



Program	EMBA17
Course	Sustainable Business & Leadership
Assignment	Individual paper
Surname	Plagmeijer
First Name	Astrid
Student Number	180001455
Email	a.plagmeijer@my.nyenrode.nl

DECLARATION

By submitting this work electronically, I, Astrid Plagmeijer, declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own original work; and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification or in fulfilment of any other academic assignment. In this I acknowledge that I understand the following elements of ethical academic conduct:

- **Plagiarism:** I understand the rules with regard to referencing and use of content that is contained in either hard or soft copy sources, including the internet or any other electronic medium.
- **Repetition of content:** I understand the rules regarding the extent to which I may resubmit content that I have already submitted as part of any other academic assignment.

I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to clarify any concerns or queries with regard to this declaration with the faculty member concerned, and that lack of knowledge about these requirements does not constitute a defence for any transgression whether I am aware of it or not.

***Goede Start, samen de
vlucht naar voren***

AGENDA
SOCIAAL

013

Good start, together forwards



Table of contents

Table of contents.....	2
Introduction	3
Step 1: The playing field	3
Step 2: Sustainability challenges	4
Step 3: Backcast the future.....	5
Step 4: Current system loops	5
Step 5: Initiatives for solutions.....	7
Step 6: Stakeholders	9
Step 7: Strategy.....	11
Step 8: My role.....	12
References	13

Introduction

Tilburg is the seventh city of the Netherlands, with over 220,000 inhabitants, of which 45,500 children and youngsters up to the age of 18. Most of them have a good start in a nice and loving environment. But a group of children and young people do not grow up on their own. 10% of Tilburg youth grows up in a family on social assistance and 11.8% receives youth care (Gemeente Tilburg, 2020). In this city Xpect Primair, as a foundation for primary education, is managing 25 schools with 7,500 pupils and 800 employees. According to Biesta (2012) education has three functions: 1. Qualification: teaching knowledge, skills and understanding, preparing the workforce and, through this, contribution to economic development and growth and to function in society. 2. Socialization: the way in which we become part of certain social, cultural and political orders. 3. Subjectification: opposite of the socialization function, processes of individuation, to become more autonomous and independent in thinking and acting. This assignment is quite a challenge in a city where there is a great inequality of opportunity for the development of children. A complex challenge because there is no clear cause. The quality of the school is an important factor, the socio-economic environment is another one (Inspectie van het Onderwijs, 2021). The 8-step approach (Simons & Nijhoff, 2021) is used in this paper to define a strategy for improving the opportunities for children in less privileged situations.

Step 1: The playing field

Optimal child development requires cooperation between school, parents and several other parties. In the policy memorandum on integrated youth care, the municipality of Tilburg (2020) expresses the ambition for cooperation with all partners in which policy is coordinated.

These partners are in the domain of healthcare (e.g., GGD, hospitals, GPs), welfare (e.g., CdT, IMW, SterkHuis), education (e.g., primary and secondary, partnership 'passend onderwijs'), childcare (e.g., K013), Safety (e.g., police), sports and culture (e.g., sports clubs, Cist, Factorium). A project group 'Good Start' tries to connect these partners.

