Successful cohousing with refugees
An analysis on the role of housing associations in cohousing projects involving refugees

AR1R035 Housing policy, management and sustainability
Management in the Built Environment, Delft University of Technology

M. Zonneveld & L.J.A. Buter

4285565 & 4621611
M.Zonneveld@student.tudelft.nl
L.J.A.Buter@student.tudelft.nl

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Dr. D.K. Czischke

Abstract – It appears that the housing of refugees in its current form fails regarding the integration of refugees. This paper will research the approach used by housing associations to improve the integration of refugees in Dutch society by the cohousing of Dutch youngsters together with refugees. The main question is: How do housing associations apply the cohousing model to refugee housing? To answer this question, information about housing associations, cohousing and refugees and their interrelationships is explained. Multiple approaches are found through interviews with two housing associations and these will be discussed. The gained experience from current projects can be used by housing associations for improvements in future cohousing projects with refugees.

Refugees, cohousing, housing associations, collaborations, integration – AR1R035,
Management in the Built Environment, Housing policy, management and sustainability
Introduction

Background
The Arab Spring and the following unrest in the Middle East sparked a new wave of refugees. Many of them looked for shelter in Europe. After a few years, the European Union agreed upon the distribution of refugees who fled to Europe (Vluchtelingenwerk, 2017). Although not all member states follow this agreement, the Netherlands does (NOS, 2017). It is important that all those refugees who may stay, integrate in the Dutch culture. One challenge for the municipalities is the housing of refugees. Most of the refugees in The Netherlands are currently being housed in reception centres. The situation in these centres is poor and often leads to problems (NOS, 2017).

Goals and problem statement
It is not clear whether these refugees will stay for good in The Netherlands or if they will go back to their country of origin in the coming years, because the future of conflicts in the Middle-East is hard to predict. This makes it hard to find a housing strategy that fits for now, and in the future. Despite this uncertainty, the Dutch national government has decided that refugees will have to integrate in the Dutch culture. Until now, most of the refugees are housed in reception centres. They live with other refugees and do not have much contact with Dutch people. There is no work or organised activities in the centres that stimulates interaction with Dutch people. The daily activities do not stimulate integration. To try and remedy this unwanted situation, small cohousing projects with refugees and Dutch youngsters arise like Startblok Riekerhaven (housing association De Key) or Science Park (housing association Rochdale). Are cohousing projects a better way to house refugees and what is the approach of the housing associations, organizing these projects?

Relevance of the research
This research on the integration of refugees through cohousing is of social relevance, due to the large numbers of refugees searching for shelter in Europe and The Netherlands. This paper has scientific relevance, as the problem is quite new and not that many articles are written about it. This leads to the used method of interviewing for this research, instead of literature research.

Main- and sub questions
Following from the background above, the main research question of this paper is: How do housing associations apply the cohousing model to refugee housing? To answer this question a list of sub questions is drawn up:
- What are the most important elements to start a cohousing project?
- Which responsibilities do housing associations have in cohousing refugees?
- How could cohousing including refugees be improved?

This paper starts with a literature overview on the main elements of research which are discussed. The used methods including the operationalisation comes next. Finally, the results, the discussion and the conclusion are described.
Literature overview
A lot of scientific research has been done on the topic of cohousing already (Williams, 2005; Williams, 2008; Durrett, 2009; Chatterton 2013). It appears that all of these have a certain type of specialisation. For example, Williams (2005; 2008) and Durrett (2009) focus on the benefits of cohousing with senior citizens. Chatterton (2013) describes the advantages of cohousing in regards to post-carbon cities. Jarvis (2011) writes about the integration of the daily lives of those who live in cohousing projects, but does not address the relation of cohousing and the integration of refugees.

Housing associations
In the Netherlands, housing associations were founded by both private and public parties at the end of the 19th century with the purpose of housing personnel or help the poor. After World War I the number of housing associations grew rapidly, but their size remained small. After World War II the government took the lead in rebuilding all houses, the housing associations were put under governmental control and became public organisations. From the 60’s onward the government privatised them more and more (Atrivé, 2013).

Nowadays, housing associations are private companies. However, they have a public task to provide sufficient affordable houses for the lower income groups. This makes them market focussed, but not market conform. Brandsen et al. (2005) positions the different social housing models and puts housing associations in the middle of the state, the market and the community (see figure 1) with the remark that their position can move a bit due to the current political wind.

Gruis (2008) argues that there are four types of housing associations based on their position on being prospector vs. defenders and commercial vs. societal oriented, see figure 2. The approach of housing associations on (co)housing refugees comes from this identity. (Co)housing refugees is new as a concept (prospector) and social oriented which will classify the housing associations in this research as ‘societal innovator’.

![Figure 1, social housing models. Brandsen et al. (2005)](image1)

![Figure 2, types of housing associations. Gruis (2008)](image2)
Gruis (2008) identifies five characteristics for societal innovators:

1. Being active in a broad and continuously developing domain, implying a dynamic management of its housing stock as well as an expansion of activities outside the domain of housing;
2. Monitoring a wide range of societal developments;
3. Creating change in the housing associations sector;
4. Growing through product development and expansion of the range of activities;
5. Growth may occur in spurts, for example through mergers and strategic partnerships

Measuring these characteristics will give a better understanding of the foundations of the approach that housing associations apply when (co)housing refugees.

Municipalities get a number of refugees appointed by the government, which they have to house. Municipalities are free to choose how they will be housed. For example, the municipality of Amsterdam stimulates cohousing projects as Riekerhaven where almost 300 refugees live. Furthermore, it has agreed with housing associations that 30% of new tenantless social housing is reserved for people that need new housing for social-medicinal reasons, like refugees (Municipality of Amsterdam, 2018). Next to this, housing associations are there to house people who cannot afford a dwelling completely by themselves. By far, most refugees belong to this group, which results in the fact that housing associations are obliged to house refugees.

Cohousing

The cohousing concept has its roots in utopian, feminist and communitarian movements of the 19th and 20th centuries. Cohousing was considered as a solution to overcome the exclusion of women and single parents from the workforce, as well as improving the quality of life for children and families (Scazoni, 2000). Franck & Ahrentzen (1989), Fromm (1991) and Norwood & Smith (1995) talk about ‘supportive’ and ‘nurturing’ cohousing communities, which again promote social inclusion and the development of social capital. Through time some parts of the concept have changed and/or are placed under a larger movement like ‘new urbanism’ or ‘smart growth’ as solutions for current day problems.

The first professional landlords, housing associations and traditional cooperatives joined the market for cohousing projects in the 1990s, in Germany (Ache & Fedrowitz, 2012). Policy made by the government and the cultural and economic circumstances in which the cohousing initiatives operate vary from one region to another (Tummers, 2015). Next to this, each composition of stakeholders gives a different, characteristic dynamic to the cohousing project. Although many cohousing projects are organised ‘bottom-up’, each housing association provides a custom made project and has its own way in which they guarantee the future operation of the project, including secured returns on investment.

