

Report Lunch Workshop 15-11-2024: Hatert, a neighborhood full of energy! Are you warm, this winter? Learning from experiences

Text and photos by Martijn Gerritsen

The leaves are falling, it's time to turn on the heating again. But not everyone takes this for granted. In the Netherlands, some 600,000 households face (too) high energy bills. Many people therefore turn the heating on very low or not at all. The bill may remain low, but the consequences for health and well-being can be very harmful. Does this also play a role in Hatert? And what can we do about it together?

Walk-in with lunch

The workshop started with a delicious lunch prepared by a local resident. While enjoying soup and sandwiches, the participants could start talking to each other. Mark Wiering, researcher at Radboud University and involved in COPPER, welcomed everyone to the Hatert community center. Besides a number of residents of Hatert, professionals from organizations in the neighborhood were also present, including Bindkracht10, House of Compassion, and Steunpunt Energietransitie.



What is energy for?

Karin Landsbergen, working at the lectorate Social Sustainable Practices of the Hogeschool Arnhem Nijmegen, then introduced the topic of the workshop. She explained that it is important to consider how citizens use energy in order to understand

where and why energy poverty occurs in the Netherlands. Low income, high energy prices, poor home energy quality, and high energy consumption are factors that make citizens vulnerable to energy poverty. There is also a lot of “hidden” energy poverty.

Karin emphasized that there are various technical, financial and social measures that can be taken to reduce or remedy the problem. Sometimes policies can actually get in people's way. She indicated that it is therefore especially important to put the perspective of residents first. After all, energy is a means for people to meet their basic needs, such as washing clothes and staying healthy. She also emphasized “that people are not pathetic, but that policy might be.”

Living with an excessive energy bill

Jessica van Hinthem then shared her story as an expert by experience. In her presentation, she addressed the significant impact that energy poverty has on citizens and their well-being. For example, people may not feel heard and seen because they cannot afford to seek help. Often shame plays a role in this: it may feel like too big a step to approach others to help you. In addition, letting social workers into their own homes is a high barrier for people who can no longer pay their energy bills. Jessica also indicated that there is a lot of energy poverty in the Netherlands among the working poor; they often earn just too much to claim benefits, but too little to make a good living.

What are actions that can help? According to Jessica, it is important to use the knowledge and experiences of people who have themselves experienced energy poverty. They can better understand the situation people are in, or the trade-offs they have to make. Furthermore, key people in the neighborhood can also be a valuable point of contact; people who are a familiar face in their own neighborhood can make it easier to ask for and admit help.

It is therefore very important for agencies such as municipalities and housing associations to build a relationship of trust with residents experiencing energy poverty. This is especially important for the what Jessica called the “bugger-off group”: a group of people who, due to the chronic stresses of energy poverty, have no “space” in their heads to engage in possible solutions.

A personal approach and many low-threshold actions, such as offering information in neighborhood squares, can help. Here, according to Jessica, the power of repetition applies: if, as a municipality, you only share a message once with a flyer, it is less likely that someone will take action and ask for help than if that same message appears, so to speak, every month in the local neighborhood newspaper.

The role of an energy coach

The third part of the workshop focused on the role of energy coaches. Joost from Huis van Compassie explained what he and his colleagues as energy coaches do and encounter in their work. Energy fixers are active in Nijmegen to take energy-saving measures in the home, such as gluing radiator foil or a draft strip. It is also important to talk to residents about how they can change their behavior so that they use less energy

structurally. For example, people's showering behavior sometimes determines up to 20% of their energy bill. The energy coaches in Nijmegen conduct these talks with residents.

Joost also emphasized that people's trust must first be gained before they can start working as an energy fixer or coach. It often takes a lot of time and effort to build this trust. Energy coaches with diverse sociocultural backgrounds and language skills help to reach as many people as possible who can benefit from help. The social power present in neighborhoods can be harnessed in this process. Joost gave the example that during the first week in which he and colleagues are active in a neighborhood, not so many appointments are requested. The second week this is already more, but the third week the agenda often fills up with requests. Positive experiences are then passed on via-via in the neighborhoods, which makes people feel more confident to invite an energy coach or energy fixer to their homes.

How does this play out in Hatert?

At the end of the workshop, participants in different groups wrote down on a large sheet what insights they had gained. They also discussed how this plays out in the Hatert neighborhood, and what can be done to reduce energy poverty.





LUNCHWORKSHOP - HATERT, EEN WIJK VOL ENERGIE! ZIT JIJ ER WARMPIES BIJ, DEZE WINTER? LEREN VAN ERVARINGEN

De bladeren vallen, het is weer tijd om de verwarming aan te zetten. Maar voor lang niet iedereen is dit vanzelfsprekend. In Nederland zien zo'n 600.000 huishoudens op tegen een (te) hoge energierekening. Veel mensen zetten daarom de verwarming of heel laag of helemaal niet meer aan. De rekening blijft dan wel laag, maar de gevolgen voor gezondheid en welzijn kunnen zeer schadelijk zijn. Speelt dit ook in Hatert? En wat kunnen we hier dan samen aan doen?

Krijg jij hier ook energie van? Dan zien we je graag op 15 november! I.v.m. de lunch is het fijn als je uiterlijk 13 november aanmeldt via de QR code --> of via: <https://forms.office.com/e/LianmuVNrG>



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Deze activiteit is onderdeel van de Nijmeegse Energie-4Daagse die plaatsvindt van 12-16 november. Allerlei activiteiten in en om Nijmegen worden afgesloten met een gratis Energie-Markt in De Vasim op zaterdag 16 november van 11-17 uur. Voor het hele programma zie: steunpuntenergietransitie.nl/energie-4daagse

Programma

12.00u Inloop met lunch

12.15u Waar is energie voor bedoeld?

Karin Landsbergen HAN

12.30u Leven met een te hoge energierekening

Jessica van Hinthem HAN

12.45u De rol van een energiecoach

Huis van Compassie Nijmegen

13.00u Met elkaar in gesprek over de vraag: hoe speelt dit in Hatert?

13.55u

Opbrengsten van de dag

14.00u

Einde

Vrijdag 15 november, 12-14 uur, met gratis lunch!

Voor sleutelfiguren in de wijk, iedereen is welkom!

Wijkcentrum Hatert
Couwenbergstraat 22 –
Ruimte B06



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