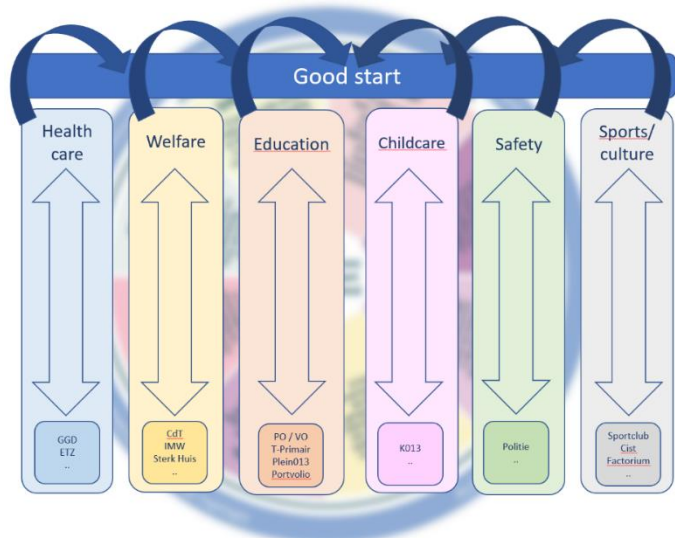


Fig.1 Cross domain project group Good Start

Step 2: Sustainability challenges

It is obvious that an optimal child development has several goals. Referring to the Global Goals for Sustainable Growth (UN, 2015), no. 4 Good Education (ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all) is the primary goal for Xpect Primair. However, this goal is inextricably linked with other goals. On the one hand because they are conditional to learning, like no. 3 Good health and no. 16 Peace and justice. On the other hand, education has a significant influence on the achievement of the other goals, of which no. 1 No poverty, no. 10 Reduce inequalities and no. 11 Sustainable cities and communities are directly related in this case.



Looking at the daily challenges the schools face, a number of them can be distinguished, which are plotted on impact and importance.

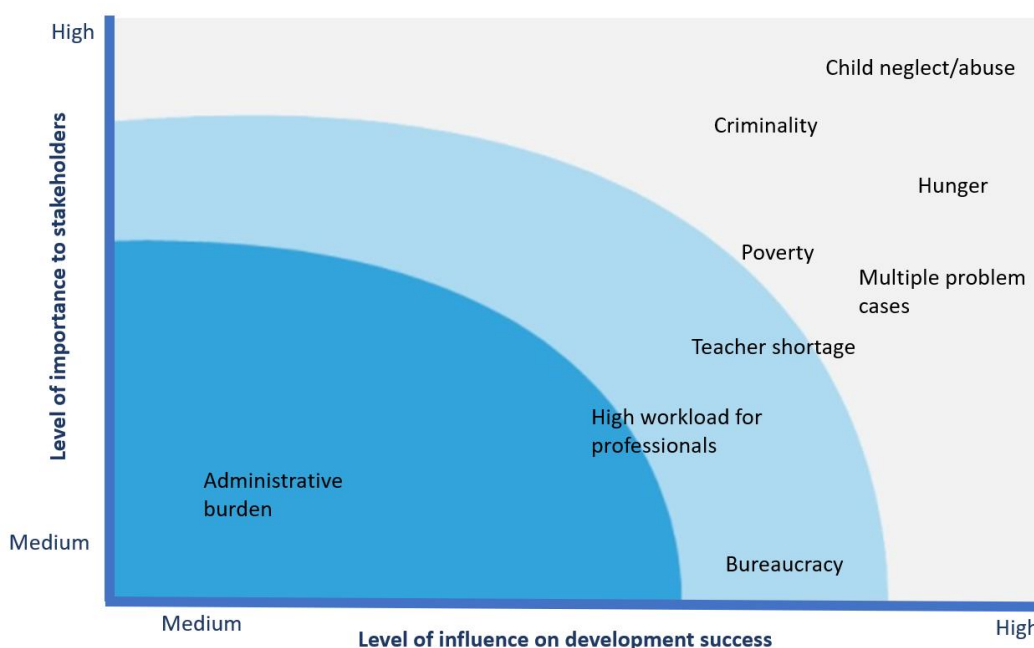


Fig.2 Challenges in facilitating the development of children

As we can see, socio-economic factors play a major role in children's development. These factors are complex and persistent and require close cooperation and coordination of policies and resources of various societal organisations. School, parents and community are inextricably connected in creating a good foundation for the development of children.

Step 3: Backcast the future

What is seen as an impossible ambition today, is realised in a few years in the city of Tilburg. Every child, no matter what their background or social environment is, is offered the same possibilities to develop their talents. By breaking down the barriers between the different societal organisations, between their different budgets and between their different objectives, Tilburg managed to realize an environment where all professionals are working together. Really working together to get it right for every child. As a result, children really get equal opportunities to develop themselves and find out what their talents are. This means that less children (and parents) need support from welfare or other organizations. More children can develop themselves to independent and working members of the community. It does not need any further explanation that this leads to a positive trend in the development of the wealth and well-being of the citizens of Tilburg.