Nowadays, cohousing has emerged from some ideologist ideas and has attracted people with the same ideas. People used to live in cohousing projects voluntarily, because they believed in the concept. These days the cohousing model is also being used to stimulate the integration of refugees (Härd, 2016). However, young refugees in Amsterdam cannot make the choice whether they want to live in a cohousing project or in a normal dwelling. When they are single and younger than 28 years old, they belong to the group of refugees which is housed in cohousing projects, according to the policy of the municipality of Amsterdam.
The social, institutional, and coordinating activities, performed by the residents of cohousing projects, together improve solidarity and shared effort that defines this social movement (Jarvis, 2011). These vibrant communities may not suit refugees. Refugees often have faced some horrific events and may need psychological help or an adapted form of cohousing, instead of such a demanding social community.

In the Netherlands, just a few cohousing projects are set up by housing associations. When they do, it’s mostly set up for elderly or has something to do with an environmentally conscious lifestyle (Omslag, no date). It becomes clear that housing associations in The Netherlands do not have that much experience with cohousing yet. Especially cohousing with refugees is something totally new. In October 2017, there were six housing associations who had realised nine refugee housing projects in Amsterdam. Only project Riekerhaven from housing association De Key had started from scratch with an ideological meaning and could steer on the cohousing community. While on the other projects, a refugee was placed when a Dutch inhabitant left and there was no possibility to steer (Nul20, 2017).

Refugees
Refugees (asylum seekers) enter The Netherlands as applicants for asylum. After registration, they wait for the decision on their asylum application. When admitted, refugees obtain a title of residence. There are different titles: temporary status, A status, AMA (Asielaanvragen van Alleenstaande Minderjarige Asielzoekers) and admission for humanitarian reasons. Refugees with a temporary status have permission to stay until the situation in their home country is safe again. A status means that the refugee may stay permanent and AMA is a status for single refugees under 18. When admitted or staying in an reception centre for more than 6 months, an asylum migrant will be registered in the Basic registration Persons (BRP, Basisregistratie Personen) (Hartog & Zorlu, 2009).

After staying in an investigation centre for 48 hours, there are two housing options for refugees, before they are admitted. The first option is staying in a reception centre. All refugees start with this option. The second option is staying in an accomodation found by themselves, often with help of friends or family. This is called the Logeerregeling (Lodge regulation). When refugees use the second option they will be registered in the Personal Records Database (BPR, Basisregistratie Personen), which contains the personal data of people who live in The Netherlands. Registration is needed, because the reception centre no longer needs to save a bed for the specific refugee.

The Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA, Centraal Orgaan opvang asielzoekers) is in charge with the housing of refugees (COA, 2016). When admitted, a refugee will be assigned to a municipality by the COA. Housing associations often help the municipality with the housing of refugees. In addition, vacant government buildings are sometimes used for the housing. Despite several measures and subsidies for stimulating the housing of refugees there are not enough accommodations available. Through this, admitted refugees keep beds in reception centres occupied, which causes that new refugees (not admitted) have to stay in emergency shelters (Rijksoverheid vluchtelingen huisvesting, No date).
Integration
During their stay in a reception centre refugees do not yet need to integrate. Despite of this, volunteers of the COA teach them some words in Dutch (NH nieuws, 2015). When refugees become admitted they are required to integrate. Within three years they need to successfully pass the integration exam. This exam tests their knowledge about the Dutch language, Dutch society and orientation on the Dutch Labor Market.

To learn all this information, refugees can follow a course, offered by different private companies or foundations. If this school is listed on the web page of the government, refugees can take out a loan to pay the course (Rijksoverheid, No date) (Dienst Uitvoering Onderwijs, No date). Refugees often complain that the course or exam does not resemble the Dutch society (EenVandaag, 2016).

Furthermore, the integration process focuses on some measures intended to meet the immediate needs and facilitate a basis on which the refugees can integrate structurally. However, after these measures, further integration through compulsory professional language training, help with finding work or retraining is not provided (Korac, 2003).

An common used definition of social integration is the one Durkheim made. “He assumes that humans are inherently egoistic, but norms, beliefs and values (collective consciousness) form the moral basis of the society, resulting in social integration (…)” (Yazdani, Shahbazi & Amoozchi, 2015). When admitted and housed in an own dwelling, a refugee is not stimulated to contact Dutch people. Cohousing with Dutch youngsters is more in line with Durkheim; the focus on community building (Jarvis, 2011) triggers the collective consciousness of refugees and this is believed to lead to social-cultural integration in the Dutch society.

Next to social-cultural integration, Yu et al. (2007) makes clear that economic integration is of equal importance. Research by Vroome & Van Tubergen (2010) concluded that having social contacts, and especially being friends with Dutch youngsters and being a member of a mainstream Dutch organisation, positively affects economic integration.

Living in a reception centre does not help economic integration, like it does not help social-cultural integration either. This is caused by the prevention of acquiring first-hand knowledge of the refugees’ new country, gaining work experience, learning the language and acquiring social contacts. These are all resources which will help refugees finding a job (Vroome & Van Tubergen, 2010). The time spent in a reception centre even has a strong relation with health problems (Laban et al., 2004). Health problems are negatively related to economic integration (Vroome & Van Tubergen, 2010).
Conclusion on literature study
In this paragraph the meaning of the findings, from the three concepts (housing associations, cohousing and refugees) and their connections, on the topic will be explained.

Housing associations are the most important element of the research, as without them there will not be any approach on applying the cohousing model to refugee housing. They also execute the approach. Housing associations all stem from the same thought: They are established to house people with a low income. Nevertheless, each housing association has its own mission which influences the approach it handles. They are all established to house people with a low income, but the one mission focuses on youngsters and the other on elderly.

The three concepts are not always in tune with each other. Some characteristics of the concepts are contradictory when applied in the field together. For example, the concept of cohousing includes community building and intensive management. Housing associations are not familiar with it and are not eager on it because of the new housing act, mentioned above. These paradoxes will be interesting to research by interviewing the housing associations, as they need to play an active role preventing these mismatches.

There are also points where the three concepts are in tune with each other. For example, housing the lower income groups (in which refugees fall) has always been one of the core tasks of housing associations. As such, they do have their processes adapted to them already. The strengths of knowledge that housing associations have should be allocated and sought after. This will give insight in core aspects, such as the primary set up of the projects.
Methods
In this section the way of sampling, data collection and processing are discussed. The semi-structured interviews are based on literature from previous chapters.

