Social Impact Through Inclusion: The Case of De Voorkamer.

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Abstract

This study attempts to understand the relationship between De Voorkamer (a community organisation in Utrecht, the Netherlands) and its community and how social impact is created through this interaction. This is done through ethnographic research paired with interviews conducted with organisational members, volunteers and participants of De Voorkamer's events. In addition, visuals are used throughout to better depict the processes at play.

The paper's main findings suggest that the impact created through the relationship between De Voorkamer and its community is managed through a sense of inclusion and belonging within the space. Power dynamics play a role in this relationship since it determines the outcome of the inclusion and integration processes. De Voorkamer's co-creation initiative was also seen as an empowering tool that creates a stronger bond with the organisation and a stronger sense of belonging. Social capital is also highlighted as a crucial ingredient for social impact, with the paper delving into how social capital is created through the inclusion process. Lastly, mental health benefits were a recurring theme within the paper as a spillover effect of the inclusion process.

The paper goes into ways De Voorkamer can improve its social impact creation. Specifically by increasing the accessibility of information about events and programs and providing more formal education opportunities. De Voorkamer could also benefit from more intentional impact planning and evaluation to ensure its programs and activities meet the community's needs.

Overall, this study highlights the importance of community-led spaces like De Voorkamer for fostering inclusion and belonging among immigrants and refugees and strengthening ties within communities. De Voorkamer acts as a bridge between marginalised, disadvantaged groups and their social needs, which prevents them from the risk of social exclusion and the adverse outcomes which are associated with it. The study provides insights into how community-led spaces can empower marginalised communities and contribute to social and economic opportunities.

Dedication

To my parents, Tony and Elaine.

Without them, I would have never made it this far.

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List Of Abbreviations

DVK   De Voorkamer

EU   European Union

NGO   Non-Governmental Organisation

SDG   Sustainable Development Goals

SIM   Social Identity Map

UNDESA   Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Chapter 1: Introduction

This study attempts to understand the relationship between De Voorkamer (a community organisation in Utrecht, the Netherlands) and its community and how social impact is created through this interaction. This is done through ethnographic research paired with interviews conducted with organisational members, volunteers and participants of De Voorkamer's events.

Just like its logo, De Voorkamer is an open door for people worldwide to connect with others and feel welcome. As you enter this shared space of the organisation's premises, you find yourself in an accepting environment and feel at ease. This warm, welcoming feeling has drawn people to the organisation since 2016. During my time at De Voorkamer, I could witness this social phenomenon play out repeatedly, and this intrigued my interest in understanding the impact that this organisation has within its community.

De Voorkamer is a community organisation that aims to connect people from diverse backgrounds by creating an inclusive space wherein people can support and learn from each other. Furthermore, De Voorkamer is also an organisation that is shaped and developed by the community for the community. This bottom-up approach which the organisation employs is of great interest as most integration attempts in Utrecht are for immigrants rather than by immigrants (Schrover, 2021). On the other hand, De Voorkamer believes in including its community in every stage of its projects or events process.

The organisation highly values people's talents and diverse abilities. It strives to foster integration by organising various accessible cultural events to connect people from different backgrounds. De Voorkamer organises many diverse events, such as; informal education, creativity and artistic performances, amongst many others. Through De Voorkamer's events, it is clear to see the relaxed style of events they aim to organise, with the primary goal being that of integration and inclusion, which will be better discussed below. Having shared the organisation's aims, it is essential to note that they are not free from power relations. Thus, understanding the power dynamics within this organisation, which heavily relies on its relationship with its community, is necessary to understand whether its goals for impact are being carried out as intended. This consequently led to the primary purpose of this research, which is to answer the question: 'How do the community members perceive the social impact of De Voorkamer?'

The overall goal of this research is to understand the perception of the De Voorkamer's impact on its community up until now. By understanding the power dynamics between the organisation and its community, one can better understand how inclusion and social impact occur. Such power dynamics are believed to determine the relationship between the organisation and its members and participants. The dynamic at play impacts the atmosphere within which co-creation occurs in the organisation. Thus, this opens up the discussion on how the integration and inclusion processes arise. Looking at these processes, we can see the alternative way community organisations impact their community through different inclusion and integration methods.

Having discussed what makes De Voorkamer an exciting organisation to look into, my research is based on understanding the social impact De Voorkamer is perceived to be creating within its community. I did this by studying the perceptions of organisational members and the participants of the organisation's events. Organisational members here include the internal De Voorkamer team, while participants include people who attend events and volunteers. I studied how the De Voorkamer community perceive the impact of the organisation. In doing this, I could ask whether the community reacts positively to the intended activities and whether the actions influence the organisational members and participants.

Determining the answer to such a question will aid De Voorkamer in understanding their impact on their community better (Branson, 2008) so that they can adjust their operations accordingly. In this way, my research can contribute to De Voorkamer by improving the impact of their activities. By investigating the impact from the participant's point of view, I also aided the organisation in ensuring that their efforts are having the intended outcomes and will be a helpful tool for them to gather feedback in the future and give them a point of reference from which they can enhance their organisational practices and improve the level of the positive impact they have on their neighbourhood.