Step 4: Current system loops

Everyone agrees that children deserve equal opportunities to develop to overcome poverty and feel safe and seen. But why are people aware of the current undesirable situation for a substantial part of our children, but are they unable to change it in a sustainable way? To change the situation, understanding of the different system loops is needed.

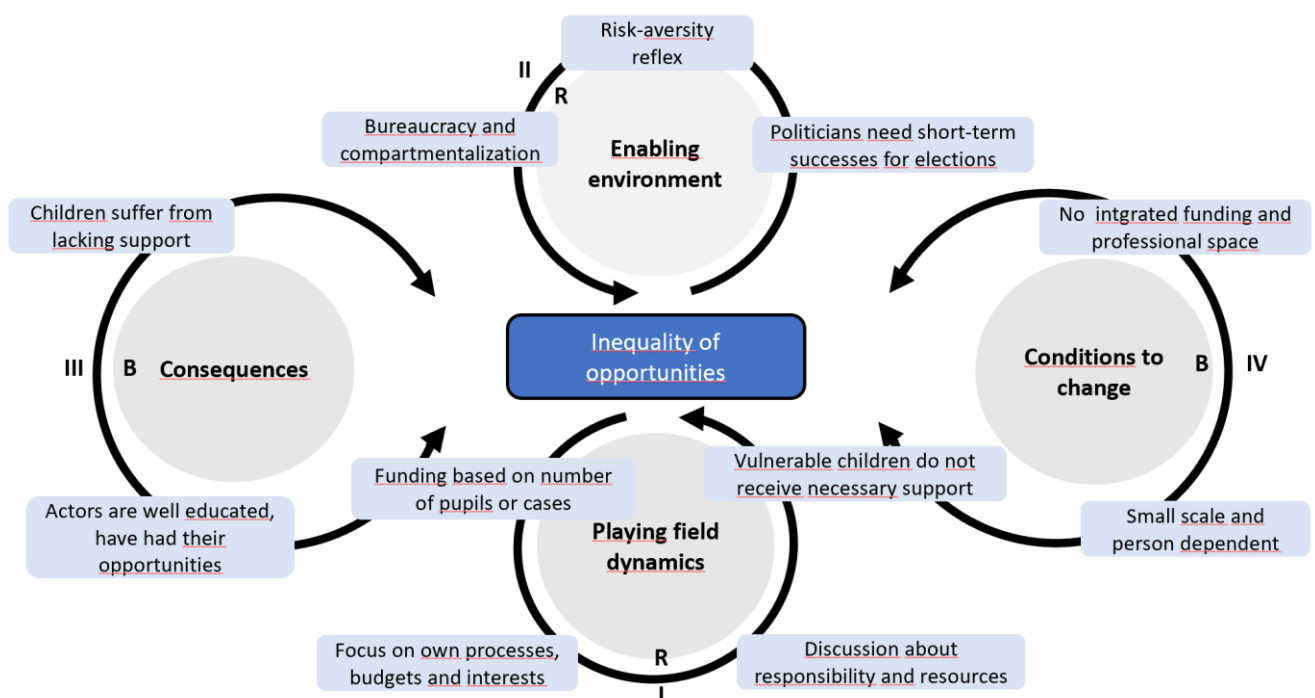


Fig.3 System loop regarding the development of children

The first loop (R I) is about the dynamics in the playing field. What incentives are there that lead to a collective behaviour which lead to the lack of equal opportunities? Looking at the educational organizations, schools are funded based on the number of pupils. The requested (hard) output is based on the results of the final test. Socio-economic factors are included in the standard used by the Inspectorate. Less is therefore already expected of children in so-called disadvantaged positions. Youth care is funded on the number of cases and hours they make. Welfare depends highly on subsidies, mainly based on input, rather than on desired output. This leads to organizations and professionals focussing on their own processes, budgets and interests, instead of cooperating in the best interests of the child. What an individual child needs in a certain situation, may deviate from the task of the relevant professional and he or she is then dependent on someone from another organization. Customization is often required that does not exactly fall within the scope of one of the organizations. Leading to discussions about responsibility and resources. The consequences are that vulnerable children do not receive the support they need, resulting in an inequality of opportunity for these children.

