboration. On the other hand, she also

recognised potential untapped value in a more integrated collaboration where, similar to UEK, community activities would be more closely connected to the traditional activities of the sports facility, with some (joint) responsibilities also being taken up by a sports club.

The main potential benefit of such integration lies in opportunities for mutual cooperation and resource pooling. Where activities overlap or complement one another, organisations could share personnel, facilities or other resources, creating joint benefits without requiring either party to independently bear the full costs of the collaboration. Ideally, this would allow community spaces and resources to be used more efficiently while enabling the respective activities of both organisations to complement one another (Gbadegesin et al., 2021). However, Skill School's experience also suggests that the organisations themselves may sometimes benefit from remaining operationally separate. Making use of a sports facility does not necessarily require integrating an external initiative into the club's organisational structure. The appropriate degree of integration therefore depends on the objectives of the collaboration, the resources available and the responsibilities each party is willing and able to assume.

A further complication is that resource pooling becomes difficult when both collaborating organisations have limited resources to begin with. As Mare (Use/Space) explained, his organisation deliberately focuses on office buildings rather than spaces provided by civil organisations. This is partly because commercial property owners generally have greater financial capacity to pay for Use/Space's matchmaking and coordination services. In collaborations between two civil organisations, such as a sports club and a community initiative, neither party may have sufficient financial, human or material resources to facilitate the additional activities or coordinate their integration. This creates a practical limitation to the potential benefits of resource pooling: even when opportunities for mutual support exist, both parties may lack the capacity to realise them. For sports clubs specifically, Carlijn (Skill School) similarly identified few immediate opportunities for the two civil organisations to provide substantial resourceful support to one another. The persistent challenge of financing community initiatives therefore remains a constraint on the feasibility of resource pooling, particularly when these initiatives depend on collaboration between organisations that already operate with limited resources.

These experiences raise a further question: if neither organisation has sufficient capacity to independently facilitate their (integrative) collaboration, who can take responsibility for bringing them together and coordinating the practical arrangements? The following section explores this question through the role of the matchmaker, drawing on the experiences of Use/Space and its established approach to facilitating shared use of space.

6.3 The role of matchmaker

As described in the previous section, organisational integration of civil organisations with(in) sports facilities holds trade-offs between potential benefits of operational integration and resource pooling, and the additional demands placed on already limited organisational capacities among the two parties. An overall (external) coordinator could

help such collaborating civil parties navigate institutional (support) networks, align expectations and clarify responsibilities through a co-creative approach (Torfing et al., 2021). Following both cases of UEK and Skill School, it has become clear that the integration of community activities (by civil organisations) within sports facilities requires some degree of these external coordinative efforts.

As Provan & Kenis (2007) argue, network governance is an important consideration in multi-stakeholder collaborations, making organisations that manage stakeholder networks valuable actors to involve. Besides Innovation Clubhouse's own efforts in fulfilling this role in the sports sector, there are two other existing organisations in Amsterdam who coordinate a linking network between civil/social organisations and different types of underutilized spaces: *Stadsloods* – a programme within City of Amsterdam – and *Use/Space*. While Stadsloods mainly concerns itself with temporary uses of vacant city-owned buildings, Use/Space's practice in maximizing the utility of in-use buildings/spaces through integrating secondary (community) use is more closely aligned with the focus on this research.

Use/Space's coordinative role in the governance of creating spatial-temporal matches extends beyond simply linking an office space supplier and social organisation/initiative with one another. As Mare (Use/Space) explained, its service model combines network governance and matchmaking with the operational coordination required to make shared use function in practice. This includes facilitating in access management, (co-)hosting, matters of insurance, and setting up mutual agreements. In Use/Space's model, the property owner (often a large commercial real estate firm with long-term ownership over office spaces) will usually be easily able to finance this service by Use/Space. By contrast, civil sports clubs already endure limited and insecure resources for their non-collaborative operations (KNVB, 2026; Schep et al., 2024). Based on insights from UEK, sports clubs as the property owners in this service model would be very unlikely to either be their own matchmaker or be able to outsource this to an organisation like Use/Space. Mare (Use/Space) therefore questioned whether matchmaking efforts to this particular sort of underutilized space would economically and operationally viable.

Consequently, Mare (Use/Space) suggested an alternative approach to tackling the underutilisation of sports facilities. This would first require distinguishing between non-commercial and commercial secondary uses, as only the latter is considered viable to support a financially sustainable shared-use model here. For example, commercial organisations could rent sports facilities at below-market rates for meetings or activities, contributing financially to their maintenance and operations. This shifts the question from merely *how sports facilities can provide more community value* to also considering *how additional uses can strengthen their organisational and financial capacity*. As Mare rightfully pointed out, sports clubs already provide wider public and social value through their core functions, often while operating with limited financial and organisational margins (Kenniscentrum Sport & Bewegen, n.d.; Waardenburg, 2019). Adding further community responsibilities may therefore place additional pressure on clubs that already struggle to sustain their primary activities. Commercial

secondary uses, by contrast, could generate income that helps maintain these existing public functions.
This alternative approach raises a distinction between the *means* of pursuing public value (multifunctional use) and the *end* itself (increasing the public value of sports facilities). Innovation Clubhouse and this research have so far focused primarily on introducing local community activities into underutilised sports spaces, treating their social use as a means of strengthening the facility's public value. However, as Mare's critique suggests, commercial activities may also contribute to this objective if their incoming resources support the facility's operations and long-term viability. The distinction is therefore not between commercial and community-oriented activities as inherently more or less valuable, but rather how each contributes to the broader objective of future-proofing sports facilities.

6.4 Institutional support & transdepartmental collaboration

Since the overall ambition of such integrative use of sports facilities is also a public one, municipal department could be expected to help civil organisations and sports clubs, both generally lacking resources as described in previous section, to link and facilitate joint use of sports facilities (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2024c). It is however less clear which departments should contribute in this, and to what extent. According to Carlijn (Skill School), civil organisations like hers tend to operate in an *institutional support gap*: their activities contribute public value to several public domains, but public responsibilities and financial support are dispersed across different sectors and governmental departments. UEK encountered the same gap, as its social (care), sports and community-development aspects overlapped multiple institutional domains. For both cases, the cross-sectoral nature of the initiative creates a need for collaboration between departments and organisations that may have different agendas and priorities.

Existing municipal support
One key aspect likely to require such institutional resources (although not prevalent for UEK or Skill School) are physical (design) modifications to existing buildings and spaces to adapt towards new functions. Various measures to increase adaptability towards non-sports functions can be taken, for example with additional storage capacity, soundproofing of spaces, room dividers, and, where appropriate, separate entrances for different user groups (Hudec & Rollová, 2016; NOC*NSF, n.d.). Romy (Sports & Green) explains that her department already regularly advises sports clubs on such interventions that can facilitate multifunctional use. In terms of such modifications to allow for new functions in sports facilities, Sports & Green already provides some financial aid. One of their subsidies, commonly referred to as the *1/3 subsidy*, supports outdoor sports clubs in improving, expanding, and making their accommodation more sustainable, including physical adaptations that facilitate additional functions within club buildings (Gemeente Amsterdam, n.d.b). If approved, Sports & Green contributes up to a third of the investment costs. However, the scheme does not cover movable materials and remains a somewhat unreliable funding source according to Romy (Sports & Green), as applications are only accepted until the annual subsidy budget has been exhausted. Also, more pressing issues for sports club in their core functions can be expected to get requested and sooner to be accepted than for an additional function.

For Amsterdam, intensified use (including introduced community functions) has already resulted in the introduction of *sportparkregisseurs* (sports facility directors) by Sports & Green in the cases of three large sports facilities. These directors act as facility hosts and coordinate diverse functions and user groups to ensure that facilities are used optimally. Although not fully integrated in the scope of this research, the link to their potential role in this matter is clear: if the sports sector will prioritize intensified use and community value of sports facilities more in the future,

Transdepartmental collaboration
Reviewing the current organisation within the City of Amsterdam suggests that municipal departments do not yet have an effective, integrated capacity to systematically support the development of community activities within sports facilities. Organisationally, the City of Amsterdam has a departmental cluster, Social, in which several departments are represented, including Social Services, Education, Youth, Health, and Sports & Green. According to Romy, however, collaboration between these departments currently takes place primarily at a strategic level, through meetings between departmental leaders, rather than through more operational cooperation. A more integrated approach could help establish a stronger support structure for sports facilities hosting community activities, particularly because no single department can be expected to bear full responsibility for their development. Nevertheless, as Grethil's account illustrates, departmental boundaries continue to shape how responsibilities are understood, with her department still viewing Sports & Green as the primary department responsible for activities taking place within sports facilities.

This raises a remaining question of whether municipal departments are effectively able to move beyond their core responsibilities to pursue a shared public objective. Although several departments clearly benefit from the public value outcomes generated by the integrated functions, none may yet have a sufficient incentive to take ownership of the process. The result is a collective-action problem in which the ambition falls between various departmental responsibilities, even though its realisation requires their combined expertise and resources. Romy's (Sports & Green) reflection captures this tension well: *"Then it can really come down to the fundamental question for a municipality: what are you responsible for, and what are you not responsible for? And how far do you go in certain situations? We already do a great deal in the field of sport, but there are also limits. What you really want is for other departments to recognise that as well."* Her account illustrates that the challenge is not necessarily an absence of relevant expertise or willingness, but the difficulty of establishing shared responsibility for an ambition that extends beyond the remit of any single department.

For community project developers and sports clubs, these overlapping institutional boundaries create a practical challenge of navigating institutional support. When a community project in a sports facility would require permits, financing, resources or expertise, it simply may not be clear which department should be contacted, or which department should take responsibility for coordinating this support. As UEK has illustrated, community activities within sports facilities occupy a grey space between policy domains, making institutional navigation a vital task in project development. Rather than relying on individual project developers to navigate these structures

independently each time, more integrated municipal collaboration (e.g. with a centralised support desk for these sort of projects) could provide a clearer route through which projects access the support they need.

As Carlijn's experience with Skill School suggested before, establishing such collaboration may be particularly challenging in a large municipal organisation such as Amsterdam. Compared with smaller municipalities, where fewer organisational layers and closer working relationships may facilitate direct cooperation, Amsterdam's extensive institutional network of departments and personnel can make it more difficult to establish the close, operational collaboration observed in UEK. A key next stap in this ambition is thus to create structures through which respective expertise, resources, and responsibilities can be brought together around a shared objective. This would help shift the development of community activities within sports facilities from a project-by-project effort, dependent on individual relationships and initiative, towards a more systematic form of institutional support.