Sample source
As is concluded from the literature, the housing associations are the most important elements in the current approaches, because they determine the foundation for the projects. But what are their reasonings and considerations? A basic understanding of their general business operations can be retrieved from their websites and reports, but cohousing refugees is not their general business. To gain deeper insight in their motivations, housing associations which have worked with or are working on cohousing refugees will be the main source of data.

Population and sample selection
The study population consists of housing associations which applied, or are applying, the cohousing model on refugee housing. Only seven housing association were working on applying the cohousing model on refugee housing. Due to shortage in time, this research could unfortunately not interview all seven of them, a selection had to be made.

The first representative of a housing associations that was interviewed is Mr. Postuma. He is an employee of De Key, which was the first housing association to create a cohousing project from scratch, called Riekerhaven. As there were no examples of such projects in the Netherlands, so The Key was not influenced by other projects. This makes De Key very interesting to research. Thus, we are able to follow this pioneering project from the very beginning to the project realisation, which became official municipal policy.

Due to a lack of available information, because the subject is so new, this research makes use of the snowball sampling technique (Bryman, 2015). During the interview with De Key, we asked additional information on other cohousing projects. Thanks to this, it is possible to make a better decision on which cohousing project and housing association would be the most interesting for the second interview. It appeared that most cohousing projects would just copy as much as possible from De Key, but one has a deviant formula, housing association Rochdale.

Rochdale first applied the cohousing model on two of their already existing projects with student apartments. Every student that moved out was replaced by a refugee until half the apartments were occupied by refugees. Currently, Rochdale is building a new cohousing project at Science Park in Amsterdam. Here, they are realizing accommodations based on their vision of cohousing refugees.

By investigating two different types of cohousing approaches, this research tries to provide a holistic overview on the question ‘how do housing associations apply the cohousing model to refugee housing?’. This research acknowledges that not all sources are heard and as a consequence, this has consequences for our main findings.
Data collection
This research makes use of qualitative, face-to-face semi structured interviews (Bryman, 2015). The semi-structured set up of the interview allows to improvise when new and interesting insights are given which need to be explored. The insights from the first interview with De Key are used to collect more clear and thorough answers from the upfollowing interview with Rochdale. The interviews can be found in appendixes one and two. The interviews were allowed to be recorded by both interviewees and were transcribed afterwards. The researchers are aware of the possibility of mistakes in interpretation.
Results
Here, the results of the interviews will be used to answer the sub questions. Hereafter, in the discussion the results will be compared with the literature. Finally, in the conclusion, the main question based on these results and discussion will be answered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Riekerhaven</th>
<th>Project Science Park</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Housing association</strong>: De Key</td>
<td><strong>Housing association</strong>: Rochdale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interviewed</strong>: Rienk Postuma</td>
<td><strong>Interviewed</strong>: Pieter de Roest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amount of refugees</strong>: 282</td>
<td><strong>Amount of refugees</strong>: 120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amount of Dutch youngsters</strong>: 283</td>
<td><strong>Amount of Dutch youngsters</strong>: 120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong>: 18 – 27 years old</td>
<td><strong>Age</strong>: 18 – 27 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Management</strong>: self-management, done by residents</td>
<td><strong>Management</strong>: done by Rochdale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Composition of refugee residents</strong>: focus on ‘magic mix’, as much different nationalities and education levels as possible</td>
<td><strong>Composition of refugee residents</strong>: no specific composition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Composition of Dutch youngster residents</strong>: students, graduated and working people</td>
<td><strong>Composition of Dutch youngster residents</strong>: students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location</strong>: Amsterdam Nieuw-West</td>
<td><strong>Location</strong>: Amsterdam-Oost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opened in</strong>: 2016</td>
<td><strong>Opened in</strong>: 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amount of refugee project before this one</strong>: 0</td>
<td><strong>Amount of refugee project before this one</strong>: 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total number of rentals De Key in 2016</strong>: 36,997 (De Key, No date)</td>
<td><strong>Total number of rentals Rochdale in 2016</strong>: 37,884 (Rochdale, 2017)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tabel 1, Case Boxes of project Riekerhaven and Science Park. Table made by authors.

Starting a cohousing project
First of all, a housing association has to determine the goals they want to reach with the cohousing project. Both De Key and Rochdale have the same agreement with the municipality of Amsterdam, which states how much and in which way refugees should be accommodated. Part of this agreement is the social integration of a select group of refugees through cohousing with Dutch youngsters. The exact interpretation and execution of the way how to do so differ, but their project goals are the same. They want to provide refugees and Dutch youngsters with housing, a nice area to live in and a chance to integrate for the refugees (appendix 1&2). These main goals are broken down into sub goals. When the goals and ambitions are determined, the roadmap to achieve them must be formed. Cohousing is not only about housing, housing associations also must determine what their side tasks are and which of them they will outsource.

De Key decided to start from scratch: they build a new complex, resulting in Riekerhaven. The first two projects of Rochdale were placed in two already existing buildings, where Dutch students were living. De Key could steer on how to build the community, because every resident was new (appendix 1). Rochdale placed a refugee in every room which became vacant through the process of students moving out. For this reason, they could steer the community forming a lot less. The third and current refugee project of Rochdale is working
on, project Science Park, is a new complex. So, this time they can steer the forming of the community more than at the first two projects (appendix 2).

Cohousing refugees was new for both De Key and Rochdale. As mentioned above, De Key did not even have an example. They gathered input through questionnaires for refugees and people living in the surroundings, but no scientific research. De Key trusted on their experience that they had as a housing association. The building of Riekerhaven has been done top-down (some managers in the top of a company decide what’s happening). Because, in the end De Key decided everything about the building-part themself. The community is being build bottom-up (everyone together decide together what’s happening). The community organises themselves, De Key only provided the conditions (appendix 1). Prior to project Science Park, Rochdale did not do any scientific research either, but used their experience too. Based on both their general experience and NDSM wharf/Nierkerkestraat project experience, Rochdale designed both the building of the complex and the community top-down (appendix 2).

After the first set up, De Key made a big effort to select the right future residents, not all Dutch youngsters are suited for cohousing with refugees in their opinion. The COA divides the refugees. De Key asked for a ‘mixed group’ but they could not pick the refugees themselves. For the long-term nature of the project, they asked for refugees who could stay for at least five years in The Netherlands. This was granted by the municipality of Amsterdam (appendix 1). With the first two projects, Rochdale was dependent on which students left the complexes. At Science Park they are able to select Dutch youngsters and refugees on predetermined traits. Housing associations are only allowed to give temporary contracts of five years to people younger than 28 years old. These contracts provide De Key and Rochdale the needed flexibility, because it is not sure how long the accommodations will stay (appendix 2).