The enabling environment is subject of the second loop (R II). This describes the structures that support, strengthen or fail to correct the undesired outcome. Influencing social economic factors by governments and municipalities is strongly influenced by politics. The political colour often determines the priorities and solutions. Short-term successes are needed to get enough votes in the next elections. This leads to risk-averse politicians, who based their discissions on incidents instead of long-term vision and trust. Directors and policy makers develop a risk-aversity reflex in which incidents lead to generally applicable new policies and laws. The bureaucracy and compartmentalization that this entails restricts professionals in their room for manoeuvre. This perpetuates a lack of or an ineffective collaboration between professionals in the various domains, inhibiting the sufficiently support of children in difficult circumstances.

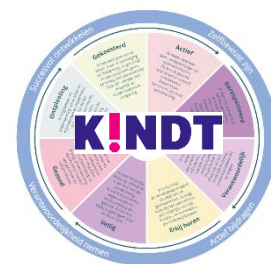
Looking at who is affected by the negative effects of the challenge (third loop, B III), a mismatch is seen. It is obvious that the children in unprivileged situations and difficult circumstances feel the negative effects directly, sometimes even physically. It would be very cynical to say that the societal organizations benefit directly from this situation. After all, if there are no problems, there is no need for their services. But the professionals working in the front line are confronted daily with these children. They feel the pressure to act, and at the same time often feel powerless, not able to solve the situation of the child. Although these are undoubtedly negative effects for the professionals, they are well educated professionals because of the chances they have had. They

have been able to get a job, a reasonable income, a house and it can be said that they are in better living conditions than these children.

The fourth loop (B IV) is about the alternatives and the possibility for actors to change their behaviour. At this time there are some small-scale initiatives. They are highly dependent on individuals collaborating, thinking outside the box, challenge boundaries and stretch the limits. In order to scale up these initiatives, financial flows have to run differently. Subsidies must be based on well-defined outcomes and must be goal-oriented instead of institution-oriented. laws and regulations must become less strict to give professionals the space to use their knowledge and skills.

Step 5: Initiatives for solutions

There are already several initiatives in the city to promote the cooperation and effectiveness of the various services. Different parties work together in different projects. One of the initiatives is K!NDT, a partnership between the municipality, primary education and welfare to develop common language for professionals working with children. By working from the same values and areas of development, it should be easier to achieve good coordination between the various partners. In



the Community school, partners work together from the point of view that “it takes a village to raise a child”. A collection of activities for parents, children and neighbours to create an environment in which all residents, young and old, live harmoniously together and work on the development of their neighbourhood. SmartStart is a data



driven approach in order to identify and prioritize the right challenges in a neighbourhood. The Taskforce child abuse tries to prevent, track down and stop child abuse. In the LEA (local educational agenda) the municipality of Tilburg is working together with the educational and childcare partners to use her financial resources as effectively as possible to prevent or eliminate learning disadvantages. TOM (tailor-made team) is a pilot to place professionals from the domains of welfare and health in schools in deprived areas in order to be able to provide care quickly and easily. IDBGH (‘it happens in the neighbourhood’) is an approach based on the principle that all children must receive the right education and support in their neighbourhood. Schools of different foundations and specialists

of the partnership “passend onderwijs” must work together to find a suitable place for all children in their neighbourhood. together they must ensure that sufficient expertise is available to meet the development needs of the children. Other initiatives are not described here but plotted in one of the four phases of sustainable transformation in the next figure.