Lastly, I investigated what meaning the different team members give to their work within De Voorkamer and saw whether the impact they perceived themselves to be making is indeed influential. This research will highlight community organisations like De Voorkamer's impact on society. This is especially necessary, seeing as there is a current lack of funding

and a need for recognition by policymakers on community organisations (Salamon & Sokolowski, 2016).

Through this research, I highlight the importance of bottom-up, community-based initiatives when tackling societal challenges. In addition, I hope to add to the current academic and social discussions about how small-scale community organisations create a positive social impact regarding social inclusion. Lastly, on a practical level, this research will better guide community organisations on effective practices towards inclusion.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.A: Understanding the social impact: The role of social capital and belonging.

The ultimate goal of bottom-up, non-profit, community organisations is to make a difference (Fruchterman, 2016), with some scholars (Brown, 2017; Branch, 2019) referring to this as 'social impact'. These organisations aim to create or produce something the private or government sector has failed to do to address a social problem (White, 2017).

Edwards et al. (2012) use the word 'elusive' to describe social impact, as it is difficult to measure. This is due to the long-term aspect of social impact, which requires a more qualitative understanding of its diverse layers. They also note how social impact means different things in different contexts, depending on who writes about the impact and their professional background. For this research, I am referring to the long- and short-term social impact De Voorkamer has on its community. This contrasts with how Ebrahim and Rangan (2014) view social impact as only lasting change at a community or societal level, differentiating the word from 'social outcomes', which refers to a specific lasting change in people's lives (Ebrahim & Rangan, 2014).

Though a measure and a more specific definition of social impact are needed (Edwards et al., 2012), there needs to be agreement around such a definition or metric base, as this would need to be general and delivered to all contexts of social impact. It would also need to be open to growth in its scope and definition (Graham & Anderson, 2015). This can be seen in the varying way scholars define impact. An example of this can be seen in the way 'The Springer Series in Social Psychology' (Mullen & Goathals, 1981) defines social impact from a more psychological and behavioural point of view by quoting Latane (1980):

"any of the great variety of changes in physiological states and subjective feelings, motives and emotions, cognitions and beliefs, values and behaviour, that occur in an individual, human, or animal, as a result of the real, implied or imagined presence or actions of other individuals." (Latane, 1980, p.343)

A more socially oriented definition of social impact can also be found, with Burdge and Vanclay's article (1995) defining social impact as:

"All social and cultural consequences to human populations of any public or private actions that alter how people live, work, play, relate to another, organise to meet their needs, and generally cope as members of society" (Burdge & Vanclay, 1995, p. 59).

A more recent study (Munte-Pascual et al., 2022) defines social impact as "creating interventions to improve societal challenges." This is a simple but significant definition of how organisations and social institutions view social impact in the current context. Another way of defining social impact is by answering Karlan's (2013) question: "How do lives change compared to how they would be if we did not do anything? What would have happened to them had this intervention not happened?" (Karkan, 2013, as cited in Starr, 2011).

When discussing social impact within the context of an organisation that welcomes migrants to their community, the terms 'inclusion' and 'integration' are crucial. The way one views the act of inclusion and integration influences the way they are 'done' by organisations (Janssens & Steyaert, 2020). This views integration and inclusion as political processes greatly influenced by different perspectives, values and regulations.

Seeing the vague understanding of social impact currently available, it is helpful to see how European institutions view social impact to contextualise it and understand how it is institutionally seen within OECD partners, including the Netherlands. This OECD definition divides social impact into two separate definitions for 'social' and 'impact'.

Social is defined as:

"…individuals and communities, and the interaction between them (European Commission, 2014[9]). When coupled with impact, social often encompasses the environmental, economic or governance dimensions, since they ultimately bear societal consequences." (OECD, 2021, p.12).

The impact is defined as:

… the ultimate significance and transformative (potential, assumed, and/or achieved) effects of an intervention (OECD, 2019[10]). In market jargon, impact typically encompasses changes observed across the full results chain, including immediate outputs, intermediary

outcomes and long-term impacts. Another critical distinction must be drawn between observed or verified results as opposed to those only expected or modelled (hence assumed). The European Commission (2014[9]) further underlines the causal relation, whereby impact is regarded as "the extent to which that change arises from the intervention." (OECD, 2021, p.12)

The above definition of impact distinguishes between observed and verified results, highlighting the importance of measuring tools when understanding the changes interventions aim to create. It also highlights the importance of such organisations identifying their 'Key Performance Indicators' for them to understand better what needs they are trying to address (Brown, 2017). Nonetheless, this paper focuses on the participants and members of De Voorkamer. Thus, impact measurement observation here will be tied to the perceived impact by such direct users and value validators to understand the lived experience of impact felt by the organisation's community. In summary, this paper understands the social impact to be the effects of an intervention on individuals and the community. This includes immediate change and change occurring over time due to the intervention. In this case, the intervention is the creation of an inclusive space.

Such attempts at creating a lasting definition for social impact draw in two main questions; What difference is being made? And how much of a difference is being made? (Nicholls et al., 2012). Many of the present ways of measuring impact within for-profit and not-for-profit organisations only analyse program-specific results (Edwards et al., 2012). This does not account for the long-term outcomes or the unintentional impact of a program, activity or action, including social capital gain and other social benefits (Edwards et al., 2012).

