# Bridging the gap

Innovative Residential Solutions
for Home-Seeking Youth
in Rotterdam

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# Abstract

This research addresses the rising amount of homelessness in Rotterdam. Homelessness should be prevented in an early stage to avoid health issues. Home-seeking youth fall between the cracks of the system since there is a lack of social support for those between 18-23 years old with no official care indication. Because of this, they aren't sufficiently helped by the municipality in times of need. The term "home-seeking youth" is used to reduce stigma and emphasize their quest for stable housing.

The needs of home-seeking youth are explored in this study, which also considers ideas on how residential housing concepts can effectively address these needs. It will be conducted through field research involving interviews with professionals, workshops with long-term homeless individuals, and a workshop with vulnerable youth in Rotterdam to understand their housing needs and preferences.

The aim is to determine how a residential building can support the physical (socioeconomic security), mental (empowerment), and social (inclusion and cohesion) needs of youth seeking stable housing. Among these needs, social needs play the most important role as they form a safety net for both mental and physical needs. The main need that home-seeking youth have is for a relationship with someone who can offer them unconditional support. Therefore, it is important that housing for youth includes access to an adult who can help them informally.

This can be achieved through housing concepts such as 'Samen en Anders,' where home-seeking youth are linked with the elderly, helping both groups by providing informal support to each other. This minimizes the need for formal care for both groups and creates a different dynamic, as the relationship is not as functional as that between a caregiver and a home-seeking youth.

Further research should be conducted to determine the number of home-seeking youth in order to better understand the importance of this problem. Policies need to change to accommodate this group during their vulnerable time, and innovative housing concepts should be created using the 'six steps to make a home' to build

# Content

# 1.0 Introduction

How can a residential building facilitate the social, physical, and mental needs of home- seeking youth?

## 1.1 Problem statement
## A rising amount of homelessness

A protest was held in October 2023 in front of Rotterdam Central Station to raise awareness about the rapidly increasing number of homeless people in Rotterdam. With tents and camp beds, they stayed the night to gain attention for the problem (Minnema, 2023). The manifest was called "Recht op rust" translated to the right to rest. Apart from the increasing homelessness in Rotterdam, there is a particular group where homelessness is increasing. According to the Salvation Army (Leger des Heils, 2020), there is a large increase in youth between the ages of 18 and 22 entering social shelters. This research was done in the four major cities of the Netherlands: Rotterdam, Amsterdam, The Hague, and Utrecht. Part of this group comes from youth care but remains a vulnerable group despite being 18 and "mature" (Leger des Heils, 2022). In the transition from youth (18-), still partially dependent, to 'adult' (18+-23) years, 'should be
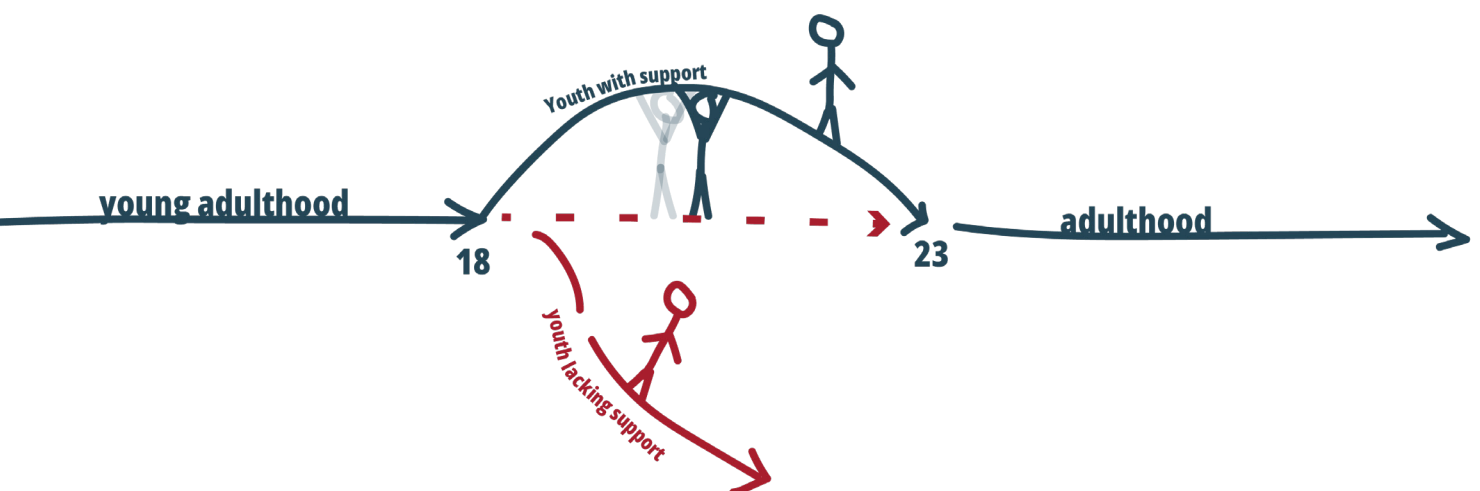


*Figure 1.*
*Home-seeking youth lacking supportive (parent)figure(s) to bridge the gap from being a young adult to being an adult.*

independent, there is a lack of a transition. This allows youth to fall out of the system (van Doorn et al., 2023). Without the prospect of permanent housing, it becomes difficult to get back into the system, especially if there is no secure social network to fall back on. Home-seeking youth get off to a bad start as a result. This is why youth who want to make something of their lives must get the opportunity they deserve. Housing is one of the main rights of being human, so this problem should be tackled as soon as possible. The House of Representatives also sees this need. On the first of December 2022, the government wrote a letter to the House of Representatives on the "National Homelessness Action Plan: A Home First" in which the approach is about preventing homelessness with the 'housing first' principle (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2022). There is also an action plan written specifically for youth 'action plan homeless youth 2019-2021' which deals more specifically with the younger target group. (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2021)

## Home-seeking youth

Home-seeking youth in this study are youth between the ages of 18 and 23 who are insecurely housed and don't have an official care indication. This means that they don't have a safe place to stay, but also are not able to find proper and safe housing and they will not be helped with housing through the municipality. Instead, they must hop from couch to couch or stay in a family situation that is not healthy. Youths from 18 must stand on their own two feet but don't have the means to do so if they don't have a safe network to count on. This group of youth often has a history of youth care but is let go at age 18 and has no place to go. They often belong to 'marginally housed' and they also do not sleep on the street, but often with friends or family and are therefore difficult to grasp (Hammink & Rodenburg, 2014). To get a better grip on these different groups of homelessness, a new approach to counting different homeless groups is developed by FEANTSA (2015). It is called the 'ETHOS' approach, which is a new typology of homeless people that allows a broader understanding of the word homelessness. ETHOS stands for the European typology of homelessness and housing exclusion. This approach looks at living conditions rather than the number of people sleeping on the streets or calling for social care. It should provide a better representation of the number of people who are homeless (van Doorn et al., 2021). The different typologies of homelessness are divided among inadequate housing, insecure housing, houseless, and roofless. Home-seeking youth following this typology fall under the cap of insecure housing under operational category 8. This can be living with friends/ family, having no legal (sub)tenancy, or illegal occupation of land (FEANTSA, 2015). Next to this: there is also a practical disadvantage of being

marginally housed. No address means no unemployment benefit or difficulties finding a job. This causes a vicious cycle which is difficult to break out of.

## Stigmatization

Another problem is that there is a huge stigma attached to the word "homelessness" even though it is not representative of a large portion of the group (Kansfonds, z.d.). This stigmatizing works in two ways. People often see homelessness as an individual problem, in which it is someone's fault for becoming homeless. Homeless youth can take this stigma upon themselves and become victims. In many cases, these homeless youths can do little to help that they ended up in the situation that they are in. It often starts with parents not being able to provide sufficient support. The other image that one has of homelessness is a person sleeping outside on a bench, leading homeless youth to not identify with this image and therefore not feel obliged to seek help (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2022). Therefore, in this study, we will not refer to homeless youth in the future but will instead refer to home-seeking youth from here on out. This term puts less emphasis on the fact that someone does not have a home, but more on the fact that they are looking for a safe home where they can work on their future.

## Research question

This research will examine the needs of home-seeking youth and how a residential building will be able to answer these needs. The research question that follows is:
*"How can a residential building facilitate the social, physical, and mental needs of home-seeking youth?"*
To arrive at this answer, both literature and field research will be conducted on the target group. Sub-questions that lead to this answer are:
*1. What characterizes the social support accessible to home-seeking youth?*
*2. What are the social, physical, and mental needs of home-seeking youth?*
*3. What kind of housing concept would be desired for home-seeking youth?*

## 1.2 Frame of reference
### Relationship between homelessness and health

The susceptibility of home-seeking youth to drug and addiction use, medical problems, mental problems, violence, and falling into victimization has been demonstrated according to Garrett et al. (2008). Can housing reduce all these problems, as we hope? Several studies have been done on this and there are mixed results regarding health improvement when homeless individuals have found housing. Often the improvement in physical and mental health is associated with an improved social network that comes with it. When there is no social integration after getting the house, the results seem to point in different directions regarding health improvements. According to Van der Laan et al. (2017) surprisingly, acquiring independent housing was not directly related to change in perceived health in this study. This is not to say that getting a house is not important for improving health. It is important, but it needs to be reinforced with treatment, employment support, and making a good social network. (Zhaozhan et al., 2020). This is also evident in another research that focuses more on drug use after the homeless have found a home. The social network can make a difference in reduced drug use after housing or no difference when a proper social network is not established around the new place of residence (Rhoades et al., 2018). Naylon et al. (2016) have tried to tie together physical and mental health and it also shows that social factors play an important role in creating physical and mental health. This relationship is shown in Figure 2. In the following research, it is therefore crucial to be conscious of the relationship between social, physical, and mental needs.
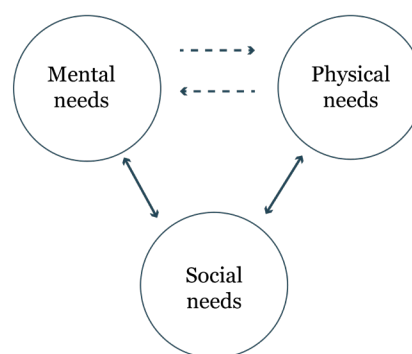


*Figure 2.*
*Mechanisms through which social, physical and mental health interact.* *Image based on Figure 1 in "Bringing together physical and mental health" (Naylon et al., 2016)*

### Housing First in the Netherlands

Home-seeking youth need Housing First to get out of the system and be able to work on a healthy future and thereby avoid a structural health disadvantage. Housing first is a principle that has been widely researched (Schmit et al., 2023). Home-seeking youth struggle to get back into society because there is no appropriate housing. By having Housing First, they can have a fair chance to build a life for

themselves and leave the past behind. It is important to have a solid foundation during the transition to adulthood. There are eight principles for 'Housing First' to work. These principles should be considered when designing a residential building in the Netherlands (Schmit et al., 2023). The eight principles of Housing First are envisioned in Figure 3 and they come together into three main terms. First, housing should be a stable factor. Second, an important factor in bringing Housing First to success is bringing flexibility in the support that the target group receives. Next to that, home-seeking youth must get the autonomy they need to be able to live their life (Schmit et al., 2023).
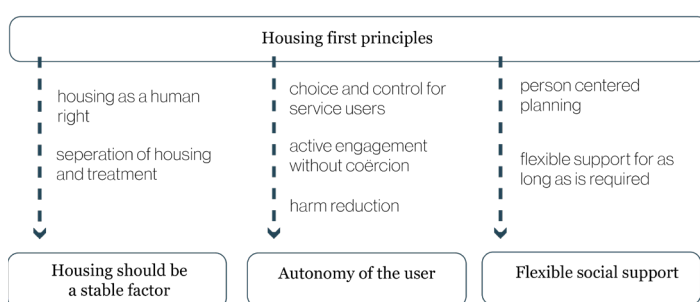


*Figure 3.*
*Housing First principles summarized to three main principles (own image).*
*Image based on principles described in "Housing First as a System Approach: what Does This Require from the Netherlands?" (Schmit et al., 2023)*

## Self-reliance

There are 5 needs for youth to become self-reliant described in the study by Leerdam et al. (2021) and they are shown in Figure 4. The study is talking about youth who exited youth care, but these conditions apply well to the target group of home-seeking young people. The main need is a house tailored to their needs. A place to live that is appropriate, stable, and affordable. In addition, well-being and health is important and it is important that youth is physically and mentally balanced but can also recognize when there is an imbalance to seek help in time. Third, it is important to have a foundation for future careers through activities, education, and work. The fourth need is that there is sufficient income and a plan for preventing and or resolving debt (the youth desk can help with this). And the fifth need is having sufficient relationships which consists of at least one adult who is permanently available and having a stable support network.