To find the best suitable Dutch youngsters to live in the cohousing project, De Key set up an information day which Dutch youngsters who were interested in the Riekerhaven project could visit. During this day, information about the project and the expected way of living with refugees was presented. Furthermore, Dutch youngsters had to write a motivation letter in which they explained why they want to live at the project. Presence on the information days and writing a motivation letter was used to filter the right kind of Dutch youngsters, as De Key thought about it. They realised that there would be people who would gave socially desirable answers, to get a room in the busy city of Amsterdam, but did not find a solution for this problem (appendix 1). Rochdale acknowledges this problem as well and is working on their own selection procedure for the Dutch youngsters. They are looking for motivated Dutch youngsters. No expats, they are considered as unfit for the project (appendix 2).

In the new housing act of 2015 it is stated that housing associations may only perform housing activities (Rijksoverheid, 2015). De Key and Rochdale acknowledge that the concept of cohousing and the responsibility of the integration of the refugees ask for more than housing only. They both made the decision of not doing the extra tasks themselves but go in a partnership with an institution who is specialized in these types of tasks. Through outsourcing, every party involved is doing what they do best. Good communication is crucial though. Partnership is an important point of success (appendix 1&2).
De Key acknowledges that Riekerhaven has been very introvert (residents didn’t make much contact with neighbours) for a long time, but now sees the added value of becoming more extrovert and makes a connection with the neighbourhood. They are inviting the neighbourhood to come by, but the attendance is less than they want. De Key is trying to improve this and wants to do this better from the start with their new cohousing project Elzenhagen (appendix 1). Rochdale is working on finding the connections with their direct surroundings as well. Next to their location is a technical oriented ‘start-up village’ (incubator). They want refugees to learn or work over there which could help their economic integration by being in contact with the Dutch labour market and expand their network which could help their social-cultural integration (appendix 2). Both De Key and Rochdale acknowledge the value of a good connection and relation with the (direct) surrounding (appendix 1&2).

Responsibilities of the housing associations (in refugee cohousing)

Around the time De Key started with project Riekerhaven, the scientific council for government policy (WRR) published a document about how to deal with the housing of refugees (Engbersen et al., 2015). Their most important conclusion was to organise the practical integration aspects, such as housing, language learning, educating and network building at the same period of time, instead of one after another. In this way, refugees would integrate on different fields on the same time instead of one after another.

At Riekerhaven, De Key has the core task to house refugees. However, they kept the advice of the WRR and the ideas of Achmed Baâdoud (chairman daily board of Stadsdeel Nieuw-west) on mixing the refugees with Dutch youngsters in mind during the organisation of the project. De Key created conditions which stimulated integration, following the advice of the WRR. The fact that refugees meet Dutch youngsters gives them the chance to build up a network. Integration activities, like language lessons, are not organized by De Key, but they offer the space for the inhabitants to teach each other their own language (appendix 1).

Rochdale offers a central common room for activities and offices for institutions who work with refugees. Before the new housing act of 2015, Rochdale would do the management of the common room by themselves, but now they hand it over to a residents committee. Rochdale and De Key know that they can make a big difference in the integration of refugees. Due to the new housing act, they may only shape the conditions on which other institutions can build (appendix 2).

Another example of an aspect which stimulates the network building and language learning is the self-management system which is used at project Riekerhaven. This self-management system is a bottom-up way of building the community. Normally the complete management part of a social housing block is organised by the housing association. However, at project Riekerhaven, this is done by the residents themselves. According to Rienk Postuma (appendix 1): “the idea is that the project becomes more ‘real’. The hope is that people want to invest more in their own living environment and that it will strengthen the community. Self-management is not the goal but the tool to a strong community from where integration can begin.” In figure 3, all the activities executed by the residents are shown. Only the coordination of the self-management system (blue box in the figure) is outsourced to a third party, called Socius.
In the opinion of Rochdale, De Key is more specialized and experienced in housing youngsters and building a community with them. Therefore, they are able to take the risk which comes with the bottom-up concept. However, De Key got into a partnership with Socius for the management of this (appendix 1). Rochdale believes that the effort which is needed to create a bottom-up system like De Key uses, does not weigh up to the benefits. Rochdale executes these tasks themselves, as they already have their internal processes for this task. Through this, they can focus more on the social aspect to build the community by organising social activities. The organization and management of this will be outsourced to a third party or a residents committee (appendix 2).

![Figure 3, Self-management system at project Riekerhaven](http://www.startblok.amsterdam/over-het-project/zelf-beheren/)

**Building on current cohousing approaches**

First, there should be the understanding that every project will have its own characteristics and should have its own thought out concept. De Key is changing some elements of their approach at their new project Elzenhagen (appendix 1):

1. Making smaller groups living in one hallway (from 30 to 16 people), in this way the people will probably know one another better.
2. Better organized introduction days.
3. More involvement of the direct neighbourhood and refugee institutions.
4. The introduction of a new measure which makes refugees better understand how to live in a Dutch house (not yet figured out by De Key).

Rochdale has learned from the experiences of Riekerhaven and their own projects at the NDSM wharf and Nierkerkestraat. Science Park will be their first cohousing project from that they will start from scratch. The new experiences of Science Park will be input for their next project for sure, but Rochdale is not yet thinking about this because Science Park is only in the planning phase. The interviewee at Rochdale had the opinion that housing associations should become more flexible to make sure there is a connection with the dynamic characteristic of their cohousing projects (appendix 2).

However, De Key and Rochdale are and will be housing associations and will need the collaboration of the inhabitants, institutions and voluntary groups to keep these cohousing projects successful.
Discussion
This research started with an overview on literature on the three most important subjects treated. The interview questions, drawn up based on the literature, provided the results. This chapter compares the literature and the results. All results, whether or not in line with the literature, are of equal importance for the research. The underlying reasons for the results, corresponding with the literature or not, could give the true insights into the research. The three important subjects are discussed first. At the end of this paragraph all subjects will be discussed to uncover their links with each other. The next chapter draws up the conclusions based on this discussion.

Housing associations
Housing corporations began intentionally to provide houses for the lower incomes, but through the years they began to do more side activities of which some failed. Because of the new housing act (Rijksoverheid, 2015) housing associations are not allowed anymore to do any activity outside of housing people with a low income. De Key and Rochdale acknowledge that they cannot influence all aspects of their cohousing projects. However, these pioneering projects fall well into the picture of the ‘social innovator’ housing associations (Gruis, 2008). These associations have been tasked to provide refugees with housing and cohousing is a new domain. It is found that through partnerships housing associations are able to expand their products and services, despite the new regulation of 2015, like De Key and Rochdale are doing.