This is the case with the current main frameworks being used to measure social impact occurring in the third sector, specifically: social accounting audits (SAA), Logic Models, and Social Return on Investment (SROI) (Edwards et al., 2012). On the other hand, well-being indicators are focused on moderate targets, such as the well-being of their community. When looking at approaches used to understanding an organisation's impact, O'Berg and Mansson (2011) believed that monitoring outputs and learning through the outcomes of activities is more valuable than attempting to measure impact, which is costly and time-consuming. These limitations to this measurement and understanding of social

impact are especially relevant because many community-based NGOs have limited financial resources to support such measures (Hanleybrown et al., 2012). Having said this, such evaluation methods should not be limited to just NGOs to fund evaluation. Assessing social impact can potentially obtain support for scaling up activities and transfer knowledge of positive social impact in other contexts. Thus, the government and other organisations and institutions could support this evaluation area.

Many attempts to measure social impact measure the efficiency and effectiveness of program outputs rather than the impact being created (Woods & Johnson, 2015; Kania & Kramer, 2012). Though this is an effective way of seeing if the organisation is going in the right direction, it is not an effective way of understanding the social impact (Brown, 2017). This is especially relevant to third-sector organisations, which contribute significantly to society through their spillover effects, which would be outside their organisational goals; thus, these measuring tools would fail to look at the bigger picture of the organisation's societal impact (Brown, 2017).

One of the long-term spillover effects of NGOs includes social capital, which Edwards et al. (2012) identify as an 'essential ingredient' in community well-being and community solidarity, and identifies it as an indicator of social impact. Birch and Whittam (2008) discuss the third sector and the regional development of social capital within non-profit associations, community organisations, and voluntary groups. They link such third-sector organisations to community development and greater cooperation within the respective community. This social cooperation is then linked to more significant social capital, which leads not only to economic gains but also to the ability of persons to be self-sufficient in a community (Birch & Whittam, 2008). Within their paper (Birch & Whittam, 2008), third-sector organisations are viewed as a bridge between an individual and: society, the government, employment opportunities and businesses. While the third sector acts as a bridge to social capital and, in turn, economic capital, its primary goal is still to encourage and support social and cultural development within a community and improve its community's overall well-being. The well-intentioned nature of this sector makes such organisations influential in addressing social challenges, promoting inclusion and enhancing the community's well-being (Birch & Whittam, 2008). Overall, such third sector organising usually operates in a context of limited resources. Thus, when addressing the societal

challenges needs, they are driven by this context and remit to design models that adequately reach their intended societal outcomes and their self-defined measurement of success, resulting in attaining social impact.

Therefore, networks and connections are at the heart of social capital creation. Trust, reciprocity, tolerance of different cultures and social agency are other dimensions of social capital development (Edwards et al., 2012). Edwards et al. (2012) created the figure below to demonstrate how social impact is modelled through their findings.

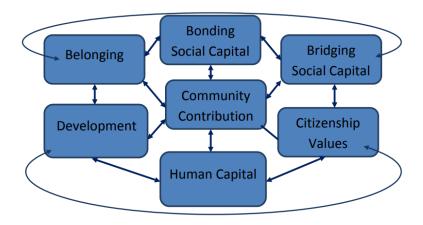*Modelling Social Impact*

Figure 1 (By Edwards et al., 2012)

Through this model, critical concepts of social impact are identified. Amongst the above themes, 'Belonging' was identified as the most vital theme in the study. Edwards et al. (2012) describe belonging as a strong sense of identity one ties to a place or an activity. This strong sense of identity leads to personal development and better community-building values, creating a bridge towards better connections and social capital (Edwards et al., 2012). Within the above model, social capital, human capital and personal development are seen as social benefits beyond the organisation's immediate impact (Edwards et al., 2012). Within the model, the above themes are interdependent in creating social impact. Within Edwards, et al.'s (2012) paper, studying local situations of organisations striving to create social impact is a way of understanding such interactions within the community. In addition to this, Edwards

et al. (2012) argue that social impact can be analysed within organisations and programs only through social measures.

2.B: Politics of inclusion and integration

Like anything else the government influences, integration and inclusion are two political processes. This is due to political decisions' influence on immigration and asylum policies, including laws and procedures, which shape people's lives in society (Gropas, 2021). This, of course, determines the quality of life of the people influenced by these decisions. Furthermore, this system also expands and influences the wider society (Gropas, 2021). An example of how politics influences these processes can be seen by looking at the rights of refugees in different countries. The passed legislation and policies influence the level of access these people have to education, healthcare (including mental health), and employment opportunities (Gropas, 2021).

It is just as important to see how integration and inclusion are viewed within the political process through both a societal and scholarly lens. Integration is defined as a process by which minority groups are incorporated into mainstream society (Antioco et al., 2012), and inclusion as "a provision of an equal opportunity platform for minority members to participate fully in all socioeconomic activities." (Barak, 2000 as cited in Azmat, 2020). Both integration and inclusion are political matters considering the decisions to be made at the international and national governing bodies (Michon & Vermeulen, 2013). These decisions influence the conditions migrants are met within their respective societies and determine the integration processes at play. Community organisations also play a critical role in these processes with their politics and power relations.