*Figure 4.*
*'The Big 5' needs*
*Image based on "Uitstroom uit instelling Jeugdzorg" (Impuls onderzoekscentrum maatschappelijke zorg, 2021)*

# Housing typologies

There are different Housing First typologies shown in Figure 5 that were suggested by the research of Gaetz (2017) for youth. The focus of this research will be developing design conditions for independent housing. In this research forms of supportive housing will be investigated to create viable options for youth to live in a community where they can feel at home.
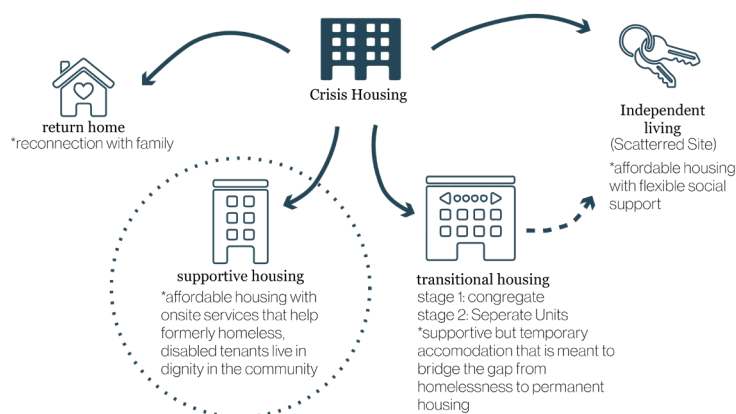


*Figure 5.*
*Models of accomodation within Housing First For Youth.*
*Image based on Figure 2 in "This is housing first for youth" (Gaetz, 2017)*

## 1.3 Research Methodology

To investigate the needs of home-seeking youth, several methods will be used as shown in Figure 6. To answer the question "What are the social, physical, and mental needs of home-seeking youth?". Interviews and workshops will be held. The knowledge attained from field research will be strengthened by literature research and case studies. These sub-questions should lead to answering the question: "How can a residential building facilitate the physical, mental, and social needs of young people seeking a home?". Care must be taken when dealing with the target group in this study as they can be vulnerable. Flexibility and caution are important to the success of the study.

## Support System for home seeking youth

First, Research will be done on what kind of housing system this youth is trapped in Rotterdam. To understand the causes and solutions for this target group, it is important to know what they must go through to get proper housing and find the pitfalls. This will be done by researching the governmental and municipal policies and an interview will be done with and policy adviser for home-seeking youth in the municipality of Rotterdam to get a better understanding of the policies that were applied. Personas will be created, and the target group will be further explained.

## Needs of home-seeking youth

Secondly, literature research will be done on the needs of home-seeking youth. This will be strengthened by the knowledge attained in workshops that are done at the 'Leger de Heils' with actual experiences. Next to that: a workshop is done with vulnerable youth in Rotterdam, to find out what youth need and look for in Rotterdam and what housing preferences they have. In this chapter the question 'What are the social, physical, and mental needs of home-seeking youth?' will be answered.

## Desired Housing Concept

To answer the last question "What kind of housing typology would be most beneficial for home-seeking youth?" Interviews, Literature research, and case studies will be done to find different housing concepts and architectural design principles needed in Rotterdam for home-seeking youth. An Interview will be done with a behavioral specialist at Maaszicht to get a deeper understanding of their building and the youth that are living in it. Another interview will be done with the 'kwartiermaker' from 'Samen en Anders' to understand their concept of reciprocity and how it can be attained. This will form a deeper understanding of the housing concepts that are possible now in Rotterdam for home-seeking youth.
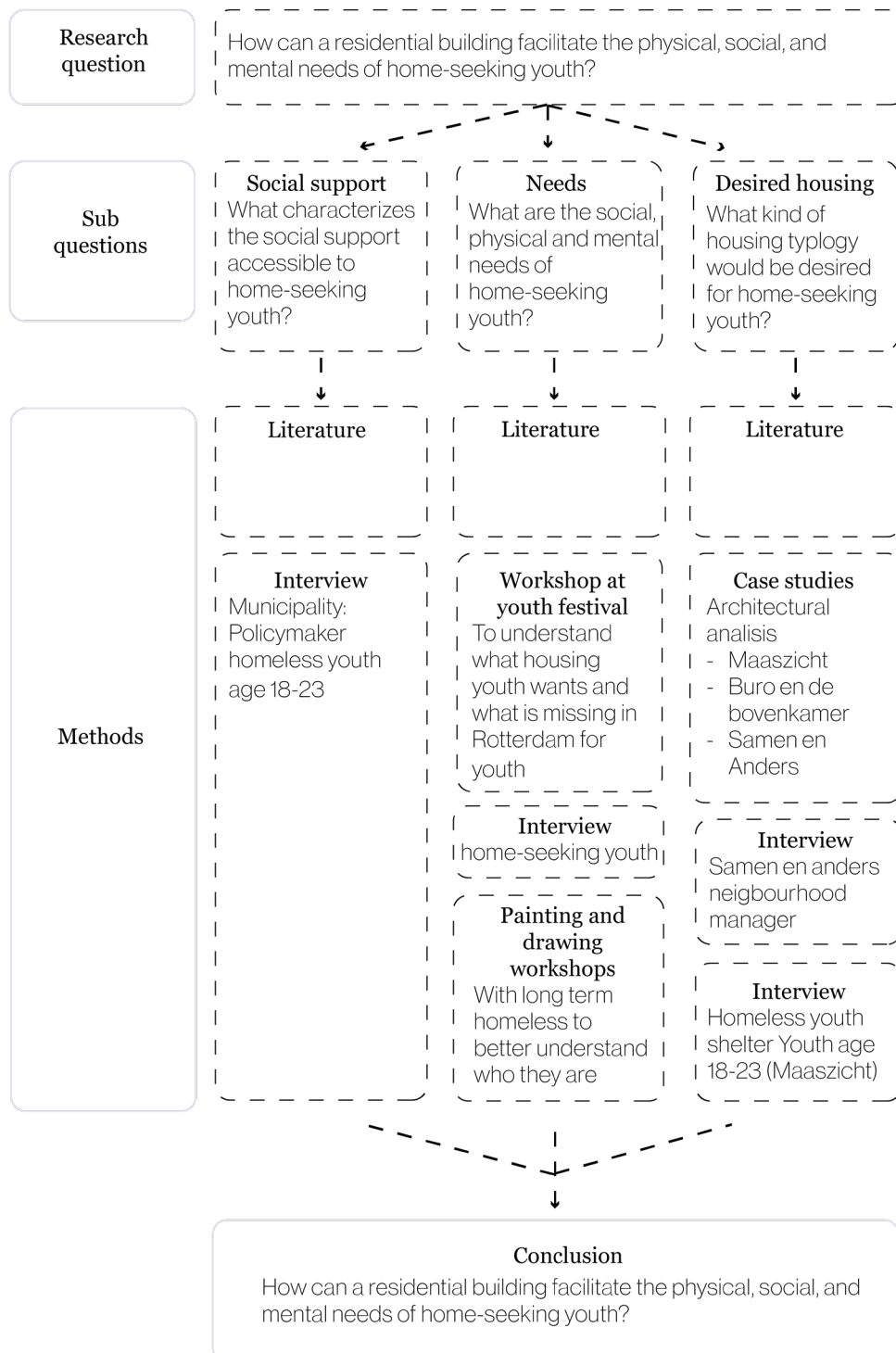
*Master thesis*

Figure 6.
 Research methodology in scheme (own image)

The content within the figure:

**Research question**

How can a residential building facilitate the physical, social, and mental needs of home-seeking youth?

**Sub questions**

Social support
What characterizes the social support accessible to home-seeking youth?

Needs
What are the social, physical and mental needs of home-seeking youth?

Desired housing
What kind of housing typlogy would be desired for home-seeking youth?

**Methods**

Literature

Literature

Literature

Interview
Municipality: Policymaker homeless youth age 18-23

Workshop at youth festival
To understand what housing youth wants and what is missing in Rotterdam for youth

Case studies
Architectural analisis
- Maaszicht
- Buro en de bovenkamer
- Samen en Anders

Interview
home-seeking youth

Interview
Samen en anders neigbourhood manager

Painting and drawing workshops
With long term homeless to better understand who they are

Interview
Homeless youth shelter Youth age 18-23 (Maaszicht)

**Conclusion**
How can a residential building facilitate the physical, social, and mental needs of home-seeking youth?

# 2.0 Social support system for home-seeking youth

What characterizes the social support accessible to home-seeking youth?

When familial and friend support is unavailable, a governmental and municipal-led support system becomes crucial for home-seeking youth. To elucidate the rights of such youth, a comprehensive figure has been created outlining the various rights they can rely on (Figure 8). The foundation for this exploration is established through personas derived from a test case conducted by the municipality of Rotterdam known as Project 010. Project 010 involved a test case wherein the municipality of Rotterdam applied the 'housing first' principle to assist several young individuals. Home-seeking youth was provided with a home to cultivate their future, coupled with support from the municipality, including a 'Breakthrough' Budget (doorbraakbudget) and a warm network ('warm netwerk'). The term 'warm network' denotes a support network comprising individuals who assist the youth in various aspects of their lives (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2021). This holistic approach aims to empower home-seeking youth with the necessary tools and resources to build a stable and successful future. For some youth, this approach worked out well and for some, it was harder to pick up life because their backpack was too big.
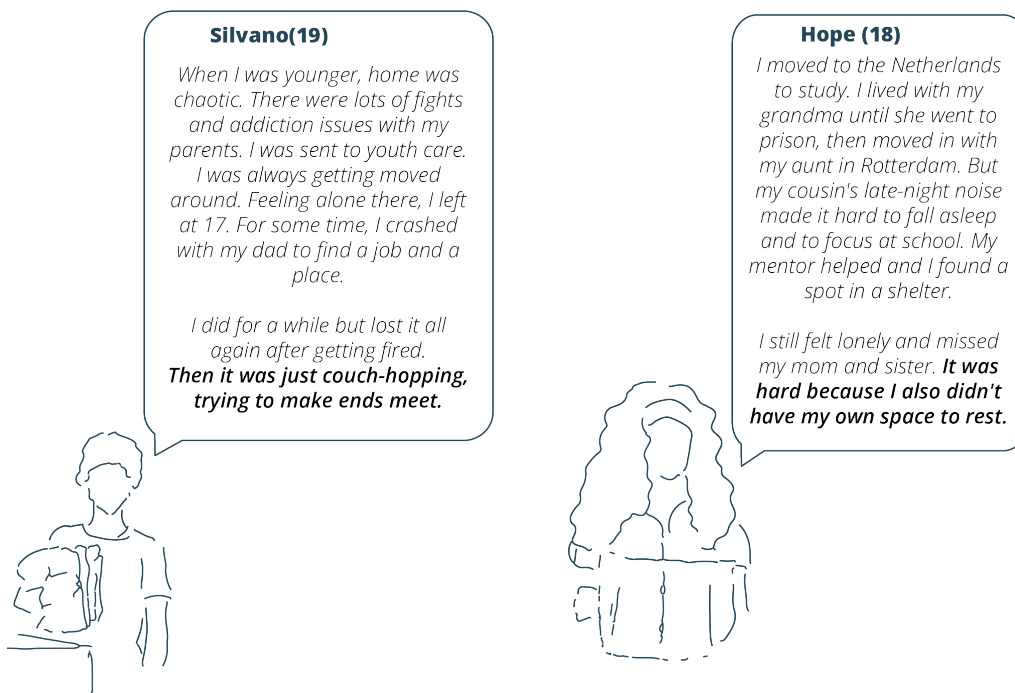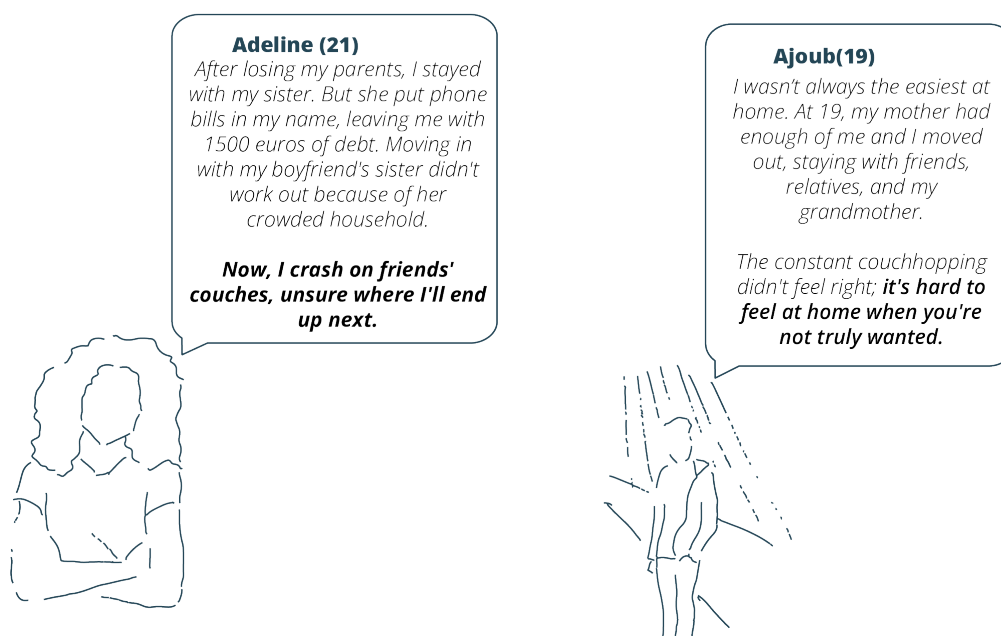
**Silvano(19)**

*When I was younger, home was chaotic. There were lots of fights and addiction issues with my parents. I was sent to youth care. I was always getting moved around. Feeling alone there, I left at 17. For some time, I crashed with my dad to find a job and a place.*

*I did for a while but lost it all again after getting fired.*
**Then it was just couch-hopping, trying to make ends meet.**

**Hope (18)**

*I moved to the Netherlands to study. I lived with my grandma until she went to prison, then moved in with my aunt in Rotterdam. But my cousin's late-night noise made it hard to fall asleep and to focus at school. My mentor helped and I found a spot in a shelter.*

*I still felt lonely and missed my mom and sister.* **It was hard because I also didn't have my own space to rest.**

*Figure 7.*
*Persona's based on testcases in project010*
*(Gemeente Rotterdam, 2021)*

## 2.1 Target group

The research scope, illustrated in Figure 8, delineates a distinction made by the municipality between youth with and without a care indication. While both groups may experience homelessness, the municipality primarily aids those with a care need. This study specifically targets youth without a clear care indication but in dire need of a stable and secure home, as indicated by the dotted line in the figure. The process these youth must navigate is divided into four stages. The initial stage involves not having secure housing, a situation often influenced by external factors beyond the youths' control. Personas such as Adeline, Ayoub, Silvano, and Hope represent diverse backgrounds and reasons for this lack of secure housing in Figure 7. The second stage revolves around seeking help. If parental support is unavailable, and there is no social network to fall back on, youth must turn to the municipality and government. This comes with certain limitations and conditions. Moving to the third stage, securing income becomes crucial for these individuals. In the fourth stage the income should help with finding a house. However, obtaining income doesn't necessarily translate to finding housing due to lengthy waiting lists at housing associations. In essence, this chapter aims to comprehend and address the challenges faced by youth navigating these stages, shedding light on systemic issues in the process.