In figure 1, we see housing associations positioned exactly in the middle of the state, community and the market (Brandsen et al., 2005). The cohousing projects are imposed by the state, the projects build communities, but the rents are positioned well below market level. If housing associations only build cohousing projects, it can be arguable that their position as given in figure 1 would move toward the state and community. This can be linked to their new role as ‘societal innovator’ (Gruis, 2008).

Cohousing
Cohousing emerged through an ideal of a group of people to live together in harmony. Institutions like housing associations were not needed, people built their houses and communities bottom-up (Scazoni, 2000). With the cohousing of refugees, housing associations are the beginning and the catalyst to bring people together who do want to live together but do not have the resources for it. De Key’s Riekerhaven set up is top-down, but as with the earliest cohousing projects, the community is built bottom-up. The vibrant communities appear to suite refugees quite well and the network possibilities let them make a good start. At Science Park, Rochdale designed the complex top-down, but the community too. This makes Science Park less in line with the original cohousing projects than Riekerhaven.
Refugees
Yu et al. (2007) and Vroome & Van Tubergen (2010) wrote about the positive effects on social-cultural and economic integration, when a refugee has social contacts with Dutch youngsters and is a member of a mainstream Dutch organisation. De Key did not do any research about cohousing with refugees and Dutch youngsters, nonetheless Riekerhaven was considered very successful and became official policy.

The goal of housing associations is to help refugees integrate, but this subjectivity is hard to measure. However, by following the definition of Durkheim, the cohousing projects and their approaches are doing a good job. The cohousing projects are built on norms, beliefs and values which are meant to help the social integration.

The holistic view
Because housing associations are the basis of every project and build it in its whole, they are the most important element of this research. This point became clear once more during the interviews that were held with the housing associations, as they do everything in their power to let the project succeed. Next to the housing associations there are the elements of cohousing and refugees. The characteristics of cohousing makes housing associations think about the possibilities that it will give on integrating refugees, such as how to stimulate the growth of their network. The characteristics of refugees shape the cohousing projects because every group is different, need their own specific things and this has influence on the approach that housing associations have.
Conclusion

The answer on the main question is based on the results of the sub questions and the discussion.

When starting a cohousing project involving refugees, the housing association first determines the goals and form a roadmap to reach these goals. Based on their experience, a few examples and sometimes a questionnaire, housing associations face the challenges that come with the new cohousing model. For example, the design should support living and activities that lead to the integration of the refugees. Housing associations go in consultation with the municipality and the COA to find refugees who fit their unique cohousing project. As integration and community(-building) management are not the core responsibilities of housing associations, partnerships will be formed. All involved parties are doing the tasks in which they are specialized. Communication between all parties is important.

After reaching these start criteria, housing associations build and exploit the project, create further conditions which stimulate refugee integration. The management can be done by the inhabitants as is done at project Riekerhaven (self-management) or by the housing associations themselves, as Rochdale does at project Science Park. If the self-management system will not be used, the housing association searches for other social activities, as Rochdale did. These activities replace the absence of the refugee integration achieved through the self-management system.

Next to this, it is important to give all new residents a good introduction to the concept and make connections with people and parties outside the project.

Now the answer to the main question: ‘How do housing associations apply the cohousing model to refugee housing?’ needs to be answered. Housing associations work as the catalyst for the cohousing projects. The start of the project is top-down organized. Housing associations build the accommodations, find suitable Dutch youngsters, search for a fitting group of refugees and create conditions which stimulate integration. The mix of people and activities will shape the community. To perform the responsibilities outside their field of work, housing associations search for the right connections with institutions specialized in these fields. This is done to ensure that all tasks will be executed as best as possible. In addition, housing associations strive to establish the right way of cohousing and keep improving the concept, like De Key and Rochdale are doing at their new cohousing projects Elzenhagen and Science Park.

Further research

New forms of cohousing with refugees should be researched to provide an optimal integration in the Dutch society. Next to this it could be interesting to research if cohousing projects could also be successful for families. Although the cohousing projects are working out well in The Netherlands, research into the implementation of the concept in other countries is needed instead of just copying the project.
Acknowledgements
The results in this paper are based on two sources, an interview with Mr. Postuma and one with Mr. De Roest. Despite the fact that cohousing projects with refugees still not appear that much in The Netherlands, more research should be done to gain more certainty about the stated information.
Another constraint is the fact that the municipality of Amsterdam made the way in which De Key houses refugees in project Riekerhaven the official housing policy for single refugees under the age of 28. This limits the other housing associations in innovating and experimenting with new ways to house refugees in cohousing projects.
Literature

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**Appendix 1**  
**Questions and answers - Rienk Postuma, frontrunner project Riekerhaven at ‘De Key’**  
*Interview date: 10-01-2018*

- **Good morning mister Postuma, thank you for having us, we appreciate it very much. Do you mind if we record this interview so we can transcribe it later?**

Good morning guys. Yes, of course, no problem.

**Housing associations**

- **What is the identity of ‘De Key’?**

‘De Key’ is a social housing association for young people living in Amsterdam. They try to house as much people as possible in or just outside the ring of Amsterdam.

- **What is the position of housing associations on housing refugees?**

Housing associations are there to house people who can’t do this by themself, people with a small income. Refugees do not have much money, so automatically housing refugees becomes a core task of a housing association. In agreement with the municipality of Amsterdam, housing associations have to reserve 30% of each dwelling becoming vacant for vulnerable groups. Refugees belong to this category of vulnerable people.

- **What is ‘De Key’s’ view on the agreements with the municipality about refugee housing?**

‘De Key’ is obliged to house the refugees, but if it wasn’t an obligation they would do the same.

- **What is ‘De Key’s’ view on cohousing?**

Rienk gave a long answer about cohousing, what is cohousing and how could you define it? He suggested a lot about different views on types of cohousing, in particular all the different ways to define different ways of cohousing. He did not gave a special answer about the way ‘De Key’ thinks about cohousing. However, it became clear that they deliberately choose for cohousing with the refugees, because they are convinced that the collaboration with Dutch youngsters stimulates the integration. Firstly, the plan was to only house refugees in the apartment complex. When Achmed Baâdoud (chairman daily board of Stadsdeel Nieuw-west) suggested to mix the refugees with Dutch youngsters they decided to integrate common rooms and select for Dutch youngsters who are very motivated to live together with refugees.

- **Does the new housing act have had influence on this project?**

The new housing act states that social housing associations are from now on only allowed to execute their core task: housing the people with a small income. Only when the market parties fall short in housing people just above the small income limit they are once in a while allowed to build and exploit dwellings in the price category above their normal dwellings. The fact that this project brings a risk with it does not make it illegal. It perfectly fits in the borders of the new act. The risk Rienk took the most serious was to find enough Dutch youngsters who want to live in the startblok. Soon after opening the registration it became clear that this wasn’t a risk. In total 1100 Dutch youngsters signed up to live in startblok Riekerhaven.
Refugee integration

- Which variables like gender, educational level or culture did you take in consideration when selecting the new residents (to form an optimal fitting group)?