Michel Foucault argues, "Power is everywhere, not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere" (Foucault, 1976, p. 93). Therefore, it is essential to understand the power relations within a community organisation which aims to foster inclusion and integration through its practices.

In particular, the technology of Pastoral Power (Foucault, 2007) is especially relevant. This is because it is a type of traditional governmental power usually present in refugee procedures, where a person needs guidance, and a religious figure will guide. This theory of power involves a religious reference of a pastor guiding individuals on all ways of life, such as health and well-being, for the people to reach 'salvation' (Kangas-Müller et al., 2023). This type of power relation creates a dependency on whichever body has taken on the pastoral role. These bodies may take different forms, such as the government, organisers, volunteers and so forth (Kangas-Müller et al., 2023).

From a pastoral power point of view, inclusion and integration are usually a one-way process with an included and an includee, i.e., a person in need of integration and who will integrate them into society respectively (Kangas-Müller et al., 2023). This view of inclusion and integration problematises migrants and refugees as 'the other' who must be integrated into the country's dominant social norms (Ponzoni et al., 2017). Studying organisational impact within the integration and inclusion domain requires acknowledging these power relations (Kangas-Müller et al., 2023). Furthemore, Young (2001) states that within a society with multiple structural inequalities, unjust power relations often affect individuals. This creates a cycle where injustices can be reproduced in other social structures despite good intentions (Young, 2001).

Many social inclusion attempts aim to resist hierarchical and pastoral power dynamics. Instead, they aim for social equality and reject the notion that someone holds power to guide someone else's life in a better direction than the individual himself/herself could. Having said this, inequality will always be present in social situations, especially within a dynamic involving refugees (Kangas-Müller et al., 2023) due to the disadvantages and exclusion migrants and refugees are exposed to (UNDESA, 2016)

2.C: Inclusion and integration as a way of creating impact: Why inclusion, integration and exclusion matter.

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (Hereafter referred to as UNDESA) (UNDESA, 2016, p. 18) defines the concept of social inclusion as both a

process and a goal which aims at "improving the terms of participation in society for people who are disadvantaged based on age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, or economic or another status, through enhanced opportunities, access to resources, voice and respect for rights." (UNDESA, 2016, p. 20). In this UNDESA report on the world social situation (2016), inclusive development is analysed, and inclusion is viewed as taking active steps to combat barriers to inclusion.

This report also identified migration status as a disadvantage leading to exclusion. Thus, to work on removing such barriers, it is essential to understand what exclusion is, what groups of people are disadvantaged because of it, how it takes place and what form it takes. UNDESA (2016, p. 18) defines social exclusion as "a state in which individuals are unable to participate fully in economic, social, political and cultural life, as well as the process leading to and sustaining such a state." UNDESA states that this definition comprises other definitions used in scholarly literature, governing bodies and NGOs (Popay et al., 2008, as cited in UNDESA, 2016). Levitas et al. (2007) have a similar definition where they discussed how this societal exclusion negatively impacts the quality of life of these individuals, along with the equality within the society and the solidarity of the respective society.

Social exclusion is a societal challenge leading to various adverse outcomes that affect individuals, communities, and society (Levitas, 2006). It is a social determinant of mental health (Gopalakrishnan, 2018), poverty, unemployment, poor health, and reduced social and political participation (Burchardt, 2000). When socially excluded people are also denied access to social capital (Boon & Farnsworth, 2011), it restricts their resources and opportunities to participate in society (Levitas, 2006). Social exclusion is a significant societal challenge that requires attention and action to ensure all individuals have access to the resources, opportunities, and networks necessary to participate fully in society.

Social exclusion can disproportionately affect culturally diverse populations (Gopalakrishnan, 2018); thus, ensuring social integration and inclusion in communities is necessary to guarantee subjective well-being (Appau et al., 2019) for migrants and the community. In addition, the International Organisation for Migration (Abdirahman, 2017) also acknowledges the importance of integration as it identifies integration and social cohesion as crucial elements for producing benefits of migration and creating sustainable development.

Factors that impact a person's ability to be fully included in society include their access to material and financial resources and having limited education and health care services (UNDESA, 2016). In addition to this deprivation, a lack of ability to participate in social processes equally to the rest of society also contributes to exclusion (UNDESA, 2016). Such a situation is the reality of persons without citizenship in the Netherlands and most other countries who are not allowed to vote and participate in these democratic processes (Government.nl, 2023). This showcases the way, at varying levels, almost all countries around the world determine the extent to which people are at risk of being disadvantaged and socially excluded according to: "age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, religion, migration status, socioeconomic status, place of residence, and sexual orientation and gender identity" (UNDESA, 2016, p. 18).

As aforementioned, exclusion occurs when individuals or marginalised groups are denied access directly or indirectly to resources, opportunities, or participation in social, political, or economic activities. Such is the case of migrants around the world, including Utrecht. Due to one's immigration status, their ability to participate in political and economic activities is limited, impacting their ability to participate in social activities. Thus, exclusion occurs at different levels, including personal, institutional, and structural (Kabeer, 2000).