**Adeline (21)**
*After losing my parents, I stayed with my sister. But she put phone bills in my name, leaving me with 1500 euros of debt. Moving in with my boyfriend's sister didn't work out because of her crowded household.*

***Now, I crash on friends' couches, unsure where I'll end up next.***

**Ajoub(19)**
*I wasn't always the easiest at home. At 19, my mother had enough of me and I moved out, staying with friends, relatives, and my grandmother.*

*The constant couchhopping didn't feel right; **it's hard to feel at home when you're not truly wanted.***

## 2.2 Trajectory home-seeking youth

To get a better understanding of the trajectory of home-seeking youth, an interview has been done with the the policy advisor for homeless youth ('Beleidsadviseur dak- en thuisloze jongeren tussen 18-23 jaar') of the Municipality of Rotterdam. Next to that, an extensive study has been done on the policies in place which has been shown in Figure 8 which concluded four phases that youth has to go through to get housing.

## Fase 1: Insecure housing

In the initial stage, the youth realizes that they no longer have a safe home and must embark on a search for a more secure and trusting environment. This realization may be triggered by a significant event or a prolonged period of an unsafe home situation. The four personas represent four distinct pathways leading to an insecure housing status (Figure 7). Adeline has experienced the loss of her parents, Ayoub faced an unsafe home situation that led to his placement in youth care. Hope's parents reside abroad, and with no viable options within her extended family, she finds herself without a place to stay. Silvano, on the other hand, lacks a secure home environment altogether (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2021). . Each persona exemplifies a unique circumstance that can result in an unsafe living situation for the youth.

## Fase 2: getting social support

To get assistance, this youth must approach the municipality. However, as they do not have a clear care need, they can only turn to the 'Jongerenloket' (Youth desk) and not to the 'Centraal Onthaal Jongeren' (Central youth reception). The Jongerenloket is a place where youth can get a youth counselor to advise and inform youth about their rights, like the 'Participation Act'. This means they are eligible for governmental benefits. The only drawback is that individuals under 27 years old enter a four-week search period. During these initial four weeks, they cannot receive any benefits yet and they must actively search for employment. Only after completing this period do they become eligible for benefits. This immediately creates a financial setback at a critical juncture in their quest. The municipality now implements exceptions for vulnerable youth, which helps reduce delays for home-seeking youth.

**Advisor municipality 'Four-week search period' for youth under 27'**

"This four-week search period leads to unneeded delays in support/housing and possibly an increased debt. These debts are still paid by the municipality to get these youth out of trouble. This four-week search period shifts the problem to later, but nothing is saved or resolved. In the meantime, exeptions are now made for vulnerable youth in Rotterdam, preventing this delay for home-seeking youth."
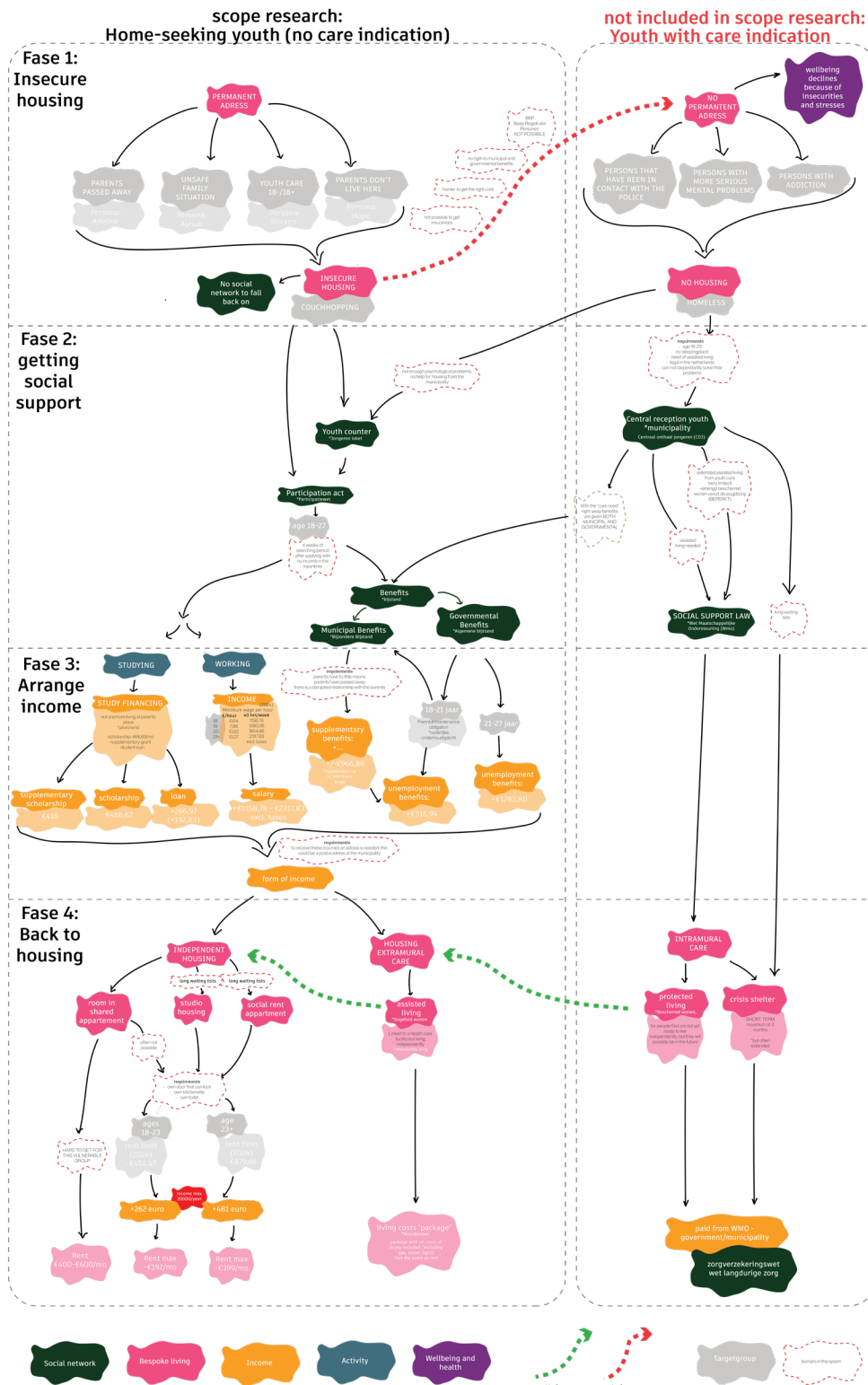
*Figure 8.*

*Support system for home-seeking youth (categorised on the big 5 needs for selfrelience) (own image)*

*Based on: Ministerie van Algemene Zaken (2024); Ministerie van Algemene Zaken (2021); Belastingdienst (2024); Belastingdienst (2023); Nederlands Jeugdinstituut. (n.d.).*

Advisor municipality
'Supplementary benefits' under 21

"These supplementary benefits are granted to youth who 1) live independently, 2) cannot meet the cost of living independently and 3) have no parents who can meet the parental maintenance obligation. If they do not meet the three acquirements, it is harder to attain these supplementary benefits. Additionally, there are supplementary benefits for various housing-related expenses. To obtain these benefits, it is important that they are authorized upfront, which can cause delays. Additionally, not all young people and counselors are aware of how to access these benefits. In general, even with all benefits combined, the income is quite thight and hard to make ends meet."

Additionally, individuals under 21 years old are entitled to only a small portion of the benefits, as there is still a 'parental maintenance obligation' from their parents. However, not all youth can receive this support from their parents. In such cases, the youth can apply for supplementary benefits at the municipality. This process takes extra time if they didn't acquire housing yet, potentially causing them to accumulate financial setbacks. This creates a vicious cycle through which getting social support gets harder when there is no housing, but housing is also harder to get when the social support is not there yet.

## Fase 3: Arrange income.

When initial support is requested, it is a matter of getting income. Income can come from various sources, such as student financing when someone starts a study (this may not always commence immediately; there are fixed start dates, usually in September). Other sources of income can include wages from work and benefits from the municipality and government. Youth aged 18 to 21 also face a drawback in this regard, namely that they earn less than those who are 21 years old (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2021b). This makes it much

Advisor municipality
'The participation act'

"The Participation Act is strict, so it's not easy to maintain benefits, and when someone works, benefits are also partially cut or may need to be put on hold."

more challenging to make ends meet when you have just turned 18 years old. Next to that, most sources of income have a requirement, and that is having a fixed address. This could also be a postal address at the municipality. This illustrates that one problem can perpetuate another.

## Fase 4: Back to housing

TThe final stage that youth must go through is ultimately finding a home. This can be a residence with some support (extramural care) or independent housing. They

can search for these options at places like housing associations. However, there are long waiting lists, and securing a dwelling often depends on registration times. Regarding housing, the rent must be lower than 454.47 euros because this is the rent limit under which individuals under 23 years old are eligible for a rent subsidy. When the rent is above this number it either should be capped by the housing association, or youth can't

**Home-seeking youth**
"I would rather not share a house as it increases the probability of a roommate not doing their tasks. This brings extra responsibility and communication that is hard for me to think about next to my responsibilities."

get any subsidy at all. Other conditions arising from rent subsidy include having a private lockable door, a kitchen unit, and a private toilet (Belastingdienst, 2023). Sharing a house with others is thus often excluded. Additionally, it is more challenging for this target group to find shared housing, as they may not be the demographic that has fully developed during their adolescence and therefore find it harder to live together with other tenants. When the rent exceeds this amount, youth also immediately lose their entitlement to rent subsidy. This makes housing quickly become too expensive for this target group.

## 2.3 Pitfalls Social Support system

The social support system at this point is lacking some fundamental help in the early stages of homelessness for youth in Rotterdam. Especially for youth that doesn't have a formal care indication. The only solution for these youth is to start sleeping on couches with friends and family. This is not a structural solution. In the end, this causes more problems which can cause youth to need more care than they initially needed. It is important for youth that the support system will become more responsive to their needs, otherwise, these costs will come back later to the municipality. Next to that, youth between 18 and 23 years are disadvantaged on a lower wage, rent allowances, benefits, an extra four-week search period etcetera, making the gap from young adult to adult even bigger at a sensitive juncture in their life. Home-seeking youth don't have a support system at home that can help them financially, with a house, and/or mental support. Therefore, it is extra important that there is a place to go. The 'Jongerenloket' should therefore also be able to give some tangible options for youth to live.

# 3.0 Needs of Home-seeking youth

What are the social, physical, and mental needs of home seeking youth?

To be able to create a sustainable life and future for home-seeking youth, a variety of needs to create a quality of life must be met. Housing is not the only need that home-seeking youth have, it is a part of the whole. Following Altena et al. (2010) there are four quadrangles of conditional factors for quality of life shown in Figure 9. This is Socioeconomic security, which is represented in the physical needs of youth, social cohesion and social inclusion, which are included in the social needs and the last one is empowerment, which is included in the mental needs of home-seeking youth.

## 3.1 Mental needs: empowerment
### Building confidence

One important skill has often not been learned yet during the teenage years of this group. That skill is learning to fail. Making mistakes was often 'punished' in some form in their youth and that made this group more vulnerable to being afraid to make mistakes as they did not have a safe environment to grow up in (Garage2020, 2020). They need greater trust from social workers and institutions, especially the youth who have a big history of failing social relationships. (Winter &
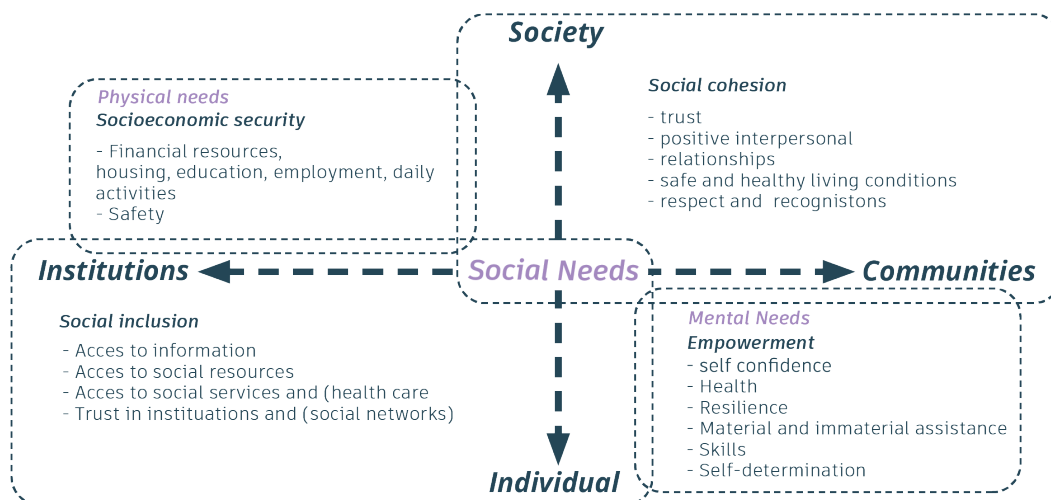


*Figure 9.*
*Social quality and the quadrangle of conditional factors of life. (Own image)*
*Image based on figure 1 from "Effective interventions for Homeless Youth"*
*Altena et al. (2010)*

### Experiences workshop 'Leger des Heils'

During the workshops at the Salvation Army, it also became clear that even at a later age, a lot of participants had a fear of doing things wrong. This made it very difficult to try new things like doing the painting workshop. On the one hand, the participants were enthusiastic and said they would like to come along next week, but at the end of the day, it was still a big hurdle to try something new and some never tried the painting in the workshop. The participants were often filling in coloring sheets since this leaves little space for mistakes. This fear seems to be the biggest thing holding them back to become independent.