On multiple stakeholder levels, both Skill School and the pilot of UEK depended on collaboration with various organisations to deliver (pilot) operations and continue further development and scaling. For both cases, fragmentation within such a stakeholder network became a substantial task to coordinate. In this, Carlijn (Skill School) noted a stark difference between stakeholder engagement and coordination in Amsterdam versus in smaller-scaled contexts. In the latter, stakeholder networks are generally much more limited in size, often leading to a more organic form of engagement and coordination. For extensive stakeholder networks, like in Amsterdam, Innovation Clubhouse could help unfamiliar organisations such as Skill School navigate the city's extensive institutional network and establish relationships.

However, there is a need to balance the benefits of an institutional broader support structure against the additional complexity it creates. Each additional stakeholder will bring in own interests, responsibilities and ways of working, increasing the effort required to coordinate the collaboration (Ansell et al., 2025). For example, Skill School experiences involvement of public departments and a dependence on their subsidies as a factor that can significantly slow project development. Although public-sector support can provide key assets, securing and coordinating this support may introduce additional procedural requirements and extend decision-making timelines. This creates a trade-off between the financial opportunities offered by institutional stakeholders and the time needed to access them. The challenge, similar to the one facing UEK, is therefore to establish a stakeholder network broad enough to provide the necessary support, while retaining a manageable operational core consisting of the initiative itself, the sports facility and an actor responsible for coordinating the collaboration.

6.5 Professionalisation versus civil empowerment

The research has shown how the limited organisational capacity of sports clubs currently makes their role in integrating and sustaining additional community functions within sports facilities largely unfeasible. This raises the question whether volunteer-based sports clubs should be professionalized and/or empowered to better hold such a role, and to what extent.

Professionalisation of sports clubs
According to Romy (Sports & Green), professionalisation of sports clubs is a growing item on the municipal agenda. The department already supports it through subsidy schemes that help clubs appoint a (paid) club manager and process guidance on organisational development for certain social challenges to sports functions (Gemeente Amsterdam, n.d.c). Such measures demonstrate that the municipality recognises the importance of strengthening the organisational capacity of sports clubs. However, financially supporting a sports club's organisational capacity does not necessarily mean that it will also have the expertise, time, or mandate to integrate new cross-domain (community) functions. Developing such community functions requires additional capabilities including identifying external funding opportunities, building relationships with potential funders, demonstrating social impact, and coordinating the resources needed to maintain activities beyond the pilot phase. These responsibilities may fall outside the usual profile of a sports club manager, whose primary role is to ensure sports-specific operations. For external parties looking to co-develop community projects, like Innovation Clubhouse, this still creates a dependency on organisational capacities that may not be present at every facility. It also raises the question of whether each club should be expected to develop these capabilities internally, or whether dedicated support should be provided through the wider institutional framework.

Moreover, professionalisation could create tensions within sports clubs that continue to mainly rely on volunteers. As Nagel et al. (2026) argued, professionalisation can help clubs manage their activities, but it can also generate tensions around the division of responsibilities, volunteer motivation, and the expectations placed on those involved. In the context of community activities at sports facilities, this raises the question of whether professionalisation should mean expecting clubs to take on increasingly complex public responsibilities, or whether the institutional framework around them should provide the necessary support. Instead of steering towards policymaking that incentives sports clubs to internally develop the capabilities to coordinate community projects, secure funding, and manage cross-sector partnerships, these responsibilities could be shared with dedicated project developers and public institutions. The challenge, therefore, is not simply to professionalise sports clubs, but to ensure that the pursuit of broader public value does not create additional organisational burdens that undermine the capacity and voluntary commitment on which these clubs depend.

Civil empowerment
As an alternative perspective towards strengthening the organisational capacity of sports clubs in the integration of community functions, the case of MidWest points towards a more independent path for sports clubs and their local communities: one centred around civil empowerment. In line with the academic understanding by Mens et al. (2025), this case example of civil, bottom-up initiative in the development of a community space steers the understanding of governance arrangements in (joint) ownership and leadership towards a larger degree of civil responsibility.

While higher-level stakeholders like Innovation Clubhouse and City of Amsterdam have predominantly taken on most early initiative in broader function thus far, especially in

this research, sports clubs and civil organisations will perhaps benefit the most from it. For instance, as UEK has somewhat demonstrated, the value of what an integrated new function can bring about within a sports club's own business model can already be seen as a reason for such organisations to take more initiative in realizing it. Grethil (Social Services) explained this well: *"When the clubhouse is also rented out for other functions, this can be financially very beneficial for a club, enabling it to do more. Step by step, this could generate income that can now be redirected to benefit the club's operations."* Such income can be reinvested into the club, allowing social and financial value to reinforce one another and resources to remain within the community.

Although low in resources, civil parties and residents can therefore be encouraged more to take a degree of responsibility alongside higher-level stakeholders. However, as Choi & Robertson (2019) point out, a sustainable co-creation of public value depends on fairly aligning mutual commitment and respective resources. Part of the responsibilities cannot simply be transferred to local communities without providing a means to fulfil it. As MidWest and UEK both illustrate, bottom-up initiative will depend on key committed individuals, strong local networks, and an overall capacity to turn ideas into actions. Higher-level stakeholders therefore still hold an important enabling role in providing uses of spaces, resources, practical support, and the autonomy needed for local actors to take ownership (Choi & Robertson, 2019; Mickelsson, 2025; Waardenburg et al., 2025). For Innovation Clubhouse and Living Lab-pilots, this would imply a reciprocal relationship in which institutions establish the conditions for community-led action, while civil actors contribute their local knowledge, initiative, and operational efforts (Alatalo et al., 2025).

This focus on civil empowerment of sports clubs and community organisations, based on the case example of MidWest, has some key limitations as well. First, MidWest's development depended heavily on Anita's local knowledge, relationships, and ability to connect residents, entrepreneurs, and other stakeholders. Anita considers her own pivotal role difficult to structurally reproduce and encourage from a higher-level perspective, as it would require embedding similarly active and capable individuals with strong local networks for every facility or community. Also, developing a fully self-sustaining community centre through this bottom-up approach can be a lengthy process, requiring sustained commitment and gradual organisational development. As MidWest founder Anita explains, establishing a viable organisation takes time and requires some combination of external (public) support and self-sufficiency: *"You need a project manager whose salary is partly funded through the project and partly covered by the organisation's own income."*

What should not be carefully assumed here is that sports clubs would showcase general willingness to fulfil such a role and contribute to envisioned new functions. While the case of UEK showed intrinsic willingness from AVV SDZ, this simply cannot be assumed for every sports club. According to Romy (Sports & Green), the *open club philosophy* or top-down encouragements to welcome new functions have not necessarily always been welcomed by sports clubs. Grethil (Social Services) also recalled previous cases in which external activities within sports clubs have resulted in damaged changing rooms or stolen equipment, leading some clubs to reject future

requests from outside organisations. Such experiences help explain why sports clubs may associate external use with additional risks, rather than immediately recognizing its potential value. These concerns demonstrate that openness requires appropriate organisational arrangements. Shared-use agreements and other forms of facility management should thereby be considered integral components of realizing the ambition (Wang et al., 2024). In line with the working method by Use/Space, clear arrangements concerning access, supervision, maintenance and cleaning, liability and resource ownership, like co-created for UEK, can reduce uncertainty and prevent the hosting organisation from being faced with unforeseen costs or issues arising from operations by others.

In sum, while it has mainly been argued that seeking institutional support has been prioritised for this research, the necessity of well-supported civil responsibilities and efforts (like MidWest exemplifies) must not be overlooked when looking to create a feasible organisational capacity and business model for this broader ambition. MidWest highlights benefits of local ownership, committed individuals, and in-depth knowledge of neighbourhood networks.

Two complementary pathways?
This subchapter has explored possible pathways to support sports clubs in their required responsibilities towards integrative use of sports facilities in the form of professionalisation and/or empowerment of sports clubs. Although these pathways appear very much similar, sharing the same end-goal, their respective underlying strategies towards creating organisational capacity on the sports-facility-level can differentiated on some key aspects, as is presented in table 5 below.

Table 5 presents the comparative characteristics of the professionalisation versus civil empowerment of sports facilities to achieve internal organisational capacity to integrate new community functions.

Dimension	Professionalisation	Civil empowerment
Organisational logic	Managerial and business-oriented	Locally embedded and community-oriented
Capacity	Built within the organisation	Mobilised through local networks and individuals
Organisation	Formal roles, structures and accountability	Flexible, informal and adaptive
Decision-making	More structured and managerial	More autonomous and locally driven
Institutional relationship	Integration into institutional and organisational frameworks	Institutional support while retaining independence

The key distinction between these pathways lies in how they approach the traditionally informal, volunteer-based organisation of sports clubs. Professionalisation can be understood as moving sports clubs towards more formalised, higher-level organisational structures, integrating them more closely into institutional frameworks through professional management, defined responsibilities and structured decision-making. Such arrangements could address the accountability gaps and organisational delays observed in UEK, where decisions often depended on multiple individuals

without clearly allocated responsibilities. However, this transition may also undermine some of the strengths of grassroots (sports) organisations, particularly their operational independence and flexibility. Civil empowerment, by contrast, seeks to strengthen organisational capacity while embracing these informal characteristics, allowing local actors to retain autonomy and organise activities around existing community networks and motivations. Yet, this approach also retains greater uncertainty concerning organisational capacity, continuity and scalability, as its success depends heavily on committed individuals, available resources and established local relationships. The experience of UEK illustrates this tension, as AVV SDZ lacked sufficient internal capacity to independently coordinate the pilot, while Innovation Clubhouse supplied much of the necessary organisational support externally. Thus, the pathways differ not only in how they develop capacity, but also in the extent to which formalisation, institutional dependence and organisational autonomy are considered desirable.

Naturally, both naturally depend on the institutional support discussed in chapter 6.4. Based on this comparison, the pathways of professionalisation and civil empowerment of sports clubs appear to be rather more complementary than hard opposites. Professionalisation provides structure and accountability, while civil empowerment provides local embedding. This analysis cannot, and will not, state which pathway decisionmakers should follow. Each clearly has it own benefits, risks and limitations, and future research is needed to explore this more.