Personal exclusion refers to the direct exclusion of individuals from conversations, events, etc. Exclusion can play out intentionally or unintentionally; such unintentional exclusion can be seen in scenarios where persons are excluded due to language barriers. Institutional exclusion refers to how institutions, such as private companies and government agencies, implement procedures that create barriers for certain groups of people. An example is a company recruiting workers that exclude applicants based on gender biases (Pager & Shepherd, 2008). Lastly, structural exclusion refers to the exclusion occurring due to policies, practices, and institutions that systematically disadvantage certain groups of people. Unlike individual and institutional exclusion, systematic exclusion is not only based on current discrimination. However, it is more so a product of processes kept in a place that oppresses groups of people (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). The above acts of exclusion can occur in many forms, including discrimination, marginalisation, segregation, and stigmatisation (Kabeer, 2000).

Social inclusion attempts matter because of the harmful impact of exclusion on individuals and society. Many of these attempts are fostered through community

organisations that address societal challenges such as exclusion. Thus, one can see the tremendous social impact the third sector can have when creating social impact through fostering social inclusion.

2.D: Social impact by third sector & community organisations: Intervention for inclusion and integration

Community-based approaches are one of the ways people from diverse backgrounds and nationalities can be part of the integration process; this enables them to advocate for their interests. This process creates a more inclusive and diverse society with a stronger social and political system (Oner, 2014). The sixteenth goal within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) established by the United Nations (2015) argues to "Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies.". This SDG promotes the creation of inclusive institutions at all levels, including inclusive societies (Robila, 2018). Inclusive societies have also been given importance by scholars and practitioners (Kangas- Müller et al., 2023); such inclusive societies include organisations that hire people from minority or disadvantaged groups, treat people fairly, and include them in the decision-making process (Nishii, 2013, as cited in Kangas- Müller et al., 2023).

One usually creates spaces within society to resist institutions and empower disadvantaged groups (Ghorashi & Rast, 2018). Such spaces additionally empower migrants to form part of their integration process. This being said, in the Dutch context, organisations which seek financial support from the government open themselves up to the influence of the government (RMO, 2013). This refers to the government's ability to limit the organisation's definition of its goals, conditions and aims (RMO, 2013). This is a position that several non-profit community organisations are at risk of being in due to the vulnerable financial situation some organisations find themselves in. Having said this, it is not the case for all non-profit organisations since, nowadays, there are ways such organisations can organise themselves to fund themselves, such as through crowdfunding and obtaining grants.

While community organisations strive for inclusion and integration to create impact, identity and identity work also play a critical role (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Brown,

2017). Intentionally or unintentionally, organisations control and shape the behaviours and attitudes of their employees through identity regulation, which involves defining what is considered an appropriate or desirable behaviour for organisational members to conduct themselves with. This identity regulation can have negative consequences for individuals, such as limiting their ability to express their true selves and pursue their goals, leading to emotional and psychological distress. It can also have negative consequences for organisations since this limit's individual creativity and diversity of viewpoints (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002). However, organisational members may also hold multiple and sometimes conflicting identities (Horton et al., 2014). For instance, someone who identifies as a female immigrant with the organisational role of welcoming other immigrants to the city may find it challenging to manage her identity work.

Therefore, by being more open to different viewpoints and encouraging new ideas, organisations can create a more inclusive space which encourages diversity and sees the benefits of different points of view. Through this, one creates a more welcoming and inclusive space where minority groups feel more like they belong, yielding further positive impact for the organisation. In addition, when it comes to volunteering, which is required during asylum-seeking in the Netherlands, refugees often need to see the benefits of volunteering. They would rather have better opportunities for employability and be financially stable (Ghorashi & Rast, 2018). Thus, even though it is possible for newcomers to be more active in organisational practices, this participation requires a lot of time and resources (Verba et al., 1995) and is not seen as a need or a priority for newcomers (Ghorashi & Rast, 2018). This highlights a critique of integration processes which require migrants to become active participants in society, as it is done through a form of forced integration. This perspective is essential since De Voorkamer aims to foster a two-way integration process rather than forcing integration. It employs co-creation to combat problems like this and ensure they meet their community's needs.

In conclusion, understanding power dynamics and the social impact of community organisations is crucial when comprehending the experiences of disadvantaged groups, such as migrants and refugees. Inclusion and integration play a critical role in such organisations, but there can be challenges when these processes are approached from a hierarchical perspective within institutional mechanisms. This includes viewing migrants as "the other"

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who must conform to dominant norms. Exclusion (personal and institutional) and structural factors further contribute to the disadvantages marginalised individuals face. Thus, understanding and addressing social exclusion is vital to promoting social cohesion and sustainable development.

Furthermore, community-based approaches, third-sector organisations, and created spaces can facilitate social integration, foster social capital, and improve overall well-being. Inclusive societies that value diversity and active participation of minority groups are necessary to promote social impact. The above theories and perspectives thus aid in understanding social impact, processes of inclusion and the power dynamics at play. Moreover, this will also help me understand how community members perceive the social impact of De Voorkamer.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.A: Case Setting

My study is based on my fieldwork with De Voorkamer. De Voorkamer is a grassroots organisation which opened its doors in 2016, and its "main goal is to create a safer place where people can express their thoughts, feelings, and knowledge whilst exchanging experiences to form connections and a network." (De Voorkamer; About, n.d). This organisation is located in Utrecht and is a cultural meeting space promoting inclusion and integration by facilitating people's diversity and individual talents. The community shapes this organisation, for its primary goal is to encourage equality and inclusion through its diverse events. This highlights the organisation's values around inclusion, respect and equity and wishes to follow up on these values through the use of creative, artistic and cultural means. De Voorkamer uses design processes, art, food and culture to create an inclusive and creative space to connect people and bridge the gap between diverse social groups.