Noom, 2003). Next to that, youth who have been in contact with care institutions also have a bad relationship with failing, because they feel like they are constantly observed which gives them the feeling that they could not make any mistakes (Garage2020, 2020). Home-seeking Youth should be given a chance to make mistakes again to grow and gain confidence. In the interview with Maaszicht, they also mentioned that the youth often lack the concepts that have to do with the self: self-respect, self-confidence, self-knowledge, etc. These are the things they will have to learn whilst being able to make mistakes.

## The need to feel normal

One of the other feelings that are needed is a feeling of being normal (garage2020, 2020). Stigmatization must be avoided. This youth must be treated like an ordinary human being and not like a 'client' (de Winter & Noom, 2003). Any kind of patronizing must be avoided (Winter & Noom, 2003).

### Experiences workshop 'Leger des Heils'

During the workshops at the Salvation Army, many people said: 'I don't belong here'. In part, this could be linked to the feeling that there are only 'geeks' there and that the ones who feel 'normal' feel like they are at a place where they don't belong, or at least where they don't (want to) belong..

## Autonomy

Another important thing that home-seeking youth need is the possibility of making their own choices and having autonomy over one's life. However, there is a paradox between making choices and needing care (Garage2020, 2020). This also became clear in the research of de Winter & Noom (2003). On the one hand, they need independence and autonomy and on the other hand, they sometimes don't feel ready for it and need social workers to get them out of the problems they made. The adolescents want more trust from the social workers. This also leads to the extent that the youth must learn to take responsibility for what they do, but also that they can make mistakes and see the consequences more lightly. Research by Krabbenborg et al. also has shown that home-seeking youth who experience

more autonomy, competence, and relatedness experience a higher quality of life (2016).

## 3.2 Social needs: inclusion and cohesion
### Personal Relationships
One of the needs for self-reliance is having good relationships or differently formulated: a good social network. Hereby it is important to have at least one person whom youth can fall back on and get unconditional support from (Leerdam et al., 2021). A different approach to creating personal relationships is having peer buddies with ex-home-seeking youth. It seems that a deeper understanding can be created quickly when two people have been in the same situation (Garrett, 2008). This is also noted by Schmitt et al. (2023) also noted that deeper trust can be gained by peer workers as they can better relate to the situation.

### Social support safety net
Safety is one of the things that youth need for self-reliance (van Leerdam et al., 2021). A safety net from social support should be in place in case there is no social network to fall back. A social support safety net means having a responsive social support system that is there to provide support right away when it is needed.

### Participation
Participating in society is a crucial need for young people, as it gradually helps them learn to take responsibility in the community. The key principle here is learning by doing. Youth need a feeling of belonging, being valued, and being necessary (de Winter & Noom, 2003). Participation can promote civil education and it fosters psychological well-being. By providing an opportunity to participate, both personal and social goals can be achieved (de Winter & Noom, 2003).

## 3.3 Physical needs: socioeconomic security
### Housing
One of the physical things that home-seeking youth need is a house. A house that can form a haven where they can always come back to. This is one of the big 5 for self-reliance that has been described in the research of van Leerdam et al. (2021)

### Third place
Third place refers to a social environment apart from the usual two social spaces: Home being the first place and work/school being the second place. "It is simply there, providing opportunities for experiences and relationships that are otherwise unavailable" (Oldenburg & Brissett, 1982). Daily activities are important for youth

seeking a home as this can serve as an outlet and a third place. It should be a place where individuals can connect. This can happen in various locations: a sports club, making music with friends, or a cafe. Cult North for instance is such a place where youth can go to have their home away from home (Cult North, z.d.).

## Perspective for the future

The home-seeking youth must create a (financial) perspective for themselves and their future. Thus, youth must have work or education. Work and education are also among the big five needs for self-reliance that have been described by van Leerdam et al. (2021).

## 3.4 How all needs come together

In Figure 10, the needs have been brought together in one image to show the relation between the basic needs of home-seeking youth. Social needs interfere with both mental and physical needs since the existance of a healthy social network can give support to both the physical and mental needs. The physical and mental needs however interact with each other in a more responsive way. The fact of missing certain physical needs can lead to problems mentally and the other way around.  Concluded can be that the social needs play a crucial role in the health of the home/seeking youth as it can influence all aspects for their health directly.
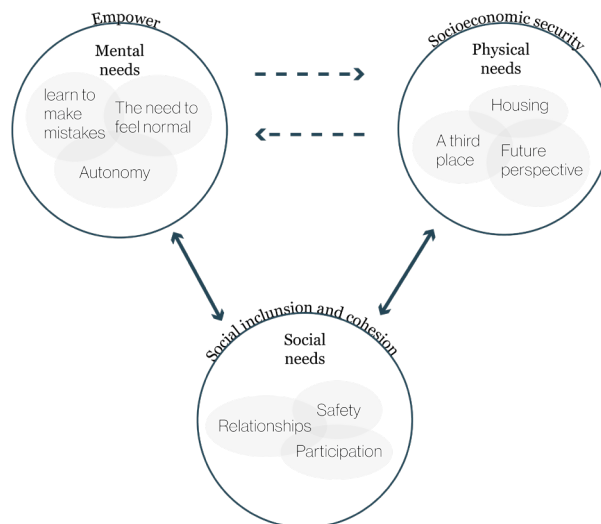


*Figure 10.*
*Mental, physical and social needs in relation to each other.*
*Image based on Figure 1 in "Bringing together physical and mental health" (Naylon et al., 2016)*

# 4.0 Desired housing concept

What kind of housing concept would be most desirable for home-seeking youth?

To create housing for home-seeking youth, it is important that on all scales the youth are included with their wishes. From their neighborhood to their personal space, they need to find their home in their building and get the chance to make their home. Garage2020 (2020) has formulated a few problems with housing for home-seeking youth through their field research in Rotterdam; A Bedroom with lots of people gives stress and unsafe feeling; living rooms often feel unattractive and temporary and the entrance hall feel impersonal and not welcoming. From these problems, they have formed some fundamental principles for designing housing for home-seeking youth. These 5 principles are formulated in Figure 11. A principle that is added in this research is 'Blending in' (step 1) since it also is utterly important that youth blend in the neighborhood and will be accepted by their neighbors. Creating a feeling of belonging.

## Vulnerable youth on what misses in Rotterdam
Places that they miss in Rotterdam are places where you can go for free and be with each other; third places.

## Vulnerable youth on where to live in Rotterdam
The north of Rotterdam seems to be most popular among youth, but on the south of Rotterdam, both Feyenoord and Katendrecht are named as neighborhoods that youth could see themselves living in if they live in Rotterdam South. It can form a bridge between the south and the north. The north of Rotterdam is the place for vibrant youth activities and the south is the place where their family lives.

*Master thesis*

## 4.1 Six steps to make a home
## 1. Blending in

It is important that the housing that is created for home-seeking youth can blend into the existing community, being seen as one of them and not as a group of unwanted visitors. In the workshop with vulnerable youth, they mentioned that Rotterdam was missing neutral places to stay. Research also has shown that social cohesion and integration are needed for home-seeking youth to become more resilient, this can be done through participation (Winter & Noom, 2003). Adding neighborhood functions in the building can add value to the neighborhood. Meanwhile, youth can participate and show the neighborhood their good intentions therefore creating social connections between the neighborhood and youth. Creating integration and cohesion instead of a deserted island.
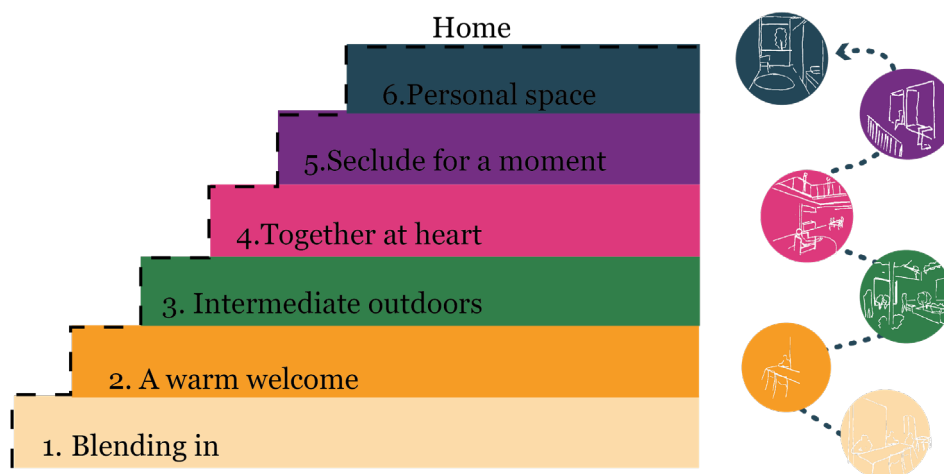


*Figure 11.*
*6 Steps to make a home for home-seeking youth (own image)*
*Based on research 'Terug naar Eigenwaarde: Onderzoeksfase & ontwerprichting.' of Garage2020 (2020).*

## 2. A warm welcome

A warm welcome indicates having a clear space on arrival and departure. This could be a kind of lobby at the entrance. Important here is to create a feeling of welcome (Garage2020, 2020). In the workshop that was done at Cult North, someone mentioned having a doorman as an extra function of the building. This could be part of the warm welcome.

## 3. Intermediate outdoors

It is important to have an outdoor space where youth can get a breath of fresh air without being a nuisance or inconvenience to others. It should be an intermediate space between shelters and the street. This can promote relaxation and dialogue. (Garage2020, 2020)

## 4. Together at heart

This is a common room that is central to the building. It should be a hybrid space, where youth have the control to decorate it as they wish. (Garage2020, 2020)

## 5. Seclude for a moment

It should also be possible to isolate oneself in the common area. These spaces can be designated for studying, relaxing, and resting. It's important to create these areas so that young people don't have to retreat elsewhere to find this peace. It's important to design gradations between the heart and the room of the youth. (Garage2020, 2020)

## 6. Personal space

A place to retreat that belongs fully to the youth themselves is important. This is where they can fully rest and can get a good sleep. This space should be self-contained. Furthermore, sanitary space should be shared with a maximum of 2 people. (Garage2020, 2020)

## 4.2 Case studies

To understand how housing for this home-seeking youth is done in Rotterdam, a few interesting case studies will be analyzed to show concepts of housing home-seeking youth. These concepts have different levels of independence and care which have been shown in Figure 12. Maaszicht shown on the left in Figure 12 is a homeless shelter and has twenty-four-hour supervision. It is a care facility and youth will be taken care of and will have less independence. Food is provided 4 times a day and they have certain hours when they must be in the building. An interview has been done with Maaszicht to get more in-depth information. Buro en de Bovenkamer is the second concept shown in the middle of Figure 12, where youth is living above a foundation that helps home-seeking youth. There is no direct connection between the inhabitants and this foundation, but it creates a friendly face in the neighborhood. The youth living here have ambulatory care and there are regular checkups. This provides an opportunity for help when needed, but the youth are independent in their house. The third concept is 'Samen en Anders' which is based on reciprocity. The youth are not taken care of, but on the other side, they must put in ten hours of reciprocity every week with other older (55+) habitants in the building.  'Youth' in this building is a broader term as they have participants from 18-55 years old functioning as the younger group. They should provide them either with doing some grocery shopping, or simply just making a talk. This provides a lot of informal care for the older inhabitants, but it also creates a sounding board for youth to ask for advice when they want. It creates more informal relationships.
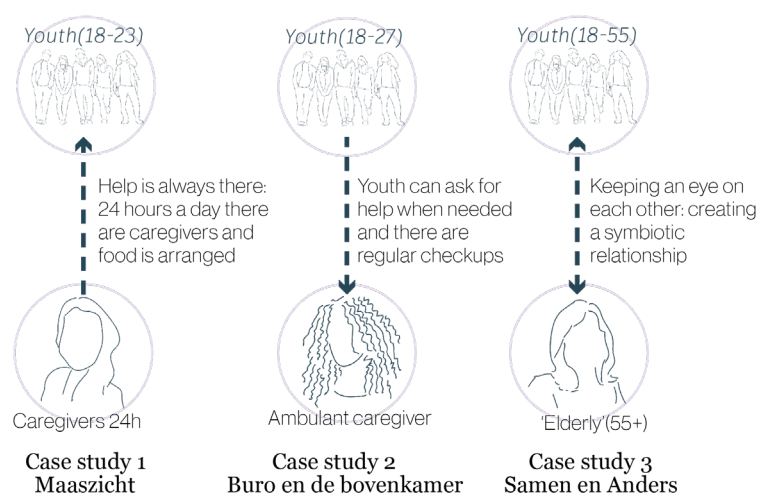


*Figure 12.*
*Case studies and care concepts*

# Youth shelter with 24h care facility

**Information**

Maaszicht (24h care)