7. Discussion

The empirical analysis in this research stretched across multiple levels and governance elements, ranging from the practical elements mainly obtained during the pilot-case of *Uit Eigen Keuken* (UEK) within AVV SDZ to a discussion on the higher-level implications and trade-offs. It thereby aimed to build an extensive, multidisciplinary understanding of the ambition set out by Innovation Clubhouse and others. This chapter will position the overall research within the existing (theoretical) understanding on (Dutch) sports facility management, collaborative governance, civil empowerment and strategies to community-building.

7.1 Re-thinking functionality of sports facilities

The potential of sports facilities to accommodate functions beyond mere sports has been discussed from several disciplinary perspectives. Naturally, such additional functions need not be exclusively towards social (community) functions, as was the focus for this research. Other such possibilities are also reflected upon Innovation Clubhouse's innovation themes, which extend beyond social inclusion, to include climate change, energy and heat, mobility and logistics, and circular building (Innovation Clubhouse, n.d.). Such other themes (which require own research for their own dynamics within sports facility governance), suggest that this pathway towards futureproofing should be understood as a multi-interpretative ambition to connect sports facilities to changing societal demands and goals, each embedded within their own domains. Orr & Kellison (2023), for example, position sports facilities as potential sites for both environmental and social resilience. Davies (2016), meanwhile, broadened functionality of sports facilities by examining their potential contribution to local socio-economic regeneration.

However, what this research has added to these various understandings of multifunctional sports facilities is how recognising the potential for new functions also raises key questions of whether additional functions are really feasible under current governance arrangements. From a public-administration perspective, prescribing additional functions without considering the interests and capacities of existing users risks undermining the very organisations and activities that give these facilities their value. This is particularly relevant in volunteer-based sports clubs, where members and users will usually have a substantial say in how facilities are operated and experienced (Enjolras, 2009; Nagel et al., 2026). Rather than assuming that more functions necessarily produce greater public value, the research insights argue for a co-creative consideration (together with operation-level stakeholders) of which additional uses are appropriate, under what conditions they can be integrated, and how they can contribute to the long-term value and viability of sports facilities.

The aspect in this broader, multidisciplinary topic this research mostly focused on is how realising this potential requires appropriate governance arrangements. Waardenburg (2019), in their study on testing public-private partnership structures for multifunctional sports facilities, argue that the ambition required continuous dialogue

between stakeholders, formalised agreements about their shared objectives and stronger professional capacity within sports clubs to manage collaboration. Similarly, Mickelsson (2025) identify leadership development, organisational development and inter-organisational collaboration as important conditions for strengthening sports clubs' community role, placing greater emphasis on developing their existing civic capacities. The findings of this research reinforce the need for organisational capacity and coordination, while simultaneously raising an additional question: to what extent can volunteer-based sports clubs fulfil this role themselves? The experience of UEK suggests that doing so requires resource capacities that clubs currently do not necessarily possess. Additional support may therefore be needed, either by strengthening the professional capacity of sports clubs or by involving an external party to coordinate the development and management of additional functions.

Beyond organisational capacity, multifunctionality in this study also raised important considerations about open access. The open club philosophy discussed in this study, particularly in relation to the pilot-case UEK, has illustrated some valid questions and trade-offs about (alternative) access management for sports facilities (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2024c). From a spatial justice perspective, such trade-offs become even more layered when arguing how sports facilities occupy valuable urban land, while membership structures and physical boundaries can limit their use by the wider community (Jian et al., 2020). Their public value should therefore also be assessed in terms of their contribution to inclusive neighbourhood development. However, openness should not mean unrestricted access or that existing club members' interests are subordinated to wider public ambitions. Sports clubs must still be understood as social ecosystems in which users develop valued feelings of belonging and familiarity (Pinkster & Loomans, 2025). Their relative exclusivity can itself contribute to such valued feelings. The resulting challenge in sports facility management thereby becomes broadening access while respecting the communities that sustain these facilities.

7.2 Collaborative governance in practice

This research adopted collaborative governance as a theoretical lens to examine how stakeholders can jointly develop community functions within sports facilities. Ansell & Gash (2008) emphasise the importance of institutional arrangements, facilitative leadership and collaborative processes through which mutual trust, commitment and shared contributions can develop. UEK illustrated the importance of these conditions in practice. Meanwhile, Ansell & Torfing (2021) position co-creation as an effective for stakeholders across different levels to jointly develop innovative solutions and generate public value. UEK again demonstrated this potential in practice, and while it was deemed successful in bringing stakeholders from different sectors together, clarifying mutual expectations and producing actionable outcomes, it also revealed limitations that qualify both the theoretical understanding of co-creation and its effectiveness as a governance tool.

First, differences in stakeholder interdependencies and limited organisational capacity at the operational level complicated the joint ability to effectively realise the pilot's objectives. This challenge ties into one identified by Choi & Robertson (2019), who

examine how differences in stakeholder motivations influence collective performance within collaborative governance structures. In UEK, stakeholder willingness and ability similarly depended heavily on organisational priorities, capacities and/or available resources.

Second, organising a co-creation session to address such challenges proved demanding in itself, particularly in a setting where a volunteer-based sports club might be expected to contribute to its preparation and facilitation. The UEK session required considerable preparatory efforts, including stakeholder engagement, preliminary interviews to identify discussion topics, and planning between participating individuals. Consequently, it took place relatively late in the pilot's development and still did not include all relevant stakeholders. This also highlight how identifying and engaging (community) stakeholders is a continuous, iterative process (Dijkstra & Joore, 2025).

These challenges tie into the explorative understanding by Tercanli et al. (2024) on how Living Lab management requires a strict balance between participatory approaches (like co-creation) and structured project management. While such experimental settings benefit from agile management that accommodates evolving stakeholder involvement, they must simultaneously meet conventional project requirements concerning deadlines, deliverables, budgets and quality standards. The experience of UEK illustrates this tension, as the flexibility needed to accommodate stakeholder perspectives also complicated timely decision-making and project progression.

In the end, these limitations of co-creation as a collaborative governance tool in this research analysis point towards the need for operational-level facilitative leadership through a (network) coordinator or matchmaker. Innovation Clubhouse fulfilled much of this role in UEK by connecting stakeholders, navigating institutional structures and coordinating operational arrangements. Missed opportunities with Skill School in establishing a comparable collaboration further illustrate this need, while Use/Space demonstrates how professional matchmaking can even generate its own working business service model. However, this coordinating role also introduces its own governance challenge: who assumes responsibility for it, and how is it financed when both sports clubs and community initiatives often possess limited resources? Realising the potential of collaborative governance therefore also requires institutional arrangements for pooling or securing the resources needed to sustain facilitative leadership and stakeholder (network) governance.

8. Conclusions and recommendations

Throughout this research, many governance elements have been analysed on multiple levels – from a pilot-case within a sports club canteen to strategic policymaking – building an empirical answer to the main question: *How and under what conditions do collaborative governance arrangements enable or constrain the integration of community functions with(in) Amsterdam's sports facilities?* This chapter will position the main research findings into the theoretical understanding of sports facility management, (collaborative) governance and community-building. It then translates the insights into well-formulated answers to the research questions, along with the real-world recommendations that may steer the overall objective in the right direction. It also reflects on what aspects this study lacked and what therefore may still need to be researched further.

8.1 Research conclusions

The substantial value of sports to society is widely recognized, plus well-reflected in measurements like its Social Return on Investment (SROI). Sports and physical activity in the Netherlands hold an estimated SROI of 2.76, meaning that every euro of public investment generates an estimated €2.76 in public value in return (Kenniscentrum Sport & Bewegen, 2024). Although this metric relates only to sports and physical activity rather than the impact of sports facilities, it illustrates substantial societal value that sports bring about. Nevertheless, sports facilities face increasing pressures from urban densification, underfunded maintenance costs and declining volunteer-based organisational capacity, challenging their long-term sustainability (NOC*NSF, 2026; Schep et al., 2024; Urhahn, 2025). Against this backdrop, integrating additional (community) functions within existing sports infrastructure offers opportunities to strengthen its public value and relevance to surrounding neighbourhoods.

This research, part of Innovation Clubhouse, has examined the effect of collaborative governance arrangements on efforts to integrate community functions with(in) Amsterdam's sports facilities. Through an action research approach, it combined an in-depth analysis of the Living Lab pilot *Uit Eigen Keuken* (UEK) at football club AVV SDZ with deepening insights from case examples like Skill School, MidWest and Use/Space. Drawing on the collaborative governance framework by Emerson et al. (2012), the research explored how the wider system context, collaborative drivers, dynamics and actions shape the development and organisation of community activities within sports facilities.

The *system context* reviewed how the current policy framework ambitions, yet does not actively encourages or facilitates integration of new functions within sports facilities (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2023, 2024c). Whereas envisioned community functions often fall within different social and welfare domains than the one addressing the functionality of sports facilities, the research identified limited coordination between these institutional environments, even where their ambitions may overlap. Spatial-temporal adaptability within AVV SDZ, when including operational considerations,

illustrated a fitting opportunity for additional use without necessarily interfering with traditional activities. At the same time, local circumstances matter: the needs and characteristics of surrounding neighbourhoods, existing community networks and the accessibility of a sports facility all influence the potential value and feasibility of new functions.

Regarding *collaborative drivers*, the UEK case showed that stakeholders may recognise shared ambitions (through co-creation) while having different reasons for participating. Their interdependence was clear: no single stakeholder possessed all the resources, expertise, networks or authority required to develop and operate the initiative independently. This created a basis for collaboration, but did not automatically establish shared ownership. Uncertainty about the project's continuity, individual contributions and expected outcomes affected stakeholders' willingness to commit. The research therefore suggests that collaboration depends not only on identifying overlapping ambitions, but also on demonstrating how participation serves the interests of each organisation.

The *collaborative dynamics* revealed that bringing stakeholders together is only a first step towards meaningful joint operations. In UEK, responsibilities and expectations required continuous engagement and coordinative efforts. The volunteer-based and thereby limited organisational capacity of sports clubs makes this especially challenging. The co-creation session for UEK proved some value in addressing practical challenges, developing a shared understanding and minimizing risks and uncertainties, yet organisational capacity on the operational level remained a key hurdle. The complementary case of Skill School alternatively illustrates that collaboration within a sports facility does not necessarily require full organisational integration. Its *shop-in-shop* arrangement offered operational independence, however closer connection to club activities could potentially create opportunities for resource pooling.