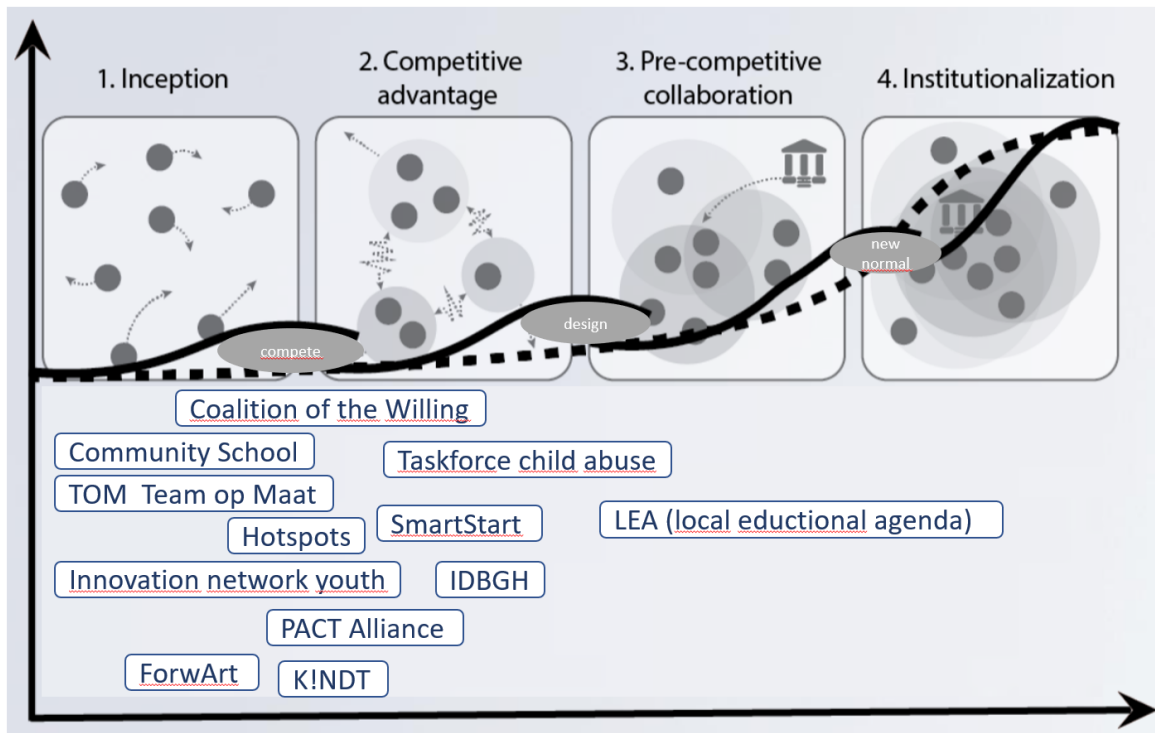


Fig.4 Initiatives for sustainable development of children

Most of these projects are initiated by one of the partners. Other partners who recognized the added value of it joined in, but only on a voluntary basis. The effect of the projects in the inception-phase often depends on the motivation of the partners. The participating partners have already made some more concrete agreements for the projects in the second phase. Continuity is more likely and new partners are actively approached. With the exception of the LEA, financial resources are not structurally arranged, which makes it more difficult to make long-term planning, necessary because the effects are not always visible in the short term. Another challenge is to connect all initiatives and not to organize them as separate projects. This is to prevent double or even counteracting actions. Exchanging knowledge, good and bad practices should lead to more effective and efficient use of available resources.