The COA divides all the refugees among all the municipalities in The Netherlands. So, Amsterdam gets a certain amount of refugees to house. Rienk told that the largest part of the refugees consist of highly educated young Syrian men. Another large group consist of low educated Eritreans. ‘De Key’ could not steer the refugee selection that much, but they asked for a mixed group. Not only people from the largest groups, but for example also low educated Syrian women and high educated Eritreans.

One strict selection criterion was that they can stay in The Netherlands for at least five years, but most of the refugees with a temporary status may stay for at least five years.

The Dutch had to visit an information day and had to write a motivation. This brought the total of 1100 registrations to 350. From this 350, the 280 with the best motivation were chosen and got a dwelling (to rent).

- What is for the key the ‘magic mix’?

‘De Key’ is the first association that selected the new occupants instead of giving the vacant dwellings to the highest placed person in the waiting list. By doing this they could select the right persons to make the magic mix. This way of selecting new occupants is even included in the new housing regulations of the municipality of Amsterdam, according to Rienk.

As stated above, ‘De Key’ wanted to house different people with different levels of education, gender and country of origin. The come to de magic mix an important measure they toke is to house the occupants with common variables like country of origin scattered over de complex. They did this to prevent them clumping together and to stimulate integration. Despite of this some Eritrean groups still visit each other. A result is that their integration goes a lot more slowly than the refugees who do not visit other refugees with common variables.

- When is a refugee successful integrated and how does Riekerhaven supports this?

That is very difficult. There is not one definition. When someone has built a network with a lot of Dutch people in it, understands the Dutch way of living, how we deal with each other. If you want to help and built on our open society. Respects the freedom of speech, for himself and for others. Very basic things actually, you can look at it like the pyramid of Maslov, the primary understandings. Furthermore doing some kind of volunteer work and speaks a bit Dutch. It is very natural to meet up with your own kind, so it may be very important too that they go beyond this and network with Dutch people.

- In which way does Riekerhaven stimulate economic integration (becoming self-supporting) and how important is this in your opinion? Taking the different status’ in account.

When ‘De Key’ started with project Riekerhaven, the scientific council for government policy published a document about how to deal with the housing of refugees. Their most important conclusion was to organise the practical integration (like housing, learning the language, educate, building a network) at the same time, instead of sequential. ‘De Key’ took this
advice in mind during the organizing of project Riekerhaven. Meeting each other, refugees and Dutch youngsters, is an advantage, a refugee gets the chance to build up another network.

‘De Key’ has the core task to house the refugees. Actually they do more than other housing associations to stimulate integration, but the main goal of startblok Riekerhaven, related to economic integration, is to create the good conditions to integrate. Concrete things like language lessons are not organized by ‘De Key’. Therefor the refugees need to visit other institutions. However, a small group of about 12 person one time per week learn each other new languages. One refugee organized the languages exchange group, where refugees learn Dutch people Arabic en the Dutch learn the refugees the Dutch language.

Cohousing

- **What is the role of housing associations in cohousing projects involving refugees?**
We organise the housing and conditions so that refugees can integrate, but do not provide language classes ourselves. Language classes are organized by the municipality and voluntarily at Riekerhaven.

- **Why did you choose for cohousing (with Dutch people) instead of other options like housing in normal social housing dwellings or housing in vacant buildings without Dutch people?**
Adding Dutch people to the project was a suggestion of Achmed Baâdoud, because he thought that housing 500 refugees together in a temporary dwelling would become to stigmatizing. Next to this, housing with Dutch youngsters in a cohousing project stimulates integration much more than placing refugees lonely in vacant dwellings across the city.

- **Which aspects of cohousing are valuable for the success of Riekerhaven?**
Refugees get the opportunity to start a network, learn the language more quickly and the Dutch way of living.

- **Did you do research about the way of living in a cohousing project, fitting on refugees? Do they like intensive collaboration and being highly socially active?**
No, this is made up very top-down. There has been a questionnaire though, with the neighbours and refugees. We are doing the same at Elzenhagen now. ‘This is our plan, react on it please’. Some information evenings also, but not very scientific founded. We are doing more questionnaires, now at Riekerhaven too. So we are learning.

- **Why did you choose for a bottom-up way of organizing the community of Riekerhaven (instead of top-down in which some managers of ‘De Key’ organize everything)?**
It is very safe to organize it in this way, almost everything is done by the residents themselves. New forms of management are very difficult and we have to make sure that the management stays high on the agenda. Look, everything that we do not have to do on our own we put it at the residents. Our idea on that is that it becomes more ‘real’, the hope is that people want to invest more in their own living environment in this way. We want to push the community. Self-management is not the goal but the tool to a strong community form.
where integration can begin. The stimulation of self-organisation, plan your birthday party, some tournament.

- **How could the project be improved? / What do you do different at startblok Elzenhagen?**

Well it is a great success already, the municipality has the Startblokformula embraced and has made it the new refugee housing policy. When a refugee gets linked at a Dutch youngster they get placed in some kind of Riekerhaven.

We are making the groups smaller, we make the common rooms smaller and expand that with some outside room. In Riekerhaven there are living 30 people on one hallway, that is too much. You cannot know all of them, 16 is better. Then you can keep the group somewhat better together.

We are going a step further with the introduction days to give everyone an even better start. We are also looking for a somewhat different setup of the buddy system so the refugees get some more explanation on how they should live in a Dutch house. This will also improve the understanding of the complex. Another thing that we are improving is the involvement of the neighbourhood and voluntary organizations. In Riekerhaven the community is quiet on their own, which can be good, but in Elzenhagen they have a better chance on working on their network. We are working on the conditions that will make Elzenhagen an even greater success. But in the end we are a housing association and cannot do it on our own.

**How would Riekerhaven 3.0 look like:**

First of all 2.0. After that we will look further. The work of Riekerhaven has not been unnoticed by the organization of the Key. We are trying to involve people in our other homes more too. When we are renovating we are trying to approach them in another way. The new thinking on community building and magic mix all comes from Riekerhaven. But it is difficult, we are doing something for a hundred years and that is difficult to change.

- **Last question, would you like to receive our research when it’s finished?**

Yes please, I would really appreciate that. Looking forward to it.
Appendix 2
Questions and answers - Pieter de Roest, program leader of the housing of refugees at ‘Rochdale’
Interview date: 22-01-2018

- Good morning mister De Roest, thank you for having us, we appreciate it very much. Do you mind if we record this interview so we can transcribe it later?

Good morning guys. Yes, of course, no problem.

Housing associations

- What is the identity of ‘Rochdale’?