In terms of *collaborative actions*, the research identified a recurring gap between higher-level ambitions and their operational feasibility. Clear responsibilities, accountable ownership, allocated resources, and lengthy timelines all proved necessary to translate collaboration into sustained activities. The UEK co-creation session, for example, required extensive time and effort to bring stakeholders together, facilitate discussions and establish a shared understanding of the project and its intended direction. As such efforts also prove unrealistic to leave to sports clubs themselves, a key (external) role to realise new community functions within sports facilities is one of a stakeholder (network) coordinator (Provan & Kenis, 2007). This is something Skill School’s envisioned Living Lab missed and therefore failed to materialise within a sports facility, while Use/Space found a commercial market gap in and operates the role as a matchmaking service.

The research consequently points towards two complementary pathways for developing the necessary organisational capacity: civil empowerment and professionalisation of sports clubs. MidWest illustrates how locally rooted initiatives can develop and sustain community spaces through bottom-up ownership, volunteering and existing community motivation. However, this approach cannot be assumed to work in every sports facility

or community context. Professionalised coordination, meanwhile, can provide the continuity, expertise and institutional connections needed to develop collaborations and support their implementation. Neither pathway necessarily requires transferring responsibility for community functions to sports clubs themselves. Rather, the central challenge is to establish governance arrangements in which sports clubs, community initiatives and institutional stakeholders can contribute according to their respective capacities.

Beyond these operational-level findings, the research identified broader trade-offs concerning the institutional and financial sustainability of multifunctional sports facilities. It suggests that additional functions need not exclusively be community-oriented: compatible commercial activities may also generate income to support existing sporting and social functions. Although stronger transdepartmental collaboration could address fragmented municipal support across different policy domains, involving more institutional actors may also increase procedural complexity and slow project development. Furthermore, neither professionalisation nor civil empowerment offers a universally applicable pathway: the former risks placing additional responsibilities on volunteer-based sports clubs, while the latter depends heavily on committed individuals, established community networks and sufficient external support.

These findings underline the need for context-sensitive governance arrangements that balance institutional support, organisational autonomy and resourceful viability. Ultimately, futureproofing sports facilities through integrating new functions is not simply a matter of introducing additional users to available spaces. It requires creating the organisational and institutional conditions through which these activities can be developed, coordinated and sustained, while safeguarding the existing sporting functions and the capacity of the organisations responsible for them.

8.2 Policy brief & recommendations

This section presents the resulting policy brief directed towards City of Amsterdam and Innovation Clubhouse, translating key insights from this research into concrete real-world recommendations.

More-than-sports: structurally enabling community functions within Amsterdam's sports facilities

Executive summary

Amsterdam's sports facilities can fulfil considerable new forms of value when serving as community activity spaces beyond traditional sports functions. However, realising this potential requires more than available space or project-level initiative: it requires institutional support, organisational capacity and collaboration across multiple domains. This policy brief recommends shifting municipal investment towards facilitating multifunctional use through interdepartmental coordination, accessible funding and support, and simplified procedures. Rather than prescribing a uniform governance model, it recommends a set of institutional measures through which sports

clubs, community-builders and local decisionmakers can jointly develop strategic and integrative approaches to linking sports facilities with new community functions.

Problem statement & context
Sports facilities stretch for 672 ha across Amsterdam's densifying urban area and require substantial (yet fruitful) public investments for their exploitation and maintenance (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2024c). There is, however, untapped value in where their use and management currently only evolve arounds sports functions. Opportunities exist, for instance, to integrate additional community functions within the existing sports infrastructure. Living Lab research and piloting by Innovation Clubhouse identified how current governance arrangement in both sports and social domains fail to structurally link and facilitate such functions.

Main research findings and policy direction
This policy brief draws on action research conducted within Innovation Clubhouse, centred on the Living Lab pilot Uit Eigen Keuken (UEK) at football club AVV SDZ and complemented by insights from other community-oriented organisations. The research examined how collaborative governance arrangements can facilitate the integration of community functions within sports facilities, identifying the organisational and institutional conditions needed to move beyond individual pilot projects towards sustained, multifunctional use.

The findings demonstrate that the availability of underutilised sports facilities does not automatically translate into opportunities for additional community activities. At the operational level, unclear ownership and responsibilities, limited organisational capacity and differing stakeholder motivations complicated the development and implementation of new community functions. Although co-creation as a governance tool helped establish shared ambitions and actionable agreements, continued stakeholder coordination efforts remain necessary to translate these into practice. Complementary case examples further revealed trade-offs between organisational integration and independence, as well as between professionalisation and civil empowerment as pathways for strengthening organisational capacity. At the institutional level, fragmented municipal responsibilities, limited transdepartmental collaboration and difficulties in accessing financial support further constrained the development of community functions. Overall, these insights suggest that futureproofing sports facilities through integrating new community functions requires reorganising sports facility governance at both operational and institutional levels, establishing clearer responsibilities, dedicated coordination capacity and more integrated support structures to enable and sustain multifunctional use.

Recommended (policy) measures
The following measures may be incorporated into a future revision of the *Strategisch Huisvestingsplan Sport & Bewegen (SHP) 2023–2027* and related municipal policy frameworks (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2023).

1. Build towards a municipal helpdesk
Pilot an online *More-than-sports facilities helpdesk*, jointly operated by Sports & Green and Social Services. It may serve as a centralised point of information, municipal

navigation and (local) contacts for sports clubs and community organisations looking build new functions within sports facilities.

2. Introduce dedicated community-functional coordinators
Extend existing municipal subsidies for professional sports club management to include a second paid position focused on community functionality. Such in-club coordinators would be able to develop partnerships, welcome new users and facilitate overall non-sport activities. Optionally start with a selection of larger sports facilities and evaluate the results before considering wider implementation. Both subsidy schemes can be institutionally coordinated through the helpdesk described above.

3. Simplify collaboration through standardised shared-use agreements
Develop a standard agreement through the helpdesk for collaborations between sports facility owners and external organisations. Cover liability, access, maintenance, shared resources and responsibilities, with assistance available to adapt agreements to individual circumstances.

4. Introduce a multifunctional-use financial discount
Subsidise part of the rental costs and other relevant financial burdens incurred by sports facilities and community-builders entering shared-use arrangements. This would reduce financial barriers and incentivise collaboration.

5. Strengthen partnerships between sports and community organisations
Actively facilitate partnerships between sports clubs and established neighbourhood organisations, including CombiWel and Regenboog. Prioritise connecting existing networks and expertise rather than creating additional parallel structures.

6. Develop an interdepartmental community-facility framework
Bring together the objectives and resources of municipal departments involved in community spaces, particularly Sports & Green, Social Services and Work, Participation and Income (WPI). Establish shared responsibilities and coordination mechanisms to overcome institutional barriers and facilitate integrated use of public amenities.

7. Integrate community functions into spatial planning domain
Encourage urban planners to consider multifunctional use of existing and planned sports facilities when developing neighbourhoods and new urban areas. The experience of Haven-Stad and UEK illustrates the potential of combining community functions with sports infrastructure rather than automatically developing separate facilities.

8. Improve the visibility and accessibility of available sports facility spaces
Require sports facility managers to periodically report available spaces, time slots, materials, existing user groups and operational restrictions to the municipal helpdesk and relevant neighbourhood organisations. Introduce accessibility requirements that encourage facilities to accommodate non-sporting users, including non-members.

9. Establish a municipal learning and knowledge-sharing network
Connect sports and social-sector professionals, sports club managers and community-builders to exchange experiences, provide practical advice and document transferable governance arrangements. Explore opportunities for community organisations to develop activities across multiple sports facilities, sharing organisational capacity and resources.

10. Introduce social-value criteria for municipal support
Develop a social-value assessment framework recognising sports facilities that contribute to neighbourhood development beyond sporting participation. Use criteria such as accessibility, partnerships, shared use and community programming to inform supplementary municipal support, accounting for differences in neighbourhood needs and organisational capacity.

8.3 Limitations & future research

This research has provided a mainly explorative understanding of the governance arrangements involved in integrating community activities into sports facilities. Several key limitations in the study point towards opportunities for further research across academic fields.

First, the analytical focus was primarily on the relationship between sports facility management and external organisations looking to integrate. Although various municipal departments and social (care) organisations were included to understand their potential role in a project like UEK, their own collaborative practices were not examined in depth. These organisations also collaborate with one another and with informal, bottom-up initiatives outside the context of sports facilities. Further research could investigate these relationships to identify how professional organisations and informal initiatives establish effective collaboration agreements, and what lessons sports sector organisations might draw from these practices.

Second, the Living Lab pilot-setting for UEK heavily shaped both the research process and the development the community activities. As the pilot was embedded in a research environment, learning and experimentation were considered equally important as objectives towards practical implementation. Consequently, some of the project's aspects were developed at a strategic level before corresponding grassroots initiatives, responsibilities and operational arrangements had fully materialised. The involvement and financial backing of the research environment may also have created conditions that would not necessarily exist in more conventional collaborations. Although this setting provided valuable opportunities for experimentation, it limits the extent to which the findings can be generalised to projects developed without similar support. Longitudinal research could examine whether collaborative arrangements such as those developed for UEK become operational and sustainable after pilot funding and research involvement end. It could also investigate what governance arrangements emerge when direct practical impact, rather than experimentation and learning, is the primary objective.

Third, the research centred primarily on one sports club case: AVV SDZ. While perspectives from Skill School, MidWest and Use/Space broadened the analysis beyond UEK as a case study, including more sports clubs in the analysis would of the findings by allowing for comparisons across different organisational settings. This would have allowed for triangulation, thereby strengthening the research's internal validity, through distinguishing case-specific challenges from recurring governance issues. Such comparisons could also have revealed additional factors, enabling conditions or stakeholder dynamics that were not encountered at AVV SDZ, thereby providing a more

comprehensive understanding of the governance arrangements required for integrating community functions. Further comparative research across different sports facilities could examine how differences in organisational structure, professional management, financial resources and spatial context affect their capacity to accommodate community functions. A more quantitative approach could help establish broader patterns in the resources facilities possess, the barriers they encounter and the conditions under which multifunctional use is feasible.

Finally, the findings point to the importance of network governance and coordination, but the research did not comprehensively assess existing local network structures or the feasibility of professional matchmaking services. Further research could investigate how organisations such as Use/Space might facilitate connections between sports facilities and suitable community initiatives, and whether existing neighbourhood networks can fulfil similar functions. Comparing different coordination models could clarify how matching, access, shared responsibilities and operational support can be organised, particularly where both parties have limited resources.