**Adress**

Rotterdam, Kleiweg 314

**Care concept**

Carefacility with 24h care

**Original architect**

Bureau voor Architectuur en stedebouw ir. S. van Duin

**Renovation (2005)**

Architectenbureau No Label

**Habitants**

39 Youngsters 17-23 years

Concept

Maaszicht is a shelter that has twenty-four-hour care for youth between eighteen and twenty-three years old. Through the municipality, if they have a care indication, youth can get a spot in this facility if they have waited on the waiting list. Maaszicht has 39 studios with individual bathrooms. Food is provided 4 times a day. Having daytime activities like studies/work/volunteering is mandatory. If the youth don't arrange it themselves, it will be arranged for them. Next to that, they have a closing time during the week at night to keep a good day and night rhythm.
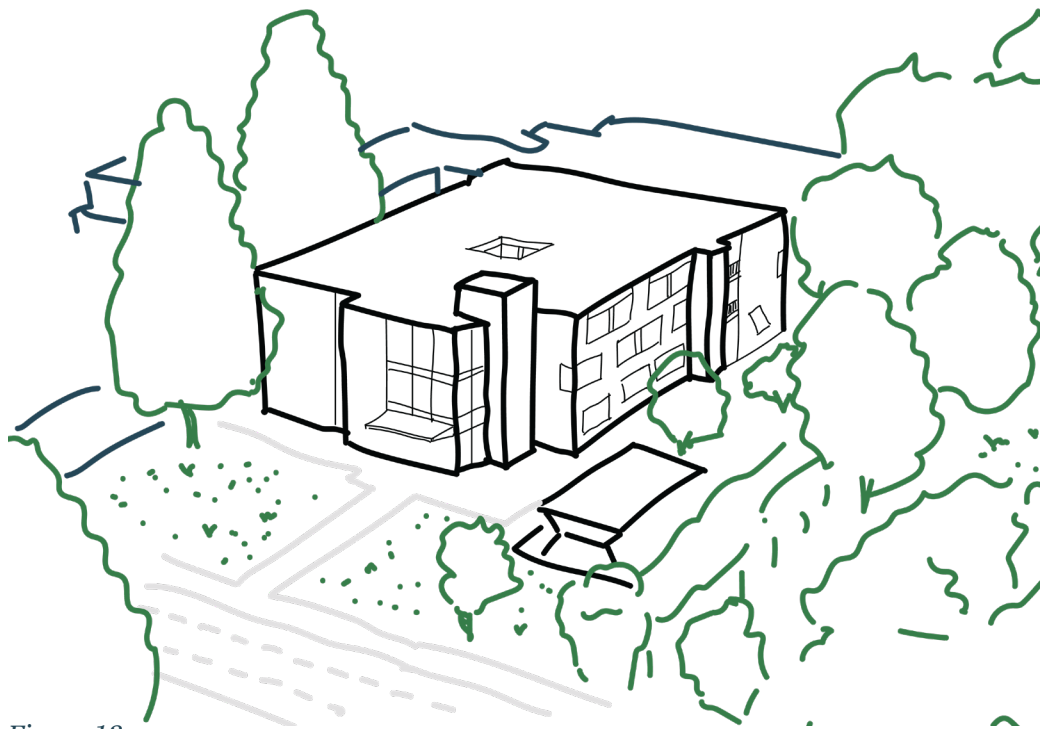


*Figure 13.*
*Maaszicht surroundings*

## Interview behavourial specialist and and policy officer at Maaszicht

Recently Maaszicht has moved from a location in the middle of Rotterdam to this building. A lot of improvements have been made compared to the previous building. There is greener space around the facility and there is a nice garden for the youngsters to share. Previously the youngsters had to share the showers and toilets and they didn't all have their personal space in the building. Now they all have a studio for themselves with their own bathroom with a shower and a toilet.

The change from having shared rooms and private rooms and sanitary spaces had a big influence on the amount of relations between the youth that were living in the facility. Previously, when showers and toilets were shared, youth got to know each other a lot quicker.

The change to individual studios is seen as a positive change though. The hygiene is a lot better and there is more rest for the youngsters. Although it was a positive influence, it did decrease the involvement of the habitants.
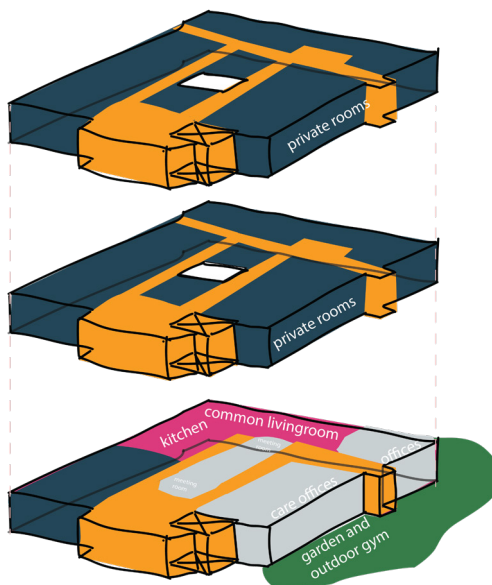


*Figure 14.*
*Axonometry 'Maaszicht'*

## 1. Blending in

The building doesn't have direct functions directly for the neighborhood. Therefore, the neighborhood did not right away have a great connection with this building. The people were a bit scared because of the group that was going to live here. This was noted during the interview.

## 2. A warm welcome

The entrances to the building are quite formal. The entrance is empty, and there is no reception or anyone to welcome you. Though, there are a lot of big windows in the hallway especially on the upper floors, which creates a pleasant environment.

## 3. Intermediate outdoors

There is a lot of intermediate outdoor space. From the living room, you can access the garden, where you can sit on two sides of the building. The backside borders a school, so smoking is not allowed there, but on the other side, smoking is permitted,. There is also a large power tower for exercising.

## 4. Together at heart

There is a large shared common area. The atmosphere is pleasant, and there are various forms of entertainment available, such as a foosball table, a guitar, a piano, some sofas, and regular dining tables. Although the atmosphere is cozy, there was no one present during the visit. Additionally, the space is quite large and adjoins the offices of the supervisors. It's conceivable that someone might not feel entirely comfortable sitting there and might feel observed by the caregivers.

## 5. Seclude for a moment

There isn't really a place to seclude oneself while still being in a public space. The living room is quite large, but the next step is essentially your own room.

## 6. Personal space

The personal space is very neat and comfortable in terms of size. Each room also has a private shower and toilet. Additionally, almost all rooms have a view of greenery outside, providing ample natural light.

## Other

In this building other are all the care functions marked as 'other' as they are not available for youth by themselves.
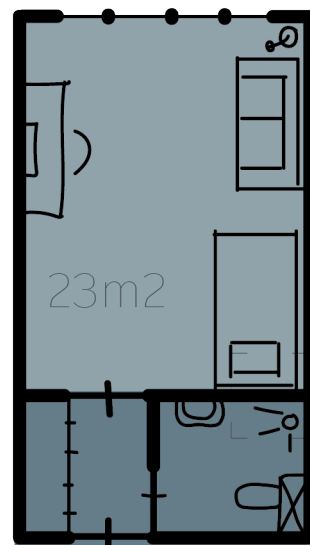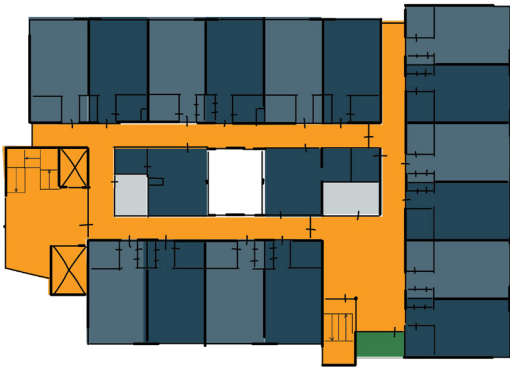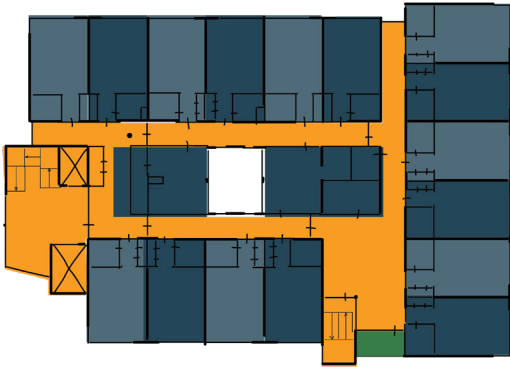
*Figure 15.*
*1:500 Floor plans with functions*



*Figure 16.*
*Personal space 1:100*

# Living independently with guidance on location

## Information

Buro en de Bovenkamer

## Adress

Rotterdam, Rochussenstraat 355-357

## Care concept

Individual appartments with personal ambulatory care on location
(BOL: begeleiding op locatie)

## Renovation (2012)

- KRILL Architecten
- Christian Muller Architects

## Habitants

23 rooms
- 3 offices of Maaszicht
- 18 rooms for home-seeking youth
(17-23 years)
- 2 student rooms
(not connected to Maaszicht)

## Concept

This building has a public use in the plinth in the form of a youth foundation. This is a foundation that helps vulnerable youth in Rotterdam with setting up their life. This has an indirect connection to the youth living on the upper floors. The youth of the upper floors are not using this foundation specifically. They have ambulantory care on the location themselves. Within the building there are three offices of Maaszicht, eighteen home -seeking youth are living here with some form of guidance and two students living here independently. They share their sanitary and they share a small roof terrace.
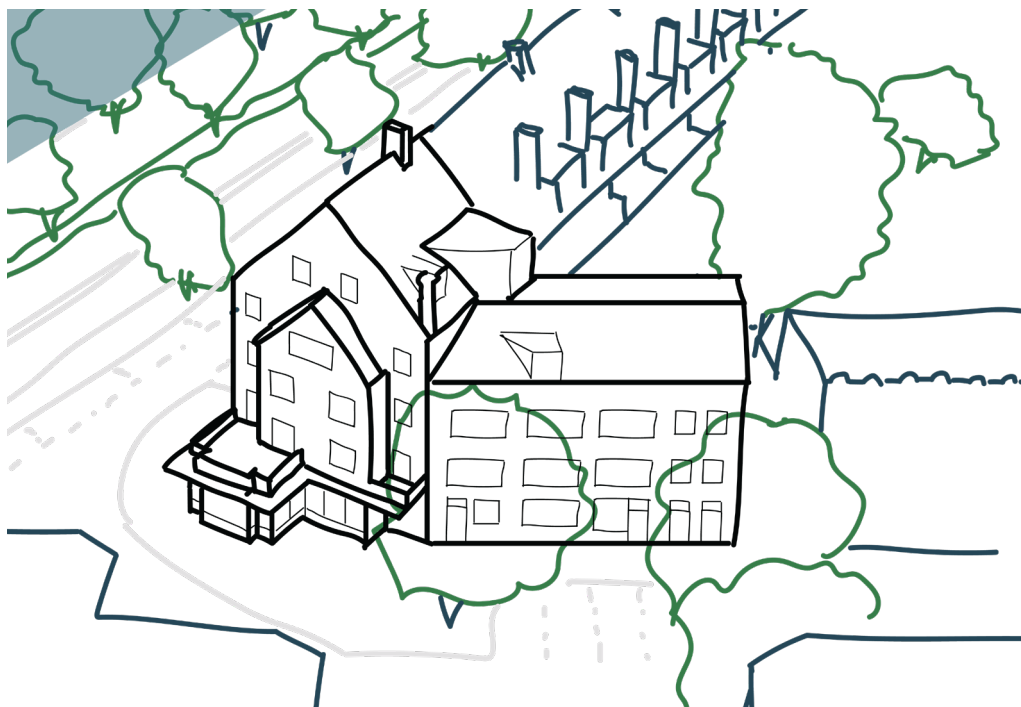


*Figure 17.*
*Buro en de Bovenkamer*

## Stichting Urban Skillsz

Foundation Urban Skillsz helps youth between 10-27 years old that are in a vulnerable situation. Skillsz helps these youth to strengthen their talents and to help them to fully participate in society (Urban Skillsz, z.d.). The foundation is not directly linked to the housing above.
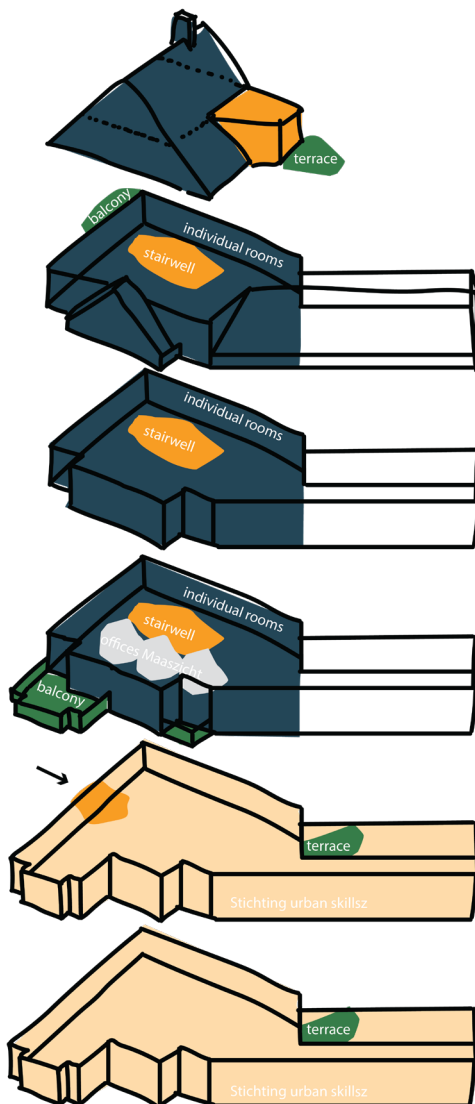


*Figure 18.*
*Axonometry 'Buro en de Bovenkamer'*

## Interview
## 'foundation Maaszicht'

When a youngster is done at Maaszicht, they have multiple places that youth can transition into. One of the options is a room in 'Buro en de Bovenkamer'. The youth here still have ambulatory care which gives them more autonomy and responsibility than at Maaszicht's twenty-four-hour care facility. Often when youth transition from twenty-four-hour care to ambulatory care, they change from mentor, so relationships are not fully maintained from the Maaszicht facility after they transition into their own appartments. Youth that live here don't get send away after they turn 23, they often can stay, but it depends on their care trajectory.