Our motto is: ‘Rochdale geeft thuis’ (Rochdale gives homes). We provide housing for the lower income so these people have a good basis to build their lives on. We have much property in Nieuw West and Zuid-Oost in Amsterdam where a lot of people live with a low income. Just like any corporation we want our houses tidy, well maintained and with a low rent. We provide houses for fast seeking and fragile people too, and as when it becomes more and more busy in Amsterdam, this becomes more and more a problem.

- What is ‘Rochdale’s’ view on the agreements with the municipality about refugee housing? (the obliged cohousing and the 30% of dwellings becoming vacant for refugees families)

That is just something we agreed on with the municipality and that is something good and a challenge. As for myself, I’m not that much into numbers, I think we should just do our best. But my predecessor really dove into this urgent question of housing refugees. We provide houses for refugees in two different ways, first of all we try to house refugees in our regular stock. It can be that they will be placed in the Jordaan or somewhere in West. The second way is through new projects, like we did at first on the NDSM wharf, at the Nierkerksestraat and now at Science Park, all in Amsterdam.

- What is ‘Rochdale’s’ view on cohousing? How do you cope the new concept?

As far as I know, Rochdale has never worked before with cohousing yet, but we love the concept for housing refugees. The NDSM wharf has some learning points for us. We want to do a selection on at least the Dutch inhabitants of Science Park so we can make sure everyone will contribute to the project.

Rochdale is not specialized in housing youngsters as De Key is. They will learn from this and implement it in other projects, youngsters are just one of our target groups. De Key knows how to build communities with youngsters, it is in their process. Not for us, we try to fix the cohousing project as much as we can in our already existing processes. So we will deal with the maintenance instead of the inhabitants. It is better to steer on the social side than on the technical side. The technical side can easily form small groups who do most of the work instead that everyone does something. We work with small volunteering compensation of max 100 euro per month.

Rochdale wants to compensate the absence of a bottom-up approach by organizing more social events through their partnerships with for example ‘akademie van de stad’. Maybe there will be a group who cares for the green or a soccer team, you can not think of all upfront. More thought is needed on these events so it will be useful for all inhabitants, not
only for the refugees. Next to akademie van de stad, we are also thinking of a residents
committee who will be responsible for the common rooms etcetera. There will be some self
management, but the way in which De Key is doing it can make it very complicated.

It is great to have a district manager who has direct contact with the project, that is
something necessary, housing associations are not build for fast contact.

**Refugee integration**

- *Which variables like gender, status in The Netherlands (temporary status, A status,
  AMA and admission for humanitarian reason), country of origin, educational level and
culture did you take in consideration when selecting the new residents (to form an
optimal fitting group)? Did you had the freedom to ask for a certain group?*

You can not steer that much on which refugees you want, we steered on age (we wanted
18-23 years old) at the NDSM project and we will do this again with the Science Park project
(18-28 years old). In this way you can make sure they are in line with the Dutch youngster
who they will live with. At NDSM we steered on the percentage of women because
there are a lot of more men. The COA tries to help us in that.

It is smart from the municipality of Amsterdam to ask for young refugees at COA, they do not
need that much space as a whole family with the small availability of space already. You can
give them a temporary contract of five year, this gives more flexibility. These type of
contracts can be offered to people of 27 years old, so 28 years is a logic limit for us.

- *Do you use a ‘magic mix’, such as De Key does?*

We already had students living at the NDSM wharf, and when a room became vacant we
gave it to a refugee. We could not steer on the passe, the position in the complex and building
groups. The students who already lived there did not sign up for this and this gave some
small problems, but these were the same general problems that we have at all our locations.

We do not have an agreement yet with the municipality on which people are going to live on
Science Park, only that those will be youngsters, students and refugees. We don’t know yet
what kind of mix this will be, but we want to steer on it. We do not have the selection method
though. For the students selection, we want to work together with DUWO (a student housing
provider), but maybe we will do it ourselves. We want 80 Students, 40 youngsters (via
woningnet.nl), all Dutch, no expats, this is something we try to steer on too, better for the
integration. And for the refugees, we want the largest part of the 120 to be aged 18 till 23.

We do want to steer on their country of origin and education level, but there is such a big
group of people who need a home. We need to provide one to all of them. The project of
Science Park will be delivered in september, november and we are in consultation with the
municipality, but they know which people are on the list of COA in May or June. So, till then,
it is not foreseeable.

- *When is a refugee successful integrated and how does Science Park supports this?*
- *In which way does Science Park stimulate economic integration (becoming self-
supporting) and how important is this in your opinion? Taking the different statuses in
account.*
We try to steer on refugees with a technical background so they may get something to do in the startup village next door with all kind of technical businesses. Closeby there will be a cohousing project next to a football club. The two of us are in consultation with the municipality to find out the possibilities to distribute the technical refugees to us and the sporting refugees to the other project.

Rochdale is in connection with many different parties. They also share ideas and try to make a connection with the project of housing association Stadgenoot, who is building the same kind of project in a distance of less than one kilometer. Project Science Park is situated next to a start-up incubator and the project of Stadgenoot next to a football club. They both try to collaborate with these parties. There are many parties who want to do something for status holders in Amsterdam, for example even the Amsterdam University College. Rochdale choses with which party they will collaborate and tries to prevent that there will be parties who offer the same service. Mr. De Roest says that it is hard to find the right position housing associations have to take, for this collaboration, because they are not going to organise all the activities, but do benefit from the results. The overall result of all the collaborations is that is should stimulate integration.

Many housing associations, among which Rochdale, are big and log. For this reason they often have to reject ideas on the housing block from people. To stimulate collaboration, Mr. De Roest wants to say yes to all the ideas for project Science Park. To make this happen, Mr. De Roest is actively searching in the organisation of Rochdale, for people who want to help him doing this. He needs colleagues who like the target group, because he thinks that is needed for success.

**Cohousing**

- Which responsibilities do housing associations have, in cohousing projects involving refugees? Partnerships?

Make sure the refugees are given a good start, partnership with ‘akademie van de stad’. Making sure that everyone who is living there feels in place. Now with Science Park, we try to go into a partnership with the technical startup village next door so the refugees with a technical background can get involved here. A good distribution is a matter of the municipality in the first place, but is of high value for us too. If everyone has something to do and will live happily, that is better for everyone. We adjusted some space at the NDSM wharf too so that there will be space for institutions and new projects.

Although housing is our focus, just like with all our other houses, we try to monitor the situation at the NDSM wharf. But, with these type of projects, you need to be more direct on the situation. We do this monitoring periodic together with the municipality and other institutions and directly through the district manager. Next to this, we try to do as least as we can, so it will not be part of our already slow process. But most of all, the inhabitants themselves and the institutions working there know best what is going on and anticipate.