9. References

Adams, D., & Tiesdell, S. (2012). *Shaping Places: Urban Planning, Design and Development*.

Alatalo, E., Laine, M., & Kyrönviita, M. (2025). Increasing civic resilience in urban living labs: City authorities' roles. *Buildings and Cities*, *6*(1), 917–933. https://doi.org/10.5334/bc.610

Ansell, C., & Gash, A. (2008). Collaborative Governance in Theory and Practice. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, *18*(4), 543–571. https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/mum032

Ansell, C., Sørensen, E., & Torfing, J. (2024). The democratic quality of co-creation: A theoretical exploration. *Public Policy and Administration*, *39*(2), 149–170. https://doi.org/10.1177/09520767231170715

Ansell, C., Sørensen, E., & Torfing, J. (2025). Theorizing the political dimension of collaborative governance. *Perspectives on Public Management and Governance*, *8*(3), 158–171. https://doi.org/10.1093/ppmgov/gvaf007

Ansell, C., & Torfing, J. (2021). Co-creation: The new kid on the block in public governance. *Policy & Politics*, *49*(2), 211–230. https://doi.org/10.1332/030557321X16115951196045

Arundel, R., & Ronald, R. (2017). The role of urban form in sustainability of community: The case of Amsterdam. *Environment and Planning B: Urban Analytics and City Science*, *44*(1), 33–53. https://doi.org/10.1177/0265813515608640

Brester, S. (2022). *Innovation Clubhouse*. Gemeente Amsterdam. https://openresearch.amsterdam/nl/page/99423/innovation-clubhouse

Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods*. Oxford University press.

Choi, T., & Robertson, P. J. (2019). Contributors and Free-Riders in Collaborative Governance: A Computational Exploration of Social Motivation and Its Effects. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, *29*(3), 394–413. https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/muy068

Daly, S., Egan, T., Carroll, P., Curran, G., Harrison, M., McGrath, A., Finnegan, L., Richardson, N., & Krustrup, P. (2025). Capturing the wider benefits from football participation: A social return on investment (SROI) evaluation of a community based football intervention. *BMC Public Health*, *25*(1), 4177. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-025-25288-2

Davies, L. E. (2016). A wider role for sport: Community sports hubs and urban regeneration. *Sport in Society*, *19*(10), 1537–1555. https://doi.org/10.1080/17430437.2016.1159192

Dijkstra, A., & Joore, P. (2025, June 1). *Living Lab Handbook*. AMS Institute.

Emerson, K., Nabatchi, T., & Balogh, S. (2012). An Integrative Framework for Collaborative Governance. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, *22*(1), 1–29. https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/mur011

Enjolras, B. (2009). A Governance-Structure Approach to Voluntary Organizations. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *38*(5), 761–783. https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764008320030

Gbadegesin, J. T., Ojekalu, S., Gbadegesin, T. F., & Komolafe, M. O. (2021). Sustaining community infrastructure through community-based governance (the social practice of collective design policy). *Smart and Sustainable Built Environment*, *10*(4), 711–739. https://doi.org/10.1108/SASBE-10-2019-0142

Gemeente Amsterdam. (2021). *Integraal Raamwerk Haven-Stad*.

Gemeente Amsterdam. (2023). *Strategisch Huisvestingsplan Sporten en Bewegen 2023-2027*.

Gemeente Amsterdam. (2024a). *De Amsterdamse referentienormen: Voor maatschappelijke voorzieninngen, groen en spelen*. Gemeente Amsterdam.

Gemeente Amsterdam. (2024b). Schetsboek Aanvulling Integraal Raamwerk 'Reisverslag van een ontdekkingstocht', Kerngroep Atelier Haven-Stad 2023-2024. *Samen Haven-Stad Maken*. Gemeente Amsterdam.

Gemeente Amsterdam. (2024c). *Visie Amsterdamse sportparken: Gastvrij & verbonden. Beweging richting 2035*. Gemeente Amsterdam.

Gemeente Amsterdam. (2025). *Visie Amsterdamse sportparken: Gastvrij & verbonden—Voortgangsrapportage oktober 2025*. Gemeente Amsterdam.

Gemeente Amsterdam. (2026). *Sport- & speelvoorzieningen*. Gemeente Amsterdam. https://maps.amsterdam.nl/sport/

Gemeente Amsterdam. (n.d.a). *Dashboard kerncijfers 2025*. Gemeente Amsterdam. https://onderzoek.amsterdam.nl/interactief/dashboard-kerncijfers

Gemeente Amsterdam. (n.d.b). *Subsidie Sportverenigingsaccomodaties*. https://www.amsterdam.nl/subsidies/subsidieregelingen/subsidie-sportverenigingsaccommodaties/#h6795c7bd-ff92-43b2-abf5-beaef159b344

Gemeente Amsterdam. (n.d.c). *Subsidie Sterke Sportclubs*. Gemeente Amsterdam. https://www.amsterdam.nl/subsidies/subsidieregelingen/subsidie-sterke-sportclubs-amsterdam-org/

Gemeente Amsterdam. (n.d.d). *Subsidies*. https://www.amsterdam.nl/subsidies/

Gemeente Amsterdam. (n.d.e). *Werk, Participatie en inkomen*. Gemeente Amsterdam. https://www.amsterdam.nl/bestuur-organisatie/organisatie/sociaal/werk-participatie-inkomen/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

González-González, F. J. (2026). Houthaven. Regeneración urbana y vida saludable en Amsterdam West. *Ciudad y Territorio Estudios Territoriales*, *58*(228), 932–943. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.37230/CyTET.2026.228.20

Gregori-Faus, C., Crespo, J., Calabuig, F., & Parra-Camacho, D. (2025). State-of-the-art of sustainability in sports facilities: A systematic review. *Environment, Development and Sustainability*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10668-024-05854-1

Hespo, V. (2008). *Stakeholder management in Socio-technical Development Processes—Action Research (AR) as stakeholder management and mobilization*.

Hou, H. (Cynthia), Remøy, H., Jylhä, T., & Vande Putte, H. (2021). A study on office workplace modification during the COVID-19 pandemic in The Netherlands. *Journal of Corporate Real Estate*, *23*(3), 186–202. https://doi.org/10.1108/JCRE-10-2020-0051

Hudec, M., & Rollová, L. (2016). Adaptability in the Architecture of Sport Facilities. *Procedia Engineering*, *161*, 1393–1397. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.proeng.2016.08.599

Huhtanen, K., Salmikangas, A., & Itkonen, H. (2025). Governing hybrid organisations: Lessons from the provision of local sports facility services in 2020s Finland. *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, *84*(2), 251–271. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8500.12641

Innovation Clubhouse. (n.d.). *Innovatiethema's*. https://innovationclubhouse.nl/innovatiethemas/

Jian, I. Y., Luo, J., & Chan, E. H. W. (2020). Spatial justice in public open space planning: Accessibility and inclusivity. *Habitat International*, *97*, 102122. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.habitatint.2020.102122

Kenniscentrum Sport & Bewegen. (2024, March 18). *De SROI van sport en bewegen is opnieuw berekend*. https://www.kenniscentrumsportenbewegen.nl/nieuws/de-sroi-van-sport-en-bewegen-is-opnieuw-berekend/

Kenniscentrum Sport & Bewegen. (2025). *Handreiking Integraal Huisvestingsplan (IHP) Sport en Bewegen*. Kenniscentrum Sport & Bewegen.

Kenniscentrum Sport & Bewegen. (n.d.). *Vrijwilligerswerk in de sport*. Kenniscentrum Sport & Bewegen. https://www.sportenbewegenincijfers.nl/kernindicatoren/vrijwilligerswerk

KNVB. (2026, May 13). *Investeer extra in BOSA: sportaccomodaties onder druk*. https://www.knvb.nl/nieuws/organisatie/berichten/71817/investeer-extra-bosa-sportaccommodaties-onder-druk

KNVB. (n.d.). *About the KNVB*. KNVB. https://www.knvb.com/about-the-knvb/about-the-knvb

Mens, J., Van Bueren, E., Vrijhoef, R., & Heurkens, E. (2025). Social Value Creation Through Bottom-up Urban Development: Mechanisms of Self-Organization. *Planning Theory & Practice*, *26*(3), 344–364. https://doi.org/10.1080/14649357.2025.2526522

Meulenbroeks, N., & Ruikes, D. (2026). *Maatschappelijke waarde van sportaccommodaties*.

Mickelsson, T. B. (2025). Sports clubs' role in community capacity development—Illustrations from the Swedish sports movement. *Community Development Journal*, *60*(1), 218–235. https://doi.org/10.1093/cdj/bsad039

Misener, L., & Mason, D. S. (2006). Creating community networks: Can sporting events offer meaningful sources of social capital? *Managing Leisure*, *11*(1), 39–56. https://doi.org/10.1080/13606710500445676

Mulier Instituut. (2023). *Cijfers Sportaccommodaties in Nederland 2023*. Mulier Instituut.

Nagel, S., Keller-Meier, R., Lang, G., Schulz, L., Stieger, R., & Schlesinger, T. (2026). The tension between professionalisation and volunteering in sports clubs. *European Journal for Sport and Society*, 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/16138171.2026.2694213

NOC*NSF. (2026). *Grote zorgen over afhandeling BOSA aanvragen 2026*. https://www.nocnsf.nl/nieuws/2026/04/grote-zorgen-over-afhandeling-bosa-aanvragen-2026

NOC*NSF. (n.d.). Multifunctionele accommodatie. *Clubbase SportNL*. https://clubbase.sport.nl/kennisbank/accommodatie/clubgebouw/multifunctionele-accommodatie

Orr, M., & Kellison, T. (2023). Sport facilities as sites of environmental and social resilience. *Managing Sport and Leisure*, *28*(1), 98–103. https://doi.org/10.1080/23750472.2020.1855081

Pinkster, F. M., & Loomans, D. (2025). Urban belonging as place-based affect. *Social & Cultural Geography*, *26*(4), 421–438. https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2024.2407159

Provan, K. G., & Kenis, P. (2007). Modes of Network Governance: Structure, Management, and Effectiveness. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, *18*(2), 229–252. https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/mum015

Santema, M. (2023, November 1). *UseSpace: Mix, match and maximise building use for social impact*. ESG Research Conference.

Santos, H. C., Varnum, M. E. W., & Grossmann, I. (2017). Global Increases in Individualism. *Psychological Science*, *28*(9).