### Behavourial specialist Maaszicht

"It is quite common to notice that the relationship between youth and caregiver is very functional. This is because of the trouble they have with attaching; it doesn't happen that quickly. They don't find it easy to create emotional bonds."

## 1. Blending in

The building has a foundation for vulnerable youth on the ground floor. This adds a friendly face to the neighborhood where they can see this vulnerable group work for their future. Blending in the neighborhood without causing skepticism.

## 2. A warm welcome

In this building, the entrance to the individual rooms is separated from the shared spaces on the ground floor, but the stairwell is designed to have an open character. The load-bearing wall that originally kept the two staircases separate has been broken, creating large pleasant intermediate zones with daylight where people can meet and have some small talk. Also the ambulatory care offices are connected to the hallways, giving opportunity to ask for help when needed.

## 3. Intermediate outdoors

There are various intermediate outdoor spaces. There is a small patio connected to the foundation, and for the residents, there is a small rooftop terrace. Additionally, there are a few balconies that can be used as personal outdoor spaces connected to the individual rooms.

## 4. Together at heart

The two floors on the ground floor and basement create various spaces where people can engage in activities together and meet each other. Though it's only available for the foundation that is located in the plinth.

## 5. Seclude for a moment

In the housing itself there is not really a place to seclude in the common areas. There is a terrace where one could go.

## 6. Personal space

The personal space consists of a room where a bed, a desk, and a small kitchen can fit. Each person has their own house number and doorbell, enhancing the sense of having one's own dwelling. Sanitary spaces are shared among the inhabitants as shown in Figure 20.

## Other

Some of the rooms are used as offices of Maaszicht for onsight supervision (BOL). These rooms are interchangable to being self sufficient rooms where youth can live.

per 6 units



30m2



17m2

*Figure 19.*
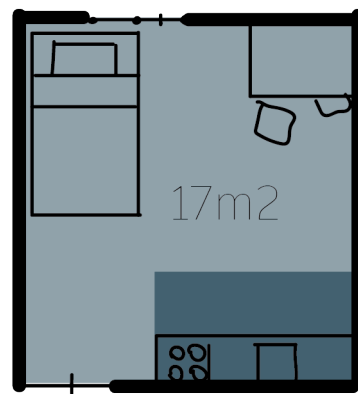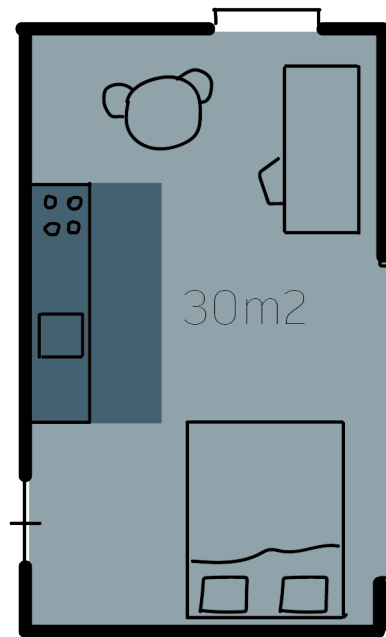*1:500 Floor plans with functions*
*'Buro en de Bovenkamer'*
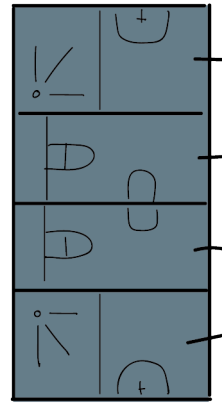
*Figure 20.*
*1:100 Personal space*
*'Buro en de Bovenkamer'*

# Caring for each other

## Information
Samen en Anders

## Adress
Rotterdam, Strevelsweg 350

## Care concept
Younger residents give back 10 hours per week of reciprocity to elderly residents

## Renovation
 MaasWonen housing corporation

## Habitants
75 rooms
mix of younger (55-)
- and older(55+) habitants

## Concept
The concept of this building is built on reciprocity. That means that to live here, the person needs to put ten hours a week in other inhabitants of the building. In exchange, they get a more affordable home. The price of the room is around 350-400 euros per month plus the ten hours of reciprocity (Open Rotterdam, 2017). Not all floors of the building are using this concept. In Figure 22 you can find which floors are used for this concept.
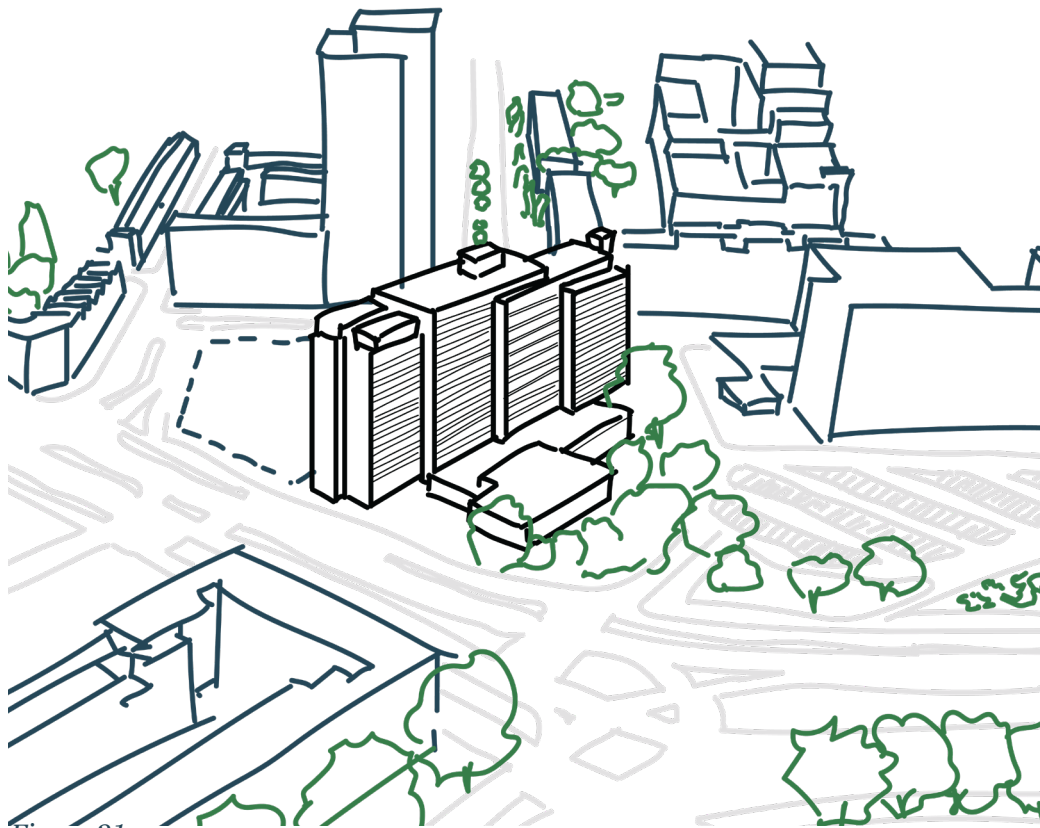


*Figure 21.*
*Samen en Anders*
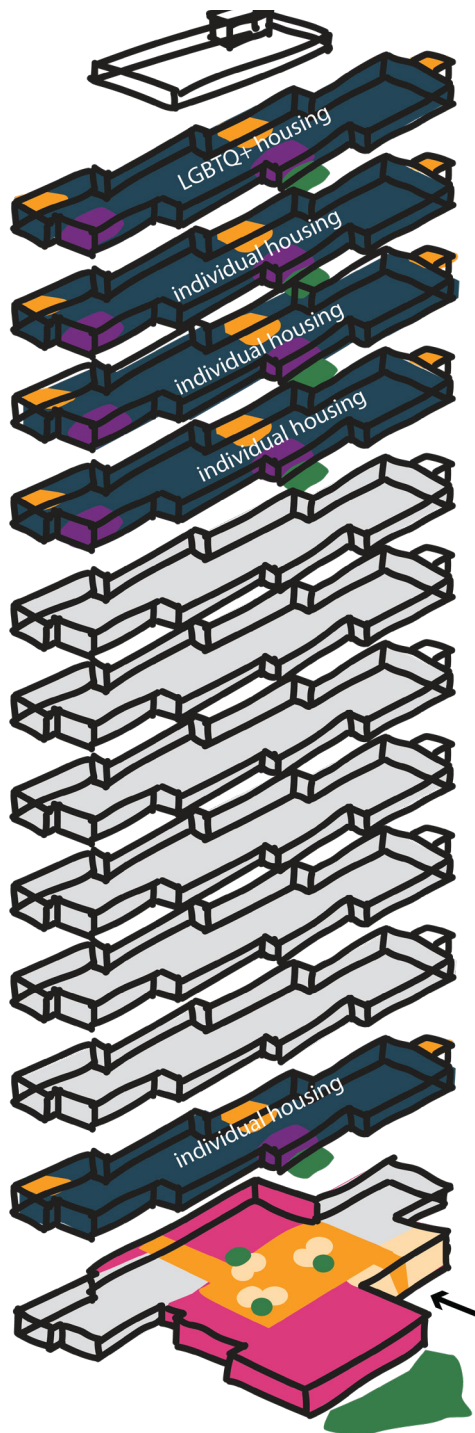
Figure 22.
Axonometry of 'Samen en Anders'

## Interview "kwartiermaker"

The 'kwartiermaker' is in this case a person with a care background that matches most of the inhabitants with each other in 'Samen en Anders'. The literal translation is neighborhood maker. The key takeaways of this concept were that it is important to think about how new habitants are matched and most importantly who has the responsibility for that. There must be a person with a background in care who can link people together, but also who decides who gets to live in the building. It is important to not 'help' everyone. Some youths have too big of a backpack. Youth with a little backpack. It is important to be strict on it so that building a community from scratch will be possible.

### 'Kwartiermaker'

The 'youth' who are added to the building must not have too many problems (or too big of a backpack) so that they can live independently here. Essentially, there is no supervision in the building.

## 1. Blending in

The building is quite isolated from the neighborhood. However a variety of social enterprises have been able to make something of the little 'shops' that are placed in the entrance hall. Some examples are: hairdresser, restaurant, indian fashion, sewing studio and more. This brings oppertunities to inhabitants to start something themselves and to blend into the neighbourhood. It brings a form of participation.

## 2. A warm welcome

In this building, the main coming and going is on the ground floor, where the reception is located to guide people to the right floor. Here you can also find workshops where residents can submit their action plans, for instance, to set up a kind of shop.

## 3. Intermediate outdoor spaces

In this building there are balconies on every floor that are shared and connected to the common living room. Next to that, there is a big garden on the ground floor that is shared.

## 4.Together at heart

The heart of the building is on the ground floor. All the different inhabitants can meet each other here.

## 5. Seclude for a moment

There are limited intermediate spaces for seclusion within the building. The boundaries are relatively strict, although there are communal living rooms shared among 10-12 individuals. These places offer a place to unwind but also a spot to have an informal conversation.
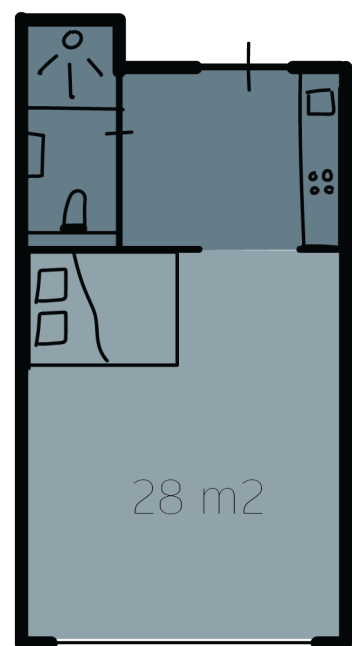
## 6. Personal space

The individual living spaces average around 28 square meters each, equipped with a kitchenette and a private bathroom. This provides residents with a personal retreat where they can avoid interactions if desired.