At Science Park there is a common room for the inhabitants and at the upper floor there are a few offices. Institutions like ‘vluchtelingenwerk’ (work on refugees) and others can get a room up there to work with the inhabitants. This monitoring is not something that we do, but we provide the office.
Rochdale partners with a lot of different parties among which many foundations (languages courses, Refugee Work, vluchtelingenwerk). They give them a place or physical room in the project. The parties execute tasks which Rochdale benefits from, but cannot do by themself. Other parties just have more knowledge of their tasks. In the optimal situation district (stadsdeel) Watergraafsmeer organise the connection with those parties/foundations.

- **Would you choose for cohousing young refugees (with Dutch people) instead of other options like housing in normal social housing dwellings or housing in vacant buildings without Dutch people, if it wasn’t obligated and why?**

Definitely, you see how good it works.

- **Which aspects of cohousing are valuable for the success of Science Park?**

In the middle of the apartments we create one common room including a kitchen and the room with the washing machines. A large part of the walls are made of glass, the idea is that you can look through the room. Outside we create a small square, where we hope people will spend time together.

A question we still have to answer, is how this common room will be managed. Maybe we will find somebody who likes to do this or who can set up a small foundation for it. After all, this has to be done by the occupants, we cannot start a catering facility. Maybe the residents committee likes to organize this, then we can steer on it for a little. But this has to come from the occupants, we cannot ask or impose this to people.

Rochdale has signed a contract with the contractor of Science Park, which includes a buyback guarantee, which is favorable for the exploitation. They could even make the decision to keep the modulair building block and replace it.

The municipality is managing the green zones.

The building blocks are two high, this brings a lot of sunlight. During the night every place will be well lit. The space around the building blocks is forbidden for unauthorized, but it is open accessible, so everyone can walk around. The front door is adjacent to the sliding doors at the back of the dwellings opposite the green (see figure x). In this way your neighbours can see you when you walk home between the dwellings. This also stimulates to make contact with your neighbours. The light and way of orienting the blocks give a feeling of safety.

At the NDSM project the corridors are very, very small. This is not considered pleasant.

At the time, it’s decided that the corridor is placed outside instead of insight. This make the project a bit more individual, but at the same time the nuisance which a inside corridor brings with is will be limited.

When a occupant places something generalizing on the central Facebook page, Rochdale directly make an appointment with this person to talk about the problem. They do this to prevent a sition in which the two groups, Dutch youngsters and refugees clash in stand.
During interviews like these it is important to make clear what you mean, therefore the terms refugees and Dutch people are used. In the communication from Rochdale to the occupants they don’t use different terms. They use for example one term as ‘residents’. This is something they learned from previous projects.

- *Did you do research about the way of living in a cohousing project, fitting on refugees? Do they like intensive collaboration and being highly socially active?*

Mr. De Roest was not involved in the phase where research could be done, but he thinks no research has been done. He knows different institutions were consulted to find out in which way Rochdale could set up the project. Based on intuition they did not listen to every wish or advice. For example the municipality of Amsterdam asked for a total of 500 dwellings, which Rochdale considered to much.

- *In which way did you organise the community of Science Park (top-down or bottom-up)?*

For each project a district manager is appointed. This manager spends a lot of time at the project. For Rochdale this person is the ‘eyes and ears’. He/she communicates with Mr. De Roest or just fix small problems him/herself, skipping the big and log organisation of Rochdale.

Rochdale did not chose for a bottom-up way of self organisation. Rochdale usus a system which provides all the tasks which De Key outsources in their self organisation system. Rochdale made a simple financial calculation which brought the conclusion that adjusting the system and implementing self organisation will cost a lot of money. And all the extra costs have to be paid by people who do not have much many. Mr. De Roest says that De Key will use their system of self organisation more often in the future and then profite of it, why they now can consider the cost as an investment for the future.

We want to prevent that the common rooms won’t be used. Therefore it’s important to search for motivated Dutch youngster occupants. How we will select theme is still a question for us, but we want to make sure that people know that they will live at a special place and will not just sit on the couch the whole day, but sometimes take some action.

When activities are organised, you need a few people who actively participate in the organization of it and you need some people who normally are in sleep mode but join the activities. The last group is often the biggest.

What not has been done at project NDSM but what will set up is a construction with home supervisors (*woonbegeleiders*). They answer question when something is broken or if they do not understand the information from Rochdale. This is to answer question fast. Also a buddy system will be introduced at Science Park, for questions. This is not possible at project NDSM, because their, refugees come in place for leaving Dutch occupants. Everybody already have their buddies and connections. At Science Park the division of Dutch youngsters and refugees will be alternately, which also could stimulate the working of the buddy system if your neighbour is your buddy.
We are now thinking about the way how we will make the buddies. Are we going to organise information evenings to find out who wants to become buddies with each other or are we just determine that your neighbour will be your buddy? You could argue for this last option, because every occupant agreed with the special conditions which comes with living at project Science Park. You could argue for the first option, because we want to steer on forming networks in the start phase of the project. Refugees and Dutch youngsters will not have a network at the start.

- **How could the project be improved? / What did you learned from NDSM?**

Mr. De Roest regrets the fact that there is no common room for each corridor/hallway, at project Science Park. He thinks this could be an important strength for such projects. However, at project Riekerhaven the one common room is used very well and often and in the other it is a big mess where nobody spends time. For this reason Rochdale chose to make one common room in which they hope some initiatives arise.

At project Nierkerkestraat Rochdale tried to house different status holders in one dwelling. It became clear that this didn’t work. They did not obliged them but asked if they want to live in this type of dwelling with someone they already know. But nobody signed up for this option. Refugees know that Rochdale has to find a suitable house for them. Another learning point from project Nierkerkestraat was the collaboration with the municipality. Rochdale found out that many foundations want to use rooms in vacant housing blocks (which Rochdale can benefit from, because they organise activities for example). At project Science Park the municipality takes the role of collaboration coordinator already from the start phase.

The way in which the district manager (*wijkbeheerder*) works at project Nierkerkestraat will be used at project Science Park too. The district manager knows everybody and everything what’s going on. The district manager is also the one who collaborate with Refugee Work (*Vluchtelingenwerk*), although he/she may (by law) not give all the information he/she has. For example information about rent arrears. Actually, with some creative use of languages the district manager can inform Refugee Work when he gets certain signals.

At NDSM the district manager do see the occupants a lot less, which makes it harder help them or know everything what’s going on.

- **Last question, would you like to receive our research when it’s finished?**

Yes please, I would really appreciate that. Looking forward to it.

**Extra:**

Rochdale cannot open the catering facility, because of the housing act. Catering is not one of the core tasks a housing association has.

It is hard to measure the success of a project, because all the measurements are qualitative and a lot of the measure points are ‘feeling issues’.