Schep, P., Hoeijmakers, R., Bronkhorst, P., & van Kalmthout, J. (2024). Clubondersteuning in Nederland. *Mulier Instituut*.

Schmidt III, R., & Austin, S. (2016). *Adaptable Architecture* (0 edn). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315722931

Seifried, C., & Clopton, A. W. (2013). An alternative view of public subsidy and sport facilities through social anchor theory. *City, Culture and Society*, *4*(1), 49–55. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ccs.2013.01.001

Sharp, G., & Warner, C. (2018). Neighborhood Structure, Community Social Organization, and Residential Mobility. *Socius: Sociological Research for a Dynamic World*, *4*, 2378023118797861. https://doi.org/10.1177/2378023118797861

Skrede, J., & Andersen, B. (2022). The emotional element of urban densification. *Local Environment*, *27*(2), 251–263. https://doi.org/10.1080/13549839.2022.2034769

Super, S., Hermens, N., Verkooijen, K., & Koelen, M. (2018). Examining the relationship between sports participation and youth developmental outcomes for socially vulnerable youth. *BMC Public Health*, *18*(1), 1012. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-018-5955-y

Tercanli, H., Jongbloed, B., & Van Der Meulen, B. (2024). Exploring prescriptive and agile management of university-based living labs. *European Journal of Higher Education*, *14*(sup1), 29–49. https://doi.org/10.1080/21568235.2024.2405551

Toprakli, A. Y. (2025). Two Sides of the Coin: Integrating Architectural and Sports Management Perspectives for Improved Sports Facility Evaluation. *International Journal of Built Environment and Sustainability*, 15–26.

Torfing, J., Ferlie, E., Jukić, T., & Ongaro, E. (2021). A theoretical framework for studying the co-creation of innovative solutions and public value. *Policy & Politics*, *49*(2), 189–209. https://doi.org/10.1332/030557321X16108172803520

Toukola, S., Ahola, T., Ståhle, M., & Hällström, A. A. (2023). The co-creation of value by public and private actors in the front end of urban development projects. *International Journal of Project Management*, *41*(8), 102542. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijproman.2023.102542

TU Delft. (n.d.). *Sports Engineering Institute*. TU Delft. https://www.tudelft.nl/sports-engineering-institute

Urhahn. (2025, February). *Ruimte geven aan sport en bewegen Onderzoek naar de relatie tussen ruimte voor sport, bewegen en spelen en ruimtelijke ordeningsafwegingen*.

van Staveren, S. (2026). *Uit Eigen Keuken – interim rapport Maart 2026*. Innovation Clubhouse.

Vrieswijk, S., van Stam, W., & Gómez Berns, A. (2023, November 21). *Behoefte van sportvenenigingen aan ondersteuning*. Mulier Instituut.

Waardenburg, M. (with van den Hombergh, S., & van Bottenburg, M.). (2019). *Bouwen Aan Maatschappelijke Waarden: Publiek-Private Samenwerking Bij Multifunctionele Sportaccommodaties* (1st ed). Boom Uitgevers Den Haag.

Waardenburg, M., Groenleer, M., & De Jong, J. (2025). Performance Management in Collaborative Governance: A Review of the Literature and Synthesis of the Challenges. *Public Performance & Management Review*, *48*(4), 735–767. https://doi.org/10.1080/15309576.2025.2510973

Wang, L., Dai, Y., Han, L., & Xu, Z. (2024). Optimizing urban resource efficiency: A scenario analysis of shared sports facilities in fostering sustainable communities in Nanjing, China. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, *468*, 143082. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2024.143082

Appendix 1 – Interviewing guide

This interview guide has been universalized by collecting all prepared questions from all individual interviews into one list of questions. Selections to each stakeholder interview were made from this list.

Interview formalities and arrangements:

- Ask for permission to record interview
- Explaining the purpose of this interview
    - Research scope of governance elements and dynamics behind integrating community functions within sports facilities.
    - State how the idea of interview is both to reflect on past roles or actions by interviewee, but also to look into the future development of the pilot or broader ambition
- Ask for use of first name in research documents (otherwise proposing anonymity through alias)
- State how interviewee may always choose to not answer if uncomfortable with question or withdraw answers at a later point. *"The interview will be securely stored and only used for research purposes connected to this project. You may withdraw your participation in the research or request removal of statements up until 1 August 2026."*

General:

- Can you describe briefly what you and/or your organisation do(es) and what your role looks like?
- How does this (role) relate to the project Uit Eigen Keuken? How did you get involved?
- What current challenges do you face in your role, in relation to this project/ambition?

Sport facility management:

- Described organisational structure within club
    - How is AVV SDZ currently organised in terms of decision-making, operations, and space use?
    - How do you balance the core sporting function of the club with broader social ambitions?
- Perceptions to legitimacy and capabilities of club management
    - What is your general experience with the management of AVV SDZ?
    - What do you notice about the role of AVV SDZ within the community? What would you like to see change over time?
    - What is your perception of the management of AVV SDZ in terms of organisation, capability, innovative thinking?

Network connectedness:

- Presence and assessment of existing relationships among stakeholders

    - Which of the involved stakeholders/persons have you already collaborated with? How did those collaborations go?
    - Who are you particularly eager to work with, who you haven't worked with before? Why?

Community activity management:

- Described existing operations by social sector stakeholders
    - What does your organisation do to strengthen the local community?
    - In your perspective, how would you describe the community-based stakeholder environment you work in? What goes well? What does not? Can you give any examples?
- Described stakeholder ambitions for sports facilities' role in community development
    - How does AVV SDZ steer its role to the direct community? And how does this differ in relation to its members, who live across Amsterdam?
    - What internal bottlenecks within AVV SDZ make it difficult to host broader community initiatives? What has been done to resolve these?

Neighbourhood profile:

- Degree of social diversity
    - What community groups did you witness to be missing/underrepresented (in relation to the neighbourhood) at AVV SDZ or previous project days?
    - Which kinds of resident groups do you think this project could include more so in the next execution?
- Neighbourhood needs
    - What is your general experience of the neighbourhood surrounding AVV SDZ?
    - Based on your experience, what kind of neighbourhood needs do you think this project may address?
- Perceptions of the community role of the sports club
    - What do you notice about the role of AVV SDZ within the community? What would you like to see change over time?

Spatial-temporal adaptability:

- Patterns in utility of envisioned project space
    - Can you describe the current use of the sports facility spaces? What aspects do you take into consideration? When thinking about how the project fits this use?
- Review of required material resources
    - How would you describe the readiness of the canteen currently for the execution of this project? What must change in terms of space/materials?
- Formal requirements for access, scheduling, liability, and user agreements
    - How do practical considerations (risks of liability, cleaning) affect your willingness to open the space to non-club users?
    - Are there any agreements or rules that you think should be clearly in place before the project restarts, in relation to the other canteen users

Interdependence:

- Perceived reliance on other actors to move forward
    - What would you like to receive from other stakeholders? Why would you need this? How does this help you?
- Identification of missing partners/tasks
    - Which responsibilities/tasks are not yet clearly covered? How do you hope the co-creation session will fill this in?
- Degree to which stakeholder recognizes shared dependence
    - How do you approach project aspects to which there is clearly a need of input from an external party?
    - How do you hope the co-creation session will address …?
    - How should public, private, and civic organisations/partners divide responsibilities for building social value within sports facilities?

Shared motivation:

- Degree of agreement on project purpose
    - How would you describe the central mission of this project in one/two sentences?
- Overlap in stakeholder goals
    - Do you like working in this the project? What made you motivated to get involved? What (personal) goals do you or your organisation have?
    - Do you see your personal goals reflected in the current project execution or development? How can we ensure those goals align more?

Uncertainty:

- Perceived risks (financial/legal/reputational)
    - Are there any risks/concerns that make you cautious about the initiative?
- Perceived belief in continuity
    - How confident are you currently in the project's continuity? Why?
- Extent to which uncertainty reduces commitment
    - Due to the current level of uncertainty, are you less willing to commit time or energy to the project? If so, in what way?
    - What uncertainties would need to be reduced before you would further commit?

Ownership & leadership:

- Clarity of project ownership
    - At this moment, how clear is it for you who owns or carries certain responsibilities in preparation of this project?
    - Who should take charge of the project/ambition, according to you?
- Degree to which stakeholder recognizes own leadership role (if any)
    - How important do you consider a leading actor in the development of project like this? In what ways?
    - Does the project currently have the right kind of leadership to move forward? If not, what would you suggest doing differently?
    - How/In what aspects do you recognize yourself as a leading actor within this project?

Willingness to contribute:

- Stated conditions to project participation
    - Under which certain conditions would you be willing to continue being involved in this project?
    - What would you need in terms to properly participate (e.g. time, clarity, support, payment, staffing, or organisation)?
    - Which concrete results or proof of success would your organisation need to see from this project?

Capacity for joint action:

- Ability to move to next steps
    - Can you describe the efforts you have made to build a trans-departmental collaborative structure for this mission? How does this relate to the practical capacity to execute a project like UEK?
- Identification for required resources
    - Which municipal procedures, rules, or barriers make it more difficult to execute or collaborate in a project like this? In what ways?

Appendix 2 – Co-creation session UEK

25 May 2026 11:00-13:30, canteen AVV SDZ (Amsterdam)

Objective of the session:

- Gaining insight into the experiences and needs of involved stakeholders;
- Identifying bottlenecks and (new) opportunities in the current pilot plan;
- Co-creating guiding solutions and actions for project restart.

Session output:

- Familiarization of all involved stakeholders with one another;
- Project action plan: overview of (joint) action items (joint use agreement, tasks and responsibilities, etc.);
- Collective understanding of project mission and timeline towards restart in September 2026.

Theme-group division:

Theme-group club & organisation	
Daan (chair)	Innovation Clubhouse
Aziz	AVV SDZ – club manager
Romy	City of Amsterdam – Sports & Green
Dirk	City of Amsterdam – Sports & Green
Theme-group participants & guidance	
Siem (chair)	Innovation Clubhouse
Judith	Project-chef + supervisor
Monique V.	City of Amsterdam – WPI
Shirley	Regenboog-group
Theme-group community value & impact	
Monique L. (chair)	Innovation Clubhouse
Anita	City of Amsterdam – Haven-Stad
Evelien	City of Amsterdam – Sports & Green
Elke	AVV SDZ – canteen manager

General session structure

- ➔ Short introduction and presentation of the organisation:
  Introducing and evaluating the first version of Uit Eigen Keuken: what worked well and what did not?
- ➔ What is the shared mission? (pre-formulated by organisation)
- ➔ Structured workshop/discussion: what is the added value for each party to participate, and in what role?
- ➔ Where is the win-win for all parties (does it align with the shared mission?)