## Other

Other functions are mostly practical room for storage and technical functions in Figure 23. In Figure 22, the other floors have other care functions.
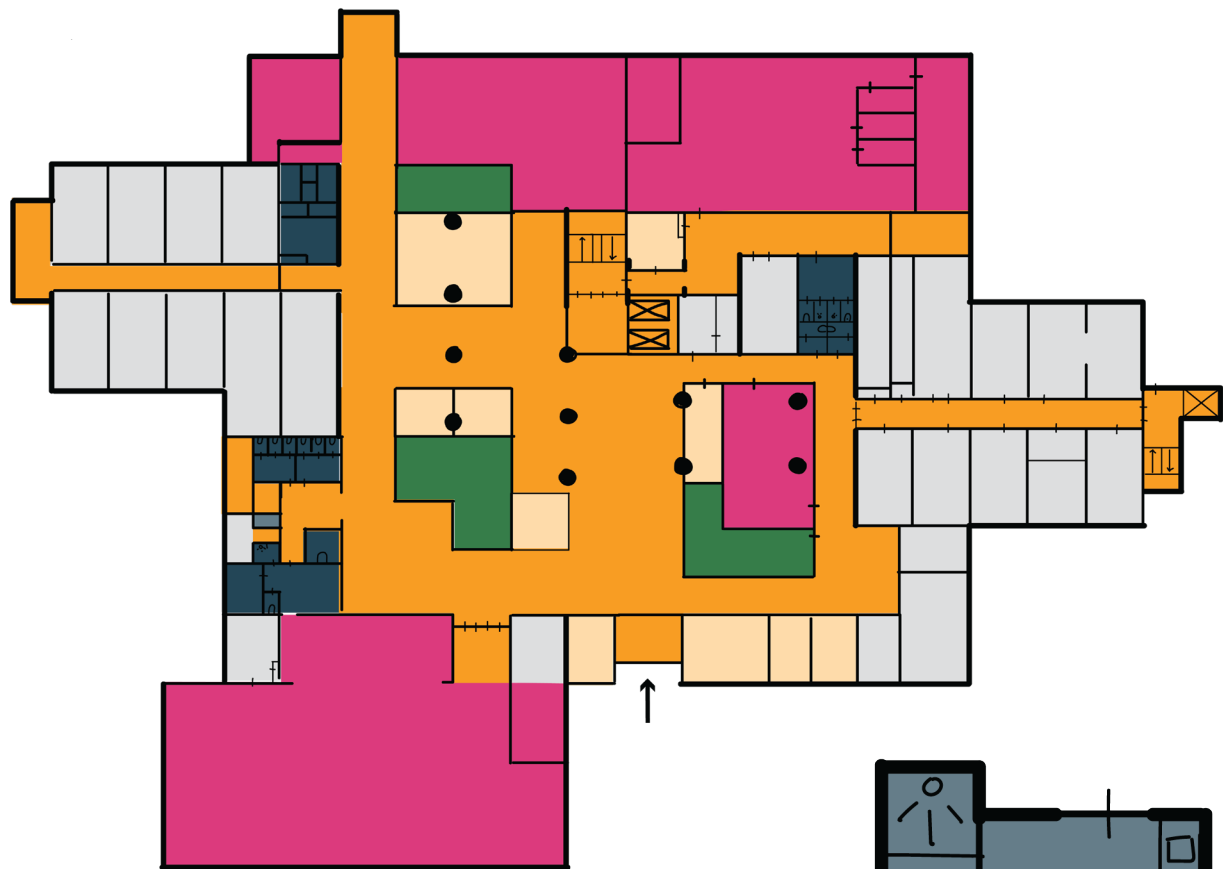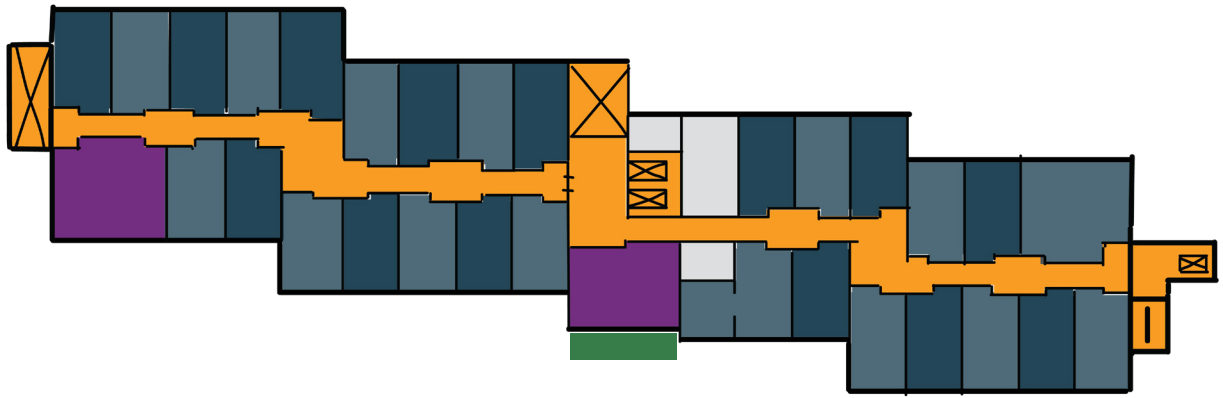
*Figuur 23.*
*1:500 Floor plans with functions*
*'Samen en Anders'*



28 m2

*Figuur 24.*
*1:100 Personal space 'Samen en Anders'*

## 4.3 Ingredients

In this chapter three housing concepts have been studied in Rotterdam. Through the 6 steps to make a home for home-seeking youth these case studies have been reviewed. Since home-seeking youth don't have a care indication they are not eligible to get into the Maaszicht facility, but they do seem to need some guidance when starting to live independently. This can be done more independently with ambulatory help (as in case study 2 'Buro en de Bovenkamer) or on a more reciprocal relationship as is done in case study 3 'Samen en Anders'. Maaszicht is also too strict for this target group as home-seeking youth are more independent than the youth living at Maaszicht. They do still need some relationship with unconditional support which is more likely to be created in case study 3 because this creates an informal relationship which leads to a different dynamic than the relationship between youth and caregiver, since these relationships are more functional. Therefore concept 3 seems most likely to be a suited concept for housing home-seeking youth as it creates a relationship where support is given without it being a formal care-relationship. To design housing with this concept, all ingredients have been put in an overview in Figure 24 to create practical puzzle pieces to create the different steps to make a home for home-seeking youth.

## 1. Blending in

- third place (for youth)
- missing amenities in neighboorhood
- invitations to pass by building
- wellbeingpoint/ guidance on location
- youth with a manageble backpack (in the building)

## 2. A warm welcome

- help desk/ doorman
- everyone uses the same entrance
- common space linked with entrance
- Match person in case of a concept based on reciprocity

## 3. Intermediate outdoors

- activities to do together
- relax spot
- meeting spot
- choice budget for common spaces

## 4. Together at heart

- no official supervision over space
- cozy meeting spot
- activities to do together
- practival incentive to pass by
- safe non- judgemenal space
- choice budget for common spaces

## 5. Seclude for a moment

- study spots
- reading spots
- resting spots
- choice budget for common spaces
- practival incentive to pass by
- not much responsibility to keep it clean (no kitchen)

## 6. Personal space

- max 450 euros per month
- applicable for rent allowance
- independent room
  - kitchenette
  - own lockable door
  - own toilet
- personal sanitary space

*Figuur 24.*
*Ingredients to make a home for home-seeking youth*

# 5.0 Conclusion

## 5.1 Conclusion

In the conclusion the following question will be answered:

"How can a residential building facilitate the social, physical, an mental needs of home-seeking youth in Rotterdam? This will be done by answering the sub-questions; What is the current support system for home-seeking youth? What are the social, physical and mental needs of home-seeking youth? and; What housing concept would be desired for home-seeking youth?

## What is the current support system for home-seeking youth?

The support system of the Netherlands and Rotterdam offers less support to home-seeking youth than it gives to adults. This makes the gap between young adults and adults bigger than it needs to be, leading to a setback at a critical juncture on the journey to being a self-sufficient adult for home-seeking youth. The fact that home-seeking youth don't have a care indication brings a lot of delays in getting benefits(income) from the government and a four-week search period also adds to this delay. Also, there is a vicious cycle in place because before youth have housing it is not possible to get the benefits and the other way around is hard as well, because often when attaining a house, a deposit is needed to get the house. The last thing that is also different for youth between 18 and 23 years old is they can only get a rent allowance of up to 450 euros per month, all rents above that don't allow the rent allowance which makes it very hard to find a house in the right budget. It is therefore important that help and benefits will be given right away when it's needed to prevent youth from getting big setbacks and to prevent youth needing a care indication later and needing the municipality to resolve the debts that they had to make.

## What are the social, physical, and mental needs of home-seeking youth?

Home-seeking youth have some specific mental, social, and physical needs. Social needs seem to be the most important factor in all needs in the sense that they can help support both mental and physical needs. Social needs will form a foundation to keep youth resilient at moments when they need support. For social health, it is important that youth are socially included and that there is a social cohesion around these youth. This can be divided into three needs: personal relationships, a well-functioning social support system, and participation in society. Home-seeking youth must have at least one personal relationship from which they can get unconditional support. A social support system where help is given right away is needed to prevent financial problems. Participation is needed to create a sense

of belonging and it can create more psychological well-being. For mental health, youth must be empowered. This can be done through learning to fail so they can build confidence. They also need to feel normal, and stigma must be avoided. Next to that, they need to be more autonomous, this works together with learning to fail because making choices themselves also comes with making mistakes. These three needs will help empower home-seeking youth in their mental health. The physical needs of home-seeking youth represent socioeconomic security which can be concluded in housing, a third place, and a future perspective. Housing is the first physical need that needs to be fulfilled. Third places are places where youth can meet other people and where they can have a home away from home. A future perspective is needed to create financial stability in the long term.

## What housing concept would be desired for home-seeking youth?

When designing housing for youth, it is important to consider six steps to make a home: blending in, A warm welcome; together at heart; together at heart; secluding for a moment; personal space, and intermediate outdoors. Three housing concepts have been examined that show different levels of independence for homeless youth. This is the homeless shelter with twenty-four-hour care, the individual housing with a youth foundation, and the concept based on reciprocity. All concepts offer some form of social concept to the youth which is an important factor to build the overall resiliency of youth. With designing the building, regardless of the concept, it is important to consider the six steps. For home-seeking youth the last two case studies seemed to meet the requirements more because these youth have a form of independence. It is very important that with their attainment of a house also is a strong social network and at least one person who can offer unconditional support to them. In the concept of 'Samen en Anders,' this is more built-in because youth can create a personal bond with the elderly, which takes off the pressure of a formal caregiver and creates a less functional connection.

## "How can a residential building facilitate the physical, mental and social needs of home-seeking youth in Rotterdam?"

First and foremost, it is essential to ensure that the housing for the youth complies with the rent subsidy norms to keep housing affordable for this group. A support system should be put in place that helps youth to a sufficient house first, without having to go through the trajectory of four phases. It must be prevented that youth need to couch surf. Health decreases and debt problems should be prevented at all costs. In designing a building for home-seeking youth it is important to meet the six steps to make a home for home-seeking youth. In this context, social needs play a pivotal role in enhancing the resilience of the youth, as it can act as a supportive

factor for both physical and mental well-being. The concept of living with reciprocity or individually with other home-seeking youth is particularly interesting. These approaches provide more autonomy to the youth without completely letting them go and giving a small community in which they can form personal relationships. The principle of reciprocity is the most interesting as it essentially flips the situation. The youngster no longer needs assistance, but they must provide help, giving them a sense of contributing to society. This enables them to participate, adding an extra layer of purpose. Moreover, they can build personal relationships with adults without an underlying hierarchy (of care) in the relationship. This can lead to different conversations and less functional connections. Caution needs to be taken in this reciprocity concept as it also creates the pressure of working 'ten hours a week' for housing. This can be seen as a lot and creates a lot of pressure on home-seeking youth that is not needed to create a bond between the elderly and youth.

## 5.2 Discussion
### Summary key findings
The trap for youth between 18 and 23 is the biggest in the social support system and caution needs to be taken so this youth doesn't get left behind in society. There are three main needs: the social (cohesion and inclusion), the physical (socioeconomic security), and the mental (empowerment) of youth that need to be considered of which the social need is the most important, bringing a supportive function within the three needs. The biggest thing home-seeking youth often are missing is a key parental figure who can help them mentally and financially when they need it. This can cause them to not have a house, no financial safety net, and no social safety net. The social support system is not bridging this gap as well. Out of the three housing concepts discussed, a housing concept where there is a relationship created with an older person can help home-seeking youth a lot to get more resilient as they can ask everyday questions more informally. This should help them to work on their mental needs: empowering themselves by doing and having a more unconditional support figure.

### Interpretations
The results mean that at this moment there is not enough social support for home-seeking youth to be independent at the age of eighteen. There needs to be a more flexible and quicker-acting support system in place so youth can get the benefits they need to attain a home and prevent debts from building up. Next to that the social factor seems to be the most important in youth becoming more resilient, this should be considered when designing a building. The social connections that these youth make in the building and around the building are fundamental to weaving them in society. The six steps to make a home could help with designing

this social cohesion and should be taken into consideration when designing a building for this group.

## Implications

This research has extended the knowledge of the 'housing first' approach and includes that getting housing should be combined with having a person who can function as a sounding board. Next to that, it brings practical steps to make a home for home-seeking youth with conceptual ingredients. These ingredients should make a building that can bring home-seeking youth back home.

## Limitations

The research has conducted interviews mostly with professionals who are in contact with home-seeking youth with a care need. The home-seeking youth that doesn't have a care indication is harder to grasp, and therefore also in this research harder to grasp since there is not a system through which this youth is registered. This led to it being harder to do field research with this specific group. Through workshops with homeless adults, and vulnerable youth in Rotterdam and speaking with professionals an understanding of home-seeking youth has been tried to be made, strengthened by literature research and field research that has been done by Garage2020 in Rotterdam.

## Recommendations

A more focused knowledge should be created for the specific group of home-seeking youth. Further research could focus on bringing into sight the number of home-seeking youth (in Rotterdam). It would be recommended to spread this knowledge also outside of Rotterdam to prevent this group from getting bigger in Dutch (and European) cities because of increasing housing prices. Preventing homelessness, in the long run, should be the head goal since this often is the turning point for these youth where it is still possible to turn the tide so they can participate fully in society when they are adults. It is important to research how to bridge the gap for home-seeking youth on all levels. It's also important to research governmental and municipal policy changes so that these youth have timely access to financial support. Next to research could be done on how home-seeking youth and adults create connections if it is not an official caregiver: with 'Kamers met aandacht' home-seeking youth are already living together with adults creating extra attention for these youth without creating the formal caregiver-relationship (Kamers met aandacht, z.d.). It would be interesting to research how this kind of 'sounding board' relationship would improve the health of home-seeking youth. With more research creating a solid bridge to adulthood for home-seeking youth should be possible.