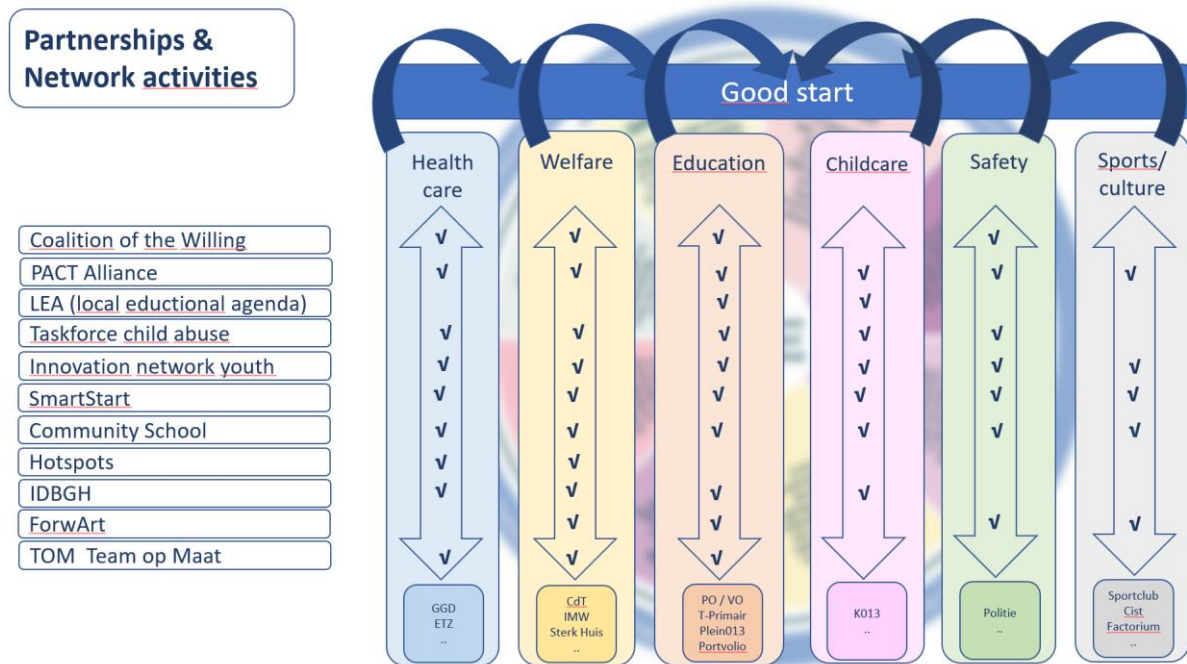


Fig.5 Selection of cross domain partnerships and network activities in Tilburg

In the next steps the focus will be on the projects TOM (tailor-made team) and IDBGH ('it happens in the neighbourhood'). From the position of primary education these projects will have a direct effect on the educational climate and development efficiency. IDBGH must provide appropriate education and additional support if necessary. The TOM ensures that personal social problems outside the school are dealt with quickly and adequately, so that children are also in the right circumstances to learn.

Step 6: Stakeholders

Parallel with the classification of the stakeholders by Simons and Nijhof (2021), the next stakeholders will be taken into account:

- ❖ Schools and societal organisations

Front line, directly responsible for education and other services for children.

- ❖ Government and municipality

Creating conditions through policies, laws and funding on national and local level.

- ❖ NGO's

Various interest groups in different domains with and without financing options.

❖ Financial institutions

As funding comes for the majority of the government and municipality, the financial institutions are not direct stakeholders. They can be involved in projects to empower parents and entrepreneurs in the neighbourhoods.

❖ Research institutions

Involved in problem analysis, design and selection of approach and effect measurement. Often related to university and colleges, transfer to local education for professionals.

For TOM to go from the first to the second phase it is recommended that the board of the foundation of the schools and the societal organizations involved, create a business model to make concrete based on the existing pilot which investments are needed and what it will yield for the child, the school and the environment in the short and long term. Use TOM as a benchmark for schools to differentiate themselves, leading to an advantage to stimulate other schools to join or as a complementary service in the neighbourhood approach. The municipality must develop a long-term vision on TOM as a sustainable part of their social agenda. Create integrated funds for which the necessary professionals can be deployed, regardless of which organization they are employed by, so that they can do the necessary things without a conflict of interest. Interest groups must be made aware of this project so they can raise awareness in other cities and lobby on national level. They can support new TOM's by funding the start-up costs. Research institutes can study the conditions for new system loops, study good and bad practices and develop an approach that is science and evidence based to expand nationwide.

IDBGH can make a next step to the pre-competitive collaboration phase when the boards of the foundation not only agree on this approach as they do now but make it part of their strategic policy and make school leaders responsible for the implementation, which is therefore not without obligation. Competitors should become colleagues in the interest of the child and school leaders should therefore not be judged on the number of pupils. The government and municipality must adopt this long-term vision, develop appropriate objectives and criteria to stimulate collaboration in neighbourhoods and adjust the funding accordingly.

NGO's must join platforms where they can influence other educational organizations and municipalities. They can act as a watchdog and signal when schools in neighbourhoods or cities compete with each other instead of working together, at the expense of the best interests of vulnerable children. Although the funding of IDBGH is primarily a responsibility of the

government and municipality, financial institutions can collaborate by providing funding for entrepreneurs who want to invest in housing and other societal facilities in the neighbourhoods. Research institutions must collect scientific evidence from an objective position and calculate potential impact that is necessary for a sustainable adjustment of the organization of the local education and financing system.

Step 7: Strategy

To take the next step towards the aspirational future, it is necessary to develop a strategy that indicates who should do what and when.