The organisation operates through different funding schemes and works with the municipality. It employs a handful of people who run the organisation's day-to-day planning and operations, though none work full-time. The work culture is an alternative that focuses on the well-being of the organisational members and the participants. Through this focus, they, in turn, achieve their mission towards making people within their community feel included. The organisation is highly reliant on volunteers who shape as well as run events and attend regular meetings at De Voorkamer. In this way, this organisation actively includes its participants in the organisation and decision-making process of events and tries to keep up with the societal needs of its participants by working with them to create events in which the community would want to participate.

My role within De Voorkamer was communication, where I worked mainly on updating their social media activity and promoting all their events. My role entailed working at De Voorkamer every Monday and Thursday from nine in the morning to five thirty in the afternoon from the beginning of February to the end of June. During my time with the organisation, I was part of team meetings, communal lunches and events, and I truly felt part of the team. I was allowed to observe the organisation at a critical point in time. This is because the organisation was at a crossroads where it needed to reassess its priorities around inclusion and social impact facilitation. This was due to the way I viewed De Voorkamer as

an organisation which was moving towards a more structured approach when it come to the safety facilitation of its events through the newly introduced role of a 'safety facilitator', which seemed to not have been the case a few months before I joined the team.

3.B: Research Design

"Knowledge comes from experience, the best way of understanding another person's ideas is to try and share the experiences that led the person to form those ideas" (Collins, 1989, p. 769). *Ethnography* is a research practice based on observing space in time (Watson & Till, 2010). Having chosen an ethnographic approach, I was aware of the strengths and weaknesses presented with such an approach, and this determined the way I chose to conduct my research. Ethnography provides an in-depth understanding of a participant group and environment and highlights the participants' perspectives, which is especially important when community perceptions are focused. Ethnography is also a research approach that offers flexibility and makes way for cultural sensitivity, which was necessary for my research as it involved persons from diverse cultural backgrounds.

On the other hand, the weakness of this research method was the way ethnographic research opens itself up to subjectivity and bias while also being time-consuming. Keeping in mind these constraints, I chose to couple Ethnography with interviews to ensure that the information gathered was taken in the proper context and to be able to clarify what is needed. Using the additional research method of interviews granted me more in-depth knowledge from different points of view, other than the organisational members, which were the focus of my ethnographic observations.

This study takes an interpretive paradigm approach and aims at understanding the subjective meanings the community gives De Voorkamer's social impact. Thus, this research employs a qualitative approach to understand the organisation's social impact; this was decided due to the way qualitative studies allow the researcher to go into depth on a topic and can delve into answering questions on 'How' something is done. Intersubjectivity was used to interpret the environment observed at De Voorkamer. The research process was an

Ethnographic process, a type of research practice based on observations of a space in time (Watson & Till, 2010). Ethnographic research aims to understand a group's social and cultural practices, including the values that fuel their work, through fieldwork and observing them within their natural setting. Within this research, De Voorkamer was observed for over four months from an insider point of view. Within this research, I aimed to provide an in-depth description of what I had observed during the organisation's everyday practices. The way the community understand the impact of De Voorkamer was also analysed.

3.C: Data Collection

I chose organisational ethnography because of its data collection tactic: observing an organisation throughout their daily practices and in their natural setting. I deemed this the right course of action since it provides a perspective like no other. Thus, observing the organisation and the way impact forms part of their strategic planning, as well as observing the events first-hand and seeing the community interact with the organisation, was the best way I could imagine conducting this research. I participated in day-to-day work, thanks to my role within communications. I also participated through attending community, feedback and team events, which gave me a broader understanding of what the organisation was doing and their impact on the community, including myself. I spent around three hundred and sixty hours conducting my ethnographic data. During this period, I used an observation list (see Appendix 3) to ensure my research aligned with my research question. During this observation period, I also used field notes to collect the data observed, resulting in around sixty pages worth of observation notes. This then helped me with the analysis process, which came next.

I conducted interviews to understand further De Voorkamer's impact on its community. I decided that interviews were necessary to ensure that my observations and findings were understood correctly, and I needed to clarify some things I observed. Interview guides (see Appendix 2) were used while conducting the semi-structured interviews to ensure that the focus of the interview was on the research question. Seven interviews were

conducted, two with organisational members and the rest with participants and volunteers. The interviews were around thirty to forty minutes long and were conducted informally.

During the interviews, I also utilised visual tools to understand better how De Voorkamer is perceived. Therefore, I asked the respondents to produce 'cognitive maps' as drawings (Mason, 2017). I also used blank papers and pens throughout my interviews with participants so that the interviewees could visually represent De Voorkamer's impact on their lives. I made this creative decision due to the comprehensive understanding drawings provide of a participant's experiences and points of view. Thus drawings, in combination with an explanation of what was drawn and what it meant to them, were used by me to ensure that the drawings were understood (Brailas, 2020).