➔ How do we get there? What are risks or barriers? What do we need to get it done? What resources are required (people, other organisations, physical space)?
➔ Participants to actively and proactively think along about the future implementation of the project.

Session agenda (duration of session: 2,5 hours)

11:00 – 11:10 | Arrival & welcome
- Informal reception (coffee/tea)
- Name stickers & seating arrangements

11:10 – 11:20 | Introduction & objectives (presentation)
By coordinator (Monique/Siem):

- Brief explanation of the main project objective
    - Shared mission: "*Uit Eigen Keuken aims to develop the AVV SDZ sports canteen into an inclusive meeting place where cooking and eating with the community contribute to social connection in the neighbourhood and provide development opportunities for vulnerable residents of Amsterdam.*"
- Why this session:
    - "We want to improve the project together and restart it."
- Reasons for co-creation:
    - Everyone is involved from the start and may contribute ideas

11:20 – 11:35 | Short tour of SDZ by club managers (Aziz)
- Canteen (central project location)
- Kitchen (practical context)
- Fields/canteen use (explanation of busy moments)

Goal:
- Give everyone the same context and familiarity with the spaces

11:35 – 11:45 | Break (10 min)
- Informal moment → often valuable conversations happen here
- Small snacks (fits the food theme) + coffee & tea

11:45 – 12:20 | Thematic tables (sub-group co-creation)
Divide participants into 3 groups (3–5 people per group)

Each group gets one theme:
1. Organisation & implementation (led by Aziz)
    - How do we organise the cooking days?
    - What practical resources are needed?
2. Participants & guidance (led by Siem)

    - Who participates? How do we reach and recruit these people? What is the social added value?
    - What do they need to participate well?
3. Neighbourhood & impact (led by Monique)
    - How do we attract a diverse group of local residents?
    - What makes it attractive to visit the sports club?
    - What public value will it create for the neighbourhood?

Method:

- Large worksheets
- Using simple discussion format:
    - Problem → idea → solution

<u>12:20 – 13:00 | Presentations & discussion</u>
Each group presents (±5 min per group)
Then:

- Short discussion
- Questions:
    - What appeals?
    - What is feasible?
    - What is still missing?

<u>13:00 – 13:05 | Closing & next steps</u>

- Seek consensus (by plenary facilitator)
- Thank participants
- Explanation:
    - “We will take this into the restart”
    - Opportunity for partners to state if/how they would like to remain involved; make agreements on this.

<u>13:05-13:45 | Lunch (outside with nice weather)</u>

- Tables with decoration on the football pitches
- Judith prepares and organises this lunch

Roles:

- Coordinator – Monique and Siem: (introducing the session and guiding the general discussion)
- SDZ host - Aziz: (context + tour of the sports facility)
- Thematic table chairs – Daan, Siem and Monique (chairing every thematic table’s discussion and ensuring proper filling-in of worksheets)
- Note-taker - Siem: someone who documents consensus + actions in real-time

---

Worksheets: Below are the worksheets for each of the thematic tables.

Worksheet theme-group club & organisation
1. **UEK is a learning process (Living Lab). Which risks have we encountered, and how can we minimize those going forward? How do we balance remaining risks with guarantee to success?**
2. **Which practical resources are needed in terms of personnel, time, communication, cleaning and canteen management during UEK?**
3. **How do we take the volunteer character / individual tasks of AVV SDZ into account during the development and execution of the project?**

4. Which agreement on access, liability and use of the canteen should be clear beforehand?
5. What would be a realistic and fair division of responsibilities going forward?
6. Which (in)formal agreements can we make upon this?

Worksheet theme-group participants & guidance
1. **Which groups of participants should we target with UEK? What is the potential value for these groups by joining the project?**
2. **What are the development goals (per target group) during UEK for these participants?**
3. **In which ways can we allow for a diversified group of participants? And in which ways not?**

4. How do we design the recruiting process of the participants? Which minimal requirements (for admission) do we uphold?
5. Which (practical) learning goals for participants do we cover with UEK?
6. With what action items / recourses can we guarantee this form of guidance for the participants (e.g. specialised guidance)?

Worksheet theme-group community value & impact
1. What are problems / challenges in the neighbourhoods surrounding AVV SDZ (in a social sense)?
2. Why is AVV SDZ a good place to promote social inclusion with(in) the neighbourhood?
3. How do we create support and publicity for the project within the community? What makes it (more) desirable for community residents to visit AVV SDZ?

4. What are barriers or risks within the concept of a ‘open club’? How do we deal with this?
5. Which role can community involvement play in relation to the plans of Haven-Stad?
6. Which action items should therefore be included in the project plan?

Appendix 3 – Action plan UEK (AVV SDZ)

About Uit Eigen Keuken & co-creation session

The pilot project *Uit Eigen Keuken* (UEK) is part of the *Innovation Clubhouse* programme, which explores how sports clubs can function as community-oriented social hubs. In a growing city such as Amsterdam, sports clubs are facing increasing pressure due to declining volunteer capacity, rising operational costs, and growing spatial claims on urban land. At the same time, there is a societal challenge related to the social inclusion of various groups of Amsterdam residents, alongside a structural labour shortage in the hospitality sector. UEK brings these three issues together by using a sports canteen as a learning and work environment where participants can gain relevant work experience, develop social connections, and take steps towards labour market participation.

The project is carried out in the clubhouse of football club AVV SDZ and follows the principles of a Living Lab, in which co-creation, experimentation, and collective learning are integrated into the implementation of the project. Various stakeholders—including the sports club itself, AMS Institute, the City of Amsterdam, and social care organisations—collaborate in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the initiative. Central to the Living Lab is the concept of *neighbourhood membership*: a broader form of involvement with the sports club that also includes non-sporting local residents and vulnerable groups.

In practice, the project consists of weekly cooking sessions during which participants, under the guidance of professional chef Judith Cyrus, prepare and sell meals in the sports canteen. This setting provides a low-threshold learning environment where vocational skills, teamwork, and familiarity with Dutch workplace culture can be developed. At the same time, the project strengthens the social function of the sports club by encouraging interaction between club members, local residents, and participant cooks.

The first implementation phase, conducted in January 2026, revealed both opportunities and vulnerabilities. Positive findings included the project's strong social value and the enthusiasm shown by both the club and the local community. At the same time, the initial cooking sessions exposed several organisational challenges, including dependency on key individuals, limited facilities, language barriers, and the need for stronger ownership and communication structures.

The project subsequently entered a redevelopment phase, during which a co-creation session was organised on 27 May 2026 for all involved stakeholders. During this session, the entire project development and implementation process was evaluated with the aim of identifying success factors, vulnerabilities, and new directions for the initiative. This handbook is a direct outcome of that co-creation session, which focused on three central themes: *club & organisation*, *participants & guidance*, and *neighbourhood engagement & impact*. For each theme, ideas and action points were formulated during the session and have been further elaborated in this handbook, providing a clear framework for the project's relaunch and intended implementation from August 2026 onwards.

1. Organisation and neighbourhood link

Project ownership & collaborations

- Innovation Clubhouse will remain the driving force behind the project; however, project ownership should primarily rest with AVV SDZ. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that sports clubs largely depend on volunteers, meaning that professional project responsibilities should not fall on the board or active club members. Therefore, from this point onwards, Innovation Clubhouse (Siem) will take a larger role in project development, stakeholder management, and all external activities related to the project beyond the cooking sessions at AVV SDZ. This will allow AVV SDZ (Aziz, Judith, and active club members) to focus fully on the implementation of the cooking days.
- AVV SDZ will remain primarily responsible for facilitating the project location (canteen and kitchen), including ensuring an appropriate setup and maintaining a dedicated project inventory, including a separate and secure storage space for project materials and ingredients.
- Participant referral organisations (e.g. De Regenboog Groep, City of Amsterdam – WPI, VluchtelingenWerk, etc.) should be clearly informed about the project details, particularly regarding their role and responsibilities within the initiative. To support this, Innovation Clubhouse (Siem) will develop a clear participant profile, intake procedure, and project programme for these organisations as part of this handbook.
- Organisations and businesses that may provide follow-up opportunities for participants (such as hospitality employers) have not yet been actively involved in the project. These parties will be approached once there is greater clarity regarding the needs and ambitions of the participants. In coordination with AVV SDZ, Innovation Clubhouse (Siem) will take the lead in approaching businesses that have strong connections to the club and the surrounding neighbourhood. The objective is to establish contacts and agreements that provide participants with access to a network of potential workplaces and employment opportunities.
- A central digital environment (shared drive) will be established by AVV SDZ (Aziz), enabling the project team to more easily share documents and information.
- A collective project mailbox (under the name of AVV SDZ) will be created through which potential participants, SDZ members, and referral or partner organisations can register their interest in participating in the project.
- Considering the busy schedules of all project team members, Wednesday will be designated as the official project day. Meetings, intake interviews, project activities, evaluations, and other project-related tasks will, as far as possible, be scheduled on this day (except for supermarket orders and mailbox management).