To start close, Xpect Primair, as the largest foundation with the most primary schools in Tilburg, must take the lead. TOM is now a project on one of her schools, therefore Xpect Primair is the right party to make the business case concrete together with its partners. Because budgets for the next calendar year are determined around October or November, it is important to speed up the business case. The aim should be to increase the number of TOMs in school year 2021/2022, so that further work can be done on refining the business case and to start profiling schools that have a TOM. Meanwhile, Xpect Primair must not forget to involve the other school boards in Tilburg and to encourage the start of a TOM at one of their schools.

The societal partners of TOM have to use the business case to gain support within their own organization to make this approach a structural part of their service package from 2023, appropriate to their social task and own ambitions.

The business case will help the municipality to include TOM in their long-term vision, elaborated in their social agenda. Broad support among the parties in the municipal council, laid down in a Council Decision, is necessary to prevent changes in policy after elections. The next step is to come to an integrated, cross domain budget, which probably takes a year (2022) to prepare. Interest groups must be actively involved by a representative of Xpect Primair and her partners. These groups must lobby on national and municipal level and make additional funds available for the start-up costs for new TOMs in school year 2021/2022. Students at the Tilburg University and Fontys Hogeschool in Tilburg must be invited and stimulated to do their research and graduation projects on TOMs in 2022. Their outcomes can be used for a well-founded basis for the new way of organizing and financing in 2023.

Regarding to IDBGH, the initiative lies with T-Primair, the cooperative of all educational foundations in Tilburg and the immediate vicinity. It is up to the boards to delegate the

agreements made to their school leaders and to hold each other accountable for compliance with them. The foundations must create an atmosphere in which incidents that do not act in the best interests of the child can be discussed openly. Exemplary behaviour and unambiguous communication from the directors are of great importance in this regard. They will have to start with this right away, if there are doing it already.

The municipality has adopted this approach but must align her policies and subsidies. Some adaption can made directly, some need more preparation. Next period can be used to inventory which policies and subsidies must be aligned and the process of bringing about change must be initiated by the relevant aldermen and officials. Preferably before the municipal elections on March 16th, 2022. The municipality of Tilburg, together with interest groups have to lobby in The Hague to get this item on the political agenda. Less labelled and compartmentalised financing would help to deploy resources across domains.

In neighbourhoods where cooperation is getting underway and local entrepreneurs want to join in, financial institutions must make their social contribution by making it possible to finance their local initiatives. This is hard to plan but should not be an obstacle to entrepreneurship.

Research institutions like the Tilburg University must start collecting scientific evidence in 2022, needed for convincing local and national government to change policies and create margins in the terms of funding flows in 2024.

Step 8: My role

In my role of Director Educational Quality & Development at Xpect Primair I must embrace the promising and illuminate the gap. This means that I must take the initiative to realize the business case for TOM and for IDGBH, encourage our directors and, above all, appeal to cooperation in the neighbourhoods. I have to discuss incidents and obstacles with the directors of our partners to create the right conditions for the school leaders and professionals at the schools.

For both projects I have to use and expand my network within the municipality to involve the right people and make them jointly responsible. I have to find out who best maintains contact with the research institutes and interest groups. My chairman of the board has a great network she can use to involve the right people in the right position.

Together with my group members of the overarching project group Good Start, we can establish connections between all ongoing projects and have access to all decision-making levels in Tilburg. I promised to share this paper with them to work together on a strategy to achieve our goal of a good start for every child.

References

- Biesta, G.J.J. (2012). *Goed onderwijs en de cultuur van het meten. Ethiek, politiek en democratie*. Amsterdam: Boom uitgevers.
- Gemeente Tilburg (2020). *Beleidsnota Integrale jeugdaanpak*.
- Inspectie van het Onderwijs, (2021). *De staat van het onderwijs 2021*. Utrecht, Inspectie van het Onderwijs.
- Simons, L. & Nijhof, A.(2021). *Changing the game. Sustainable market transformation strategies to understand and tackle the big and complex sustainability challenges of our generation.* Oxon: Routledge.
- United Nations, (2015). *Sustainable Development Goals*. Retrieved from <https://www.globalgoals.org>