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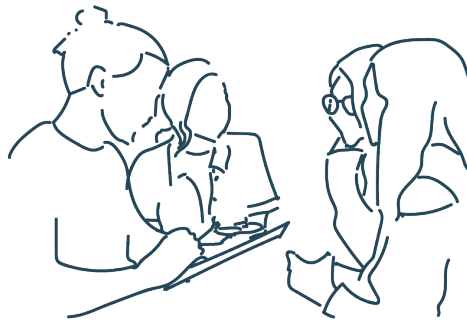
Questionnaire and workshop at CultNorth with vulnerable youth n Rotterdam
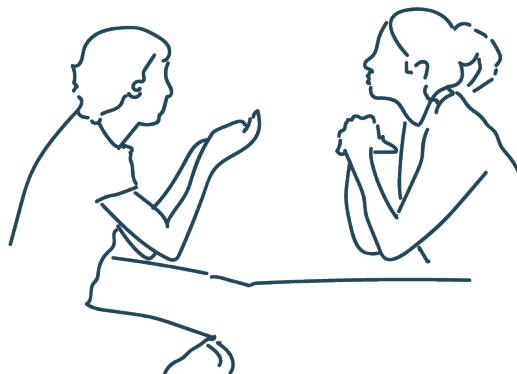


Interview with a home-seeking youth



*Figure 25.*
*Field research done on getting to know home-seeking youth personally.*
*(Own image)*

Painting workshops at the salvation army with inhabitants

# 7.0 Fieldwork diary

## 7.1 Paint and drawing workshops at 'Leger des Heils'

### Leger des Heils
### (The salvation Army)

For this research, painting and drawing workshops have been given at the Salvation Army. Leger des Heils is an international movement that has its origins in Christianity. Its priority is to help people who are in need without any form of discrimination (Leger des Heils, z.d.). They have a wide variety of support options, from ambulant help to neighborhood work, social shelters, and more. For this research, I worked at the 'Dukdalf' which is located at the Coolhaven in Rotterdam. The building has a combination of housing with a few floors for care facilities, some floors dedicated to habitants with more heavy addiction and psychological problems, and some floors for habitants with lighter psychological problems. Next to that, there is a 50/50 working place where people can work during the day.



*Figure 26.*
*Set up workshop*

## Set up

To understand better how the inhabitants of the Salvation Army are, I did weekly workshops on a creative morning where I would paint and draw with the inhabitants. During these weeks I got to know them a lot better and was able to form a personal bond with some of them. There were very different people with totally different backgrounds who joined the creative mornings. The living room was next to the 50/50 workplace. This is where participants would work and spend their daytime and earn some money. On this creative morning, the participants could just come to play a game/ draw/ paint, or do 'sjoelen'. Shuffleboard often was the most popular game that everyone would join.  The mornings were from 9.30-11.30 and i would join there and try to get participants enthusiastic about drawing and painting.

## Experiences

In the first week, it was mainly about getting to know each other. Everyone was open to chat, and there was a lot of interest in me as well. Nice conversations started, but not many people wanted to join the painting yet. However, they were willing to sit and watch while filling in their coloring pages, and perhaps they would consider participating another time. The second week was more successful; two people joined in, and we painted landscapes. After a few weeks, the attendance remained relatively low, and participants still seemed a bit hesitant to try new things despite our efforts to motivate them. However, you can sense a slowly forming bond with the participants. They appreciate the conversations and interest, and they show a lot of respect to you as a 'teacher. Participants also support each other and encourage one another during activities like shuffleboard, creating a positive atmosphere in the mornings.

The participants have good intentions, but they just find it hard to make steps and every step that seems little is very big. The fear of making mistakes remains a significant obstacle for the participants.

## 7.2 Cult North festival

### Cultn North for vulnerable youth

This workshop is done at a Cult North Festival. Cult North is an organization that wants to provide a 'Third Place' for Rotterdam youth, providing a neutral social environment separated from home (first place) and the workplace(second place). This inclusive space allows visitors to connect without obligations. Cult North focuses on creative interests and encourages youth participation without pressure. The organization's events enable youth to explore and deepen their interests, recognizing the advantages of personal development. The target group is youths aged 14-27 in Rotterdam North, particularly those facing challenges like unemployment, poverty, addiction, a criminal past, or uncertainty and depression. (vulnerable youth)

### Set up

Youth with ages 17-26 years are asked where they feel at home in Rotterdam, and how they would want to live. A big visual map of Rotterdam is placed in the main room of the festival. We asked youth passing by where they feel at home in Rotterdam and where they potentially want to live. Also, some questionnaires are filled in, and questions are asked to get more in-depth information. about housing wishes.
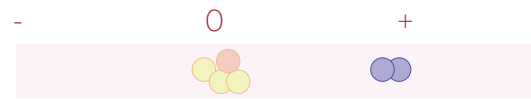


*Figure 27.*
*Set up festival*

## Willingness to Reciprocate

There was a willingness to reciprocate among youth to get a more affordable home as shown. Either youth was neutral or positive towards that idea.

*"I am willing to provide assistance to other people in my residential building in order to obtain a more affordable housing."*



*"I know people in my network who currently do not have a fixed address."*
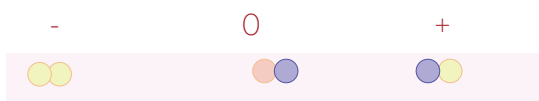


## Knowing Home-seeking youth

Some youths had people in their network who didn't have a set address at that moment.

## Proximity

Most youth indicated the tram/metro/bus as their most used form of transport. For daily activities, the willingness to travel was the shortest, Work and education are in the middle and the furthest they would want to travel for are relationships like family and friends.
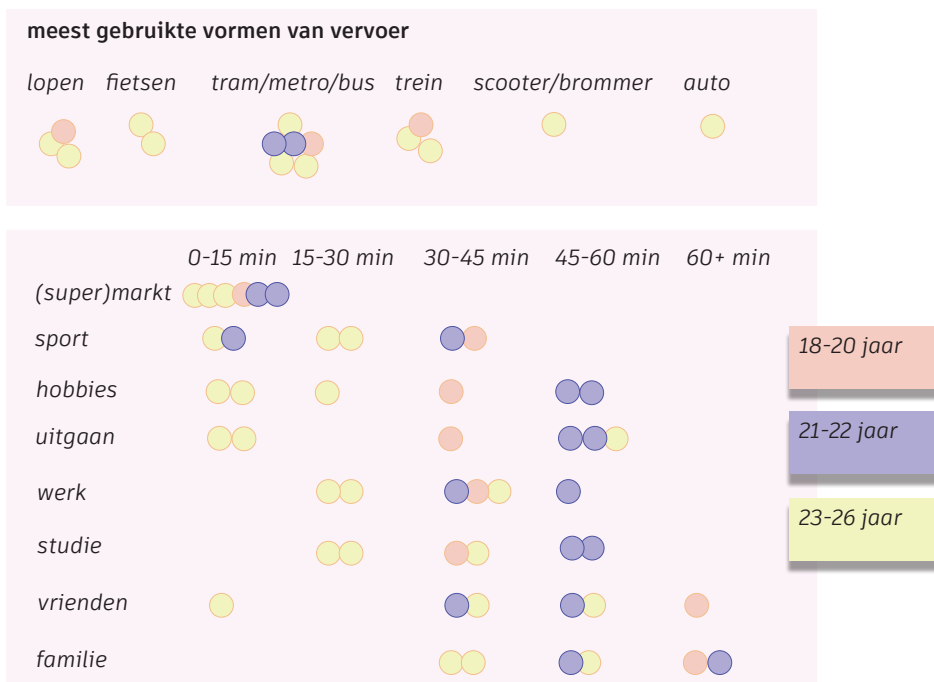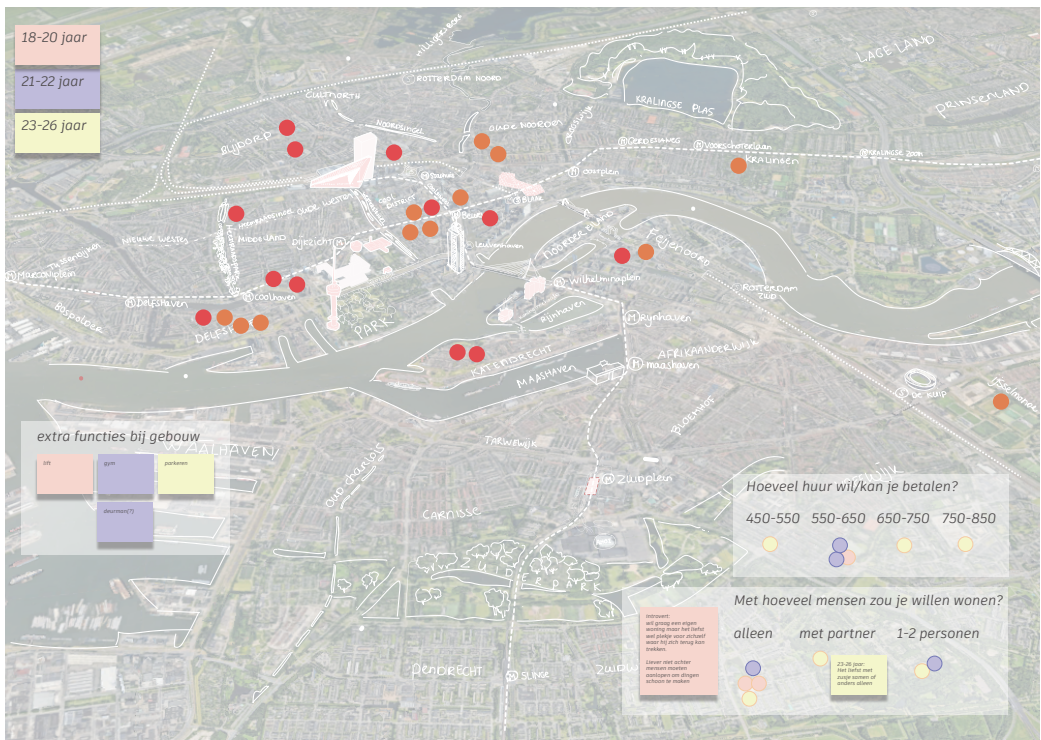


*Figure 28: proximity youth*
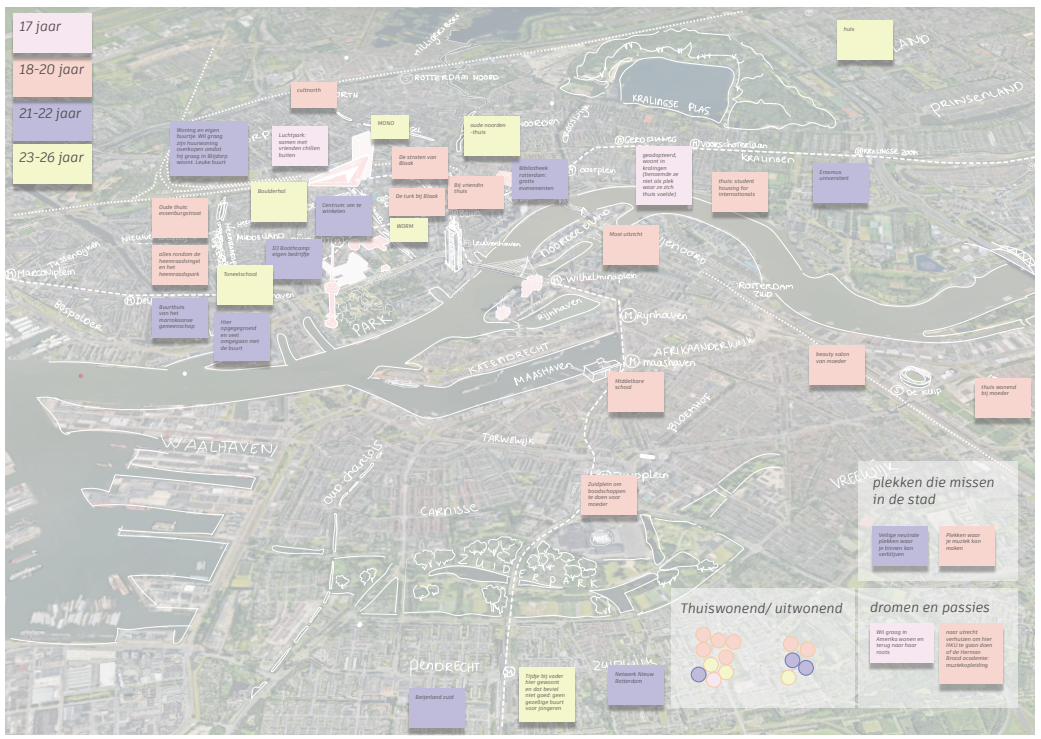
Figure 29.
Where do you want to live in Rotterdam?



Figure 30.
Where do you feel at home in Rotterdam?

## Where to live in Rotterdam

The youth seemed more eager to live in the North of Rotterdam, although some also mentioned Feyenoord and Katendrecht as potential living locations in Rotterdam South. These locations also form a good connection between North and South and therefore are especially interesting in the case of families living in the south. Connecting the bridge between north and south.

## Feeling at home in Rotterdam

There seem to be more places in the north of Rotterdam where youth feel at home, fewer than on the south. This could be because there is more for youth in the north. It could also be partly dependent on the fact that we asked this question in the north of Rotterdam. The kind of places that they were feeling at home were often places where you would go for free: from school to a particular neighborhood, to the mom's hairdressing salon.

## Places that Rotterdam misses

Youth indicated that Rotterdam missed places that are neutral where you can stay for free and where everyone is welcome. Next to that they also wanted more places where you can make music.

## Living with family or living on your own

Most of the respondents were still living with their parents. Often, they wanted to live on themselves, but it was too expensive.

## 7.3 Interviews
### Municipality Rotterdam
'Beleidsadviseur  Dak-  en  thuisloze jongeren gemeente Rotterdam'

### Samen en Anders
'Kwartiermaker'

### Maastzicht
Behaviour specialist and worker

### Home-seeking youth
A guy living at 'Leger des Heils' in a group for home-seeking men between 18-23 years old

### Kamers met Aandacht
Worker and currently hosting a home-seeking youth in house