Organisation during cooking days

- The workload assigned to a single person (Aziz) on behalf of AVV SDZ is currently too extensive. Therefore, Aziz will establish a dedicated UEK committee consisting of AVV SDZ members who will support Aziz and Judith throughout the project period through pre-arranged shifts and responsibilities, contributing a combined total of approximately hours. These activities will fall under the club's internal *verenigingswerk* (club service) scheme, through which members can earn back part of their annual membership fee (€100) by contributing to club activities.
- Committee members will have Aziz as their primary point of contact for information and registration. He will be responsible for informing them about their tasks and planning. During cooking days, committee members will work alongside Judith to ensure that kitchen operations and meal sales run smoothly.
- AVV SDZ (Aziz and committee members), in weekly coordination with Judith, will be responsible for purchasing ingredients and non-food supplies (plates, napkins, takeaway containers, and cutlery) through the club's supermarket ordering system. The club will maintain records of purchases and sales through its existing cash register system and will share this administration with Innovation Clubhouse at the end of the project period.
- During the first cooking day, approximately 30 meals will be prepared. Thereafter, the project team will make a weekly estimate of the number of meals based on the expected attendance of club members and local residents. The ambition is to gradually increase sales to approximately 50 meals per cooking day, provided that the kitchen team can manage this workload and that the participants' learning trajectory does not suffer as a result.
- The inclusive strength of the project lies in the principle that everyone should be able to access an affordable meal. Therefore, meal prices should remain low, with a maximum price of €8 for a main course.
- To prevent food waste, only meals that can be safely refrigerated and stored in the event of unsold portions will be prepared. These meals can subsequently be sold on Thursday or Friday to club members and/or donated to the nearby homeless shelter.
- Participant development takes precedence over meal sales and revenue generation. For this reason, discounts, promotional offers, or other sales incentives that would shift the focus of cooking days solely towards production will not be introduced. Once meals are sold out, they are sold out. A maximum number of meals will be set to ensure a healthy balance between teaching participants new skills and serving customers.
- To mitigate liability risks, participants will be registered as volunteers with AVV SDZ. This ensures that they are covered under the club's existing insurance policies. Aziz will be responsible for arranging this registration following each participant's intake process.
- AVV SDZ is located in a relatively isolated area and may feel unsafe during the evening and nighttime hours. The project team will take this into account and

implement appropriate measures regarding the accessibility and safe travel of participants and visitors to and from the club.

PR and neighbourhood link

- The area surrounding AVV SDZ may undergo significant changes as part of the urban development of Amsterdam Haven-Stad. It is therefore especially important to position the club strongly within the neighbourhood and strengthen its long-term future viability. UEK serves as a tool to achieve this by increasing the social value of AVV SDZ and thereby creating a stronger argument for maintaining the club at its current location. As a project team, we share the philosophy of the Haven-Stad planners themselves: *together we make the city complete*.
- The message regarding the added value of UEK must therefore be clear and effectively communicated within the appropriate networks, both inside the club and throughout the surrounding neighbourhood. To support this, Siem will develop a comprehensive communication and public relations strategy, through which the project and opportunities for involvement will be promoted via social media, club WhatsApp groups, the SDZ newsletter, community centres, and other relevant organisations. Within AVV SDZ, Aziz, Andries, and Emilio will support the implementation of this communication strategy.
- A specific challenge will be strengthening connections with the neighbourhoods surrounding AVV SDZ. In collaboration with CombiWel, Siem will develop a targeted outreach strategy for the Spaarndammerbuurt, Houthavens, and Westerpark areas. The central message will be that Wednesday evenings at AVV SDZ are *open club* moments, where everyone is welcome to visit the club for an affordable meal, a social gathering with neighbours, and an opportunity to become acquainted with the club and its members.
- Football is widely loved in Amsterdam, including by many people who are not actively affiliated with a club. Through its *open club* moments, AVV SDZ occupies a unique position to offer these residents a social connection to the sport. Therefore, during UEK activities, AVV SDZ should actively promote football and the broader benefits of sports participation and involvement in club life.
- The project team will explore the possibility of organising a participation evening during a cooking day later in the project period. Such an event would bring together local residents and club members to discuss topics such as the continuation of the project beyond the collaboration period with Innovation Clubhouse, or other neighbourhood developments that may affect the future role of the club and the project.

2. Participants and guidance

Participant Intake

- UEK is open to a broad range of potential participants: in principle, any Amsterdam resident with a distance to the labour market is welcome. Referral

organisations (such as VluchtelingenWerk, De Regenboog Groep, City of Amsterdam – WPI, Roads, Feey Zorg, etc.) will be actively informed by Innovation Clubhouse about the participant profile, project programme, and available places described below.

- During each cooking day, two participant shifts of four hours will be offered: from **10:00–14:00** and from **15:00–19:00**. This provides greater flexibility both for Judith and for participants regarding their availability and commitment.
- The project takes an individualised approach, both during the intake process and throughout participant guidance during the cooking days. Group composition is also carefully considered: a maximum of six participants per shift will be maintained.
- Intake procedures are tailored to the individual. Whether a person is a suitable fit for the project is always open for discussion. Clear agreements will be made with each participant regarding the type of development pathway and support that best matches their needs and circumstances.
- Participants will never be asked to perform tasks elsewhere within the club unless these are assigned by Judith. Other club members are present solely to provide support or carry out their own responsibilities and do not hold a supervisory role over participants.

What makes someone suitable as a participant?

- The participant has an interest in and enthusiasm for food and cooking.
- The participant possesses basic language skills in either Dutch or English.
- The participant is motivated to learn and develop further (towards paid employment or another educational/development trajectory), and the learning objectives of the project align with their personal goals.
- The participant has a personal supervisor or caseworker (for example from the referral organisation) who remains involved throughout the project. This supervisor should attend the intake, evaluation meetings, and, where necessary, one or more cooking days.
- The participant is willing to complete at least **four shifts of up to four hours each** during the cooking days between **26 August and 28 October 2026**.

The intake procedure will follow the following steps:

1. Referral organisations contact the UEK project team when they have identified a potentially suitable participant. The participant registration period remains open until **20 August 2026**.
2. Judith and/or Aziz schedule an introductory meeting with the participant and their supervisor. During this meeting, the project is explained, expectations are discussed, and the ways in which UEK may support the participant are explored. The participant effectively “applies” by presenting their background and motivation for joining the project, which is considered an initial learning opportunity in itself.
3. Following the introductory meeting, a mandatory screening process takes place. Together with the referral organisation and/or supervisor, it is assessed whether the participant can legally participate (for example regarding residence permits),

and whether participation can take place safely and constructively alongside other participants.

4. If a suitable match is confirmed, the participant's shifts between **26 August and 28 October 2026** are scheduled in advance. Aziz subsequently registers the participant with AVV SDZ as a club volunteer (*verenigingswerker*).
5. Evaluation meetings take place both midway through and after completion of the agreed number of shifts. These evaluations involve the participant, Judith, and the participant's supervisor, and are used to discuss progress, learning outcomes, and any further support needs.

Learning objectives for participants

Kitchen-related learning objectives:

- Basic recipes from different cultures
- Cutting and cooking techniques
- Familiarity with kitchen utensils and equipment commonly found in a simple professional kitchen
- Food hygiene and safety (HACCP principles)

Work and social learning objectives:

- Job application skills
- Working effectively within a team
- Personal hygiene
- Communication skills
- Punctuality and notifying supervisors appropriately in case of absence
- Customer service orientation
- Becoming familiar with work routines and Dutch workplace culture
- Introduction to sports club and association culture

Participant programme

Expectations and rules for participants:

- Participants are expected to arrive on time (10:00 for the first shift; 15:00 for the second shift). In case of absence, participants should inform Judith by telephone the evening before whenever possible.
- Participants should wear clean clothing, have clean hair, wear closed shoes, and wash their hands upon arrival.
- Everyone is expected to treat each other with respect and listen to one another. The intention is that all participants contribute equally.
- Participants are not expected to leave the club or engage in unrelated activities during their shift. If there is a genuine need to leave temporarily, this should first be discussed with Judith.
- Participants and their personal supervisors are responsible for informing any residential facility or support organisation that they intend to participate in the project.
- Participants should not use their phones or make phone calls in view of customers. If necessary, they should ask Judith for permission and step outside or into a private area.

What does a typical UEK cooking day look like?

- 10:00–10:30: The first group of participants arrives at the club. Judith and an SDZ committee member open the canteen and discuss the plan for the day with the participants. Tasks are assigned, the supermarket delivery is received and stored, and the kitchen is prepared for service.
- 10:30–14:00: Participants carry out their mise-en-place and preparation tasks under Judith's supervision. At a suitable moment, participants take a 30-minute lunch break (participants do not need to bring their own food).
- 14:00–15:00: The first shift ends and participants may go home. Judith has one hour available for a break or to catch up on any remaining tasks.
- 15:00–19:00: The second shift begins with a new group of participants. Judith provides a short briefing before participants continue preparing meals. From 17:00 onwards, participants also receive guidance and responsibilities related to serving and selling meals at the counter. Towards the end of the shift, the group cleans and tidies the kitchen together, ensuring it is left in good condition for the canteen staff. Participants are expected to remain until all cleaning and closing tasks have been completed.
- 19:00–19:30: Participants and supervisors receive a free meal. Judith, Siem, and the SDZ committee members conduct a brief evaluation of the day and prepare for the following cooking session.

What do participants get in return?

- Experience working in a Dutch/European kitchen environment. This is valuable because employers in Amsterdam's hospitality sector appreciate candidates who already possess such experience.
- A certificate and reference letter as proof of successful participation (see below).
- Access to a network of hospitality businesses in Amsterdam that may provide future employment or development opportunities. The UEK team will actively support participants in identifying their next step.
- A free lunch or evening meal after every completed shift.
- Participants are always welcome to approach the project team with questions, concerns, or difficulties they may encounter during the programme.

Certification and progression opportunities

- After a participant's final shift, Judith, the participant, and their supervisor will schedule a short final evaluation. The participant's experiences and areas for improvement will be discussed. Together, they will also explore potential next steps and determine how UEK can support these ambitions, for example through a continued role within the SDZ canteen or progression towards employment in a hospitality business.
- Participants who successfully complete a minimum of four shifts will receive a certificate and a reference letter written by Judith as proof of participation.
- Siem and Judith will explore whether this certificate can be formally accredited or recognised by relevant organisations in the future.

3. Evaluation and continuation

- The sense of community and identity of AVV SDZ is strong and should not be compromised as the club becomes more open to non-members. The project team will actively listen to club members regarding their experiences with the cooking days and will take this feedback into account when making decisions about the future direction and implementation of the project.
- As the first project within the AVV SDZ Living Lab, UEK is an ongoing learning process that develops in parallel with project implementation. Innovation Clubhouse (Siem) is responsible for documenting project development and implementation, communicating potential improvements and adaptations to the operational team, and safeguarding the learning process among facilitating partners, including AMS Institute, TU Delft, the KNVB, and the City of Amsterdam (Departments of Sport & Recreation, Social Services, and Haven-Stad).
- Continuity is important and desirable for all stakeholders. AVV SDZ aims to continue the project beyond the current agreed project period with Innovation Clubhouse, which ends on **28 October 2026**. Innovation Clubhouse (Siem) will support the club in this ambition by proactively exploring future project formats and identifying potential partner organisations before that date. Examples may include a coordinating role for the City of Amsterdam – Sport & Recreation Department or organisations such as Roads.