In addition to cognitive maps, visual and spatial representations of subjective findings were employed within the research, as qualitative data representation offers a means of analysing and presenting complex and intangible aspects of a concept (Henderson & Segal, 2013). It is frequently utilised in social sciences and geographical studies (Kumar et al., 2023) and was a valuable tool to visualise concepts which were too complex to discuss. Descriptions were then important when it came to such visuals participants drew, which were great metaphors for De Voorkamer's impact on their lives. I then used other literature and theories to understand further the meanings behind the observations made at De Voorkamer.

I determined the population size for the interviews once I reached saturation point and realised that the last two interviews conducted were repetitive. It was essential to give an equal voice to the organisation's internal and external stakeholders, to get a well-rounded view of the organisation's perceived impact. As I mostly observed the internal stakeholders during my field research, most of the interviews were conducted with the organisation's participants to ensure that external stakeholders were allowed to showcase their opinions on the matter. Thus, interviews and participant observation were suitable for this research, as both methods are of equal importance within my research.

I used convenience sampling for my interviews (Bryman, 2016). Thus, I interviewed people I had met first-hand while working with the organisation and with persons the other team members connected me to due to my time constraints. This method was also employed seeing as it was a way of bridging the trust gap between myself and my interviewies, since

through this connection there is between myself, the organisation and the interviewee enabled a sense of trust during the interviews (Brewis, 2014). This type of sample was employed because of its practicality and time effectiveness. Thus, a high response rate from the relevant participants was prioritised. The participant's relevance was determined through my observation of the organisation and their role and relationship with it, making their perspective on the organisation's impact preferable within the research's constraints.

I interviewed two organisation members, both paid workers with set positions. Only two employees were interviewed since data from employees and interns had been gathered throughout the observational period within the organisation itself. Since I spent two full working days with the facilitators of De Voorkamer weekly. Thus, interviews with the facilitators were limited to two formal interviews.

On the other hand, I conducted more interviews with external organisation members. This included people who participated during events at different degrees and those who attended events and volunteered with the organisation. My participants ranged from people who had attended meetings for the past month to those who had been attending and organising meetings for more than a year. More detailed information about the interviewees can be found below in Appendix 4.

The interviews I conducted were semi-structured since a set of questions helped guide me (see appendix 2), but still allowed me to ask any follow-up questions and probe deeper into some regions of interest which might have come up. This interviewing method was also limited since I could not thoroughly compare between interviews. The interviews were held in person to ensure I could observe body language and make communication easier. The interviewees were of different genders, migration statuses and nationalities and came from various educational and cultural backgrounds. These aspects were considered during the interview and analysis to ensure I understood the data correctly. The profile of the interviewees can be found in Appendix 4.

Since I could only conduct interviews in English, and for many of my interviewees, English was not their first language, asking follow-up questions and rephrasing if needed was necessary to overcome the language barrier presented. In addition to the language barrier, another limitation of my sample strategy was excluding persons who do not speak English.

The decision to limit this study to English-speaking participants is both a limitation and a strength since this ensures that I can fully communicate and understand the interviewees. On the other hand, this point of view limited the generalisability of the study since it excluded migrants and Dutch people who had not learnt English.

3.D: Data Analysis

I chose to analyse my data through the use of 'NVivo', a qualitative analytical tool that aided me in grouping phrases to make the data analysis process less time-consuming. My data corpus consisted of transcriptions of interviews, recordings of interviews and field notes. A diagram (Figure 2) can be seen below, describing the data analysis process in Nvivo. This will also be discussed below.
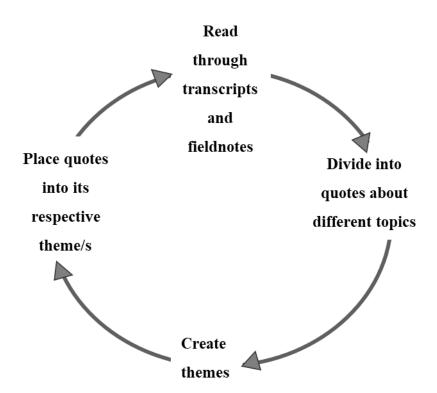

Figure 2 (By Author, 2023)

I analysed the data by transcribing the interviews onto a Word document. Then I inputted the transcriptions into Nvivo and read them in detail. I then coded the different sections under different themes, which I noticed throughout the interviews. Such themes included: 'Feeling of home', 'Atmosphere' and 'impact in their lives'. Such themes and others were determined as they were topics observed to be discussed during most of the interviews. Themes were also overlapping; for example, the 'feeling of home' and 'atmosphere' were often connected as the atmosphere contributed to the feeling of home participants would experience.

The themes were determined as I analysed each interview and would pinpoint topics I found interesting and connected to the impact of De Voorkamer. I chose this specific coding strategy in order to find the relevant patterns in a clearer way while also aiding the analysis processthrough dividing the topic into different sections, thus helping to view the issue from different angles.. Thematic Analysis was thus deemed the most appropriate qualitative data analysis method due to it's focus on on identifying and organising patterns and themes within the raw data (Clarke et al., 2015). This type of analysis is focused on collective meanings and experiences, which is ideal for this research's aim to understand the perceptions of De Voorkamer's community. Within the table below, one can see a demonstration of the way by which thematic Analysis was employed within this research. This aligns with how Clarke et al. (2015) discussed Thematic Analysis. Below is an example of how a theme was analysed and coded using sub-categories.

Theme 1 – Safe Space

Category	Evidence
Feeling of Home	"De Voorkamer feels like a second home" Participant A
	"Even when I clean stuff, it feels like you're cleaning your home" Participant D
	"It really makes me feel comfortable because it's familiar because it reminds me of like, my massive family back home" Participant G

	During an event with volunteers at DVK I was surpised by the people walking in and out of the kitchen to put their plates in the sink and make themselves a fresh cup of water. It was like they were right at home, even the way they set on the pillows reading, as if they're at home (Fieldnotes p. 14)
Relaxed Atmosphere	"It's so easy, you can approach anyone" Participant A
	"The atmosphere is so natural, you don't have to be anyone, just yourself" Participant E
	A women thought that DVK was a café and entered asking for coffee. I explained to her what the space was and made her a coffee and invited her to stay and hang around if she wanted to. She set on the pillows and drank her coffee then walked around admiring the art on the walls. Later she came to thank me and to ask where she can find us on facebook so that she can attend events. She told me that she has never experience being in a place where she felt so comfortable. She suffers from anxiety and is very careful what place to go to due to this, but she said she did not feel any stress or discomfort in the space. (Fieldnotes p. 34)
Unspoken Rules	During a conversation I had with a fellow student at DVK we were discussing the atmosphere and feeling DVK has which is felt by everyone. She then said that the values and rules of DVK are unspoken but everyone feels them. She said that no one really knows the rules and they arent written down anywhere but if you ask people who come to DVK what the rules and values are of DVK they would all know because you can just sense them as you walk into the door. (Fieldnotes p. 20)
	"We make a deal when we get to De Voorkamer that we should respect eachother, that there is no diffrence between anyone and that respect is the foundation of all our decisions and discussions." Participant E
	"De Voorkamer does not force us to do this, but this is our rules, if you want to be part of De Voorkamer you need to respect and accept all of us and the same for them, they accept my ideas and me as I am." Participant E

The process was a repetitive one since, for example, while going through my third interview, I noticed a re-occurring theme of 'social capital'; thus, I added this theme and went through my previous interviews to see what was said regarding this theme which I missed the first time round. Thus, I analysed each interview at least three times to ensure that no useful information was missed.

When this data process was completed, I reviewed the different themes and analysed what the participants said about the topics. I also used the tool of creating a 'data set', which aided me in linking themes together. This process was also used for the field notes collected throughout the data collection stage. Grouping phases and sections I wrote down during observations aided me in understanding different themes in different situations and made it easier to analyse my past observations. After coding the different categories, I reviewed each category within the interview and observation data. In the following chapter, I discussed my observations and the interviewee's outlook. The categories which came out of my data analysis are:

- Inclusion at De Voorkamer: The feeling of home.
- Building connections and social capital at De Voorkamer and its mental health benefits.
- The values around social impact creation within De Voorkamer.
- Understanding the impact created through forming a safe space and the values behind it.
- Improving the current impact.

I conducted my analysis through an analytical point of view rather than a descriptive outlook, employing critical thinking to understand my observations and form opinions of what these observations meant to create an impact within the organisation. This also means that within this study, I will voice my opinion about the impact created, whether it is positive for its community or not. Of course, constructive critisism will be employed since the aim of this research is to assist the organisation. This approach is in line with the approach De Voorkamer is currently using. This is due to how the organisation is focused on the perceptions of their impact by their participants, which they use as feedback and adjust how

they work. They do not currently measure their impact creation. Instead, they focus on building relationships with participants and opening up conversations for feedback and improvement with their participants and community.

3.E: Quality Criteria

Byran identifies (as cited in Clark et al., 2021) credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, authenticity and relevance as crucial factors to consider within qualitative research. Within this research, this criterion was prioritised throughout the whole process to different extents. This is especially relevant, as factors such as credibility were imperative to my study and were done through various means, such as employing references to other scholarly works and taking extensive ethical considerations during the interview and observation processes. On the other hand, transferability was not a priority since the research was about a specific organisation at a point in time.

Thus, the priority was to understand the impact of perceptions and the inclusion at play rather than making it applicable to different contexts. Dependability was also prioritised to ensure transparency within the research process, especially seeing as the process of ethnography was at play, which is a subjective point of focus. Confirmability was a complex aspect of the research, as ethnographic work is always open to the observer's bias. Here reflexivity was employed to ensure that observations were conducted fairly and transparently. The research's natural openness to subjectivity was then combated through interviews, where perspectives were more easily depicted authentically through contextualising quotes from the interviewees. Finally, the research was conducted after a rigorous process of looking at what was needed in the field of social impact. The methodology chosen was recommended by Edwards et al. (2012), who taught that focusing on the local community through social measures was ideal for understanding social impact creation and for a social impact measurement to be created eventually.

Seeing the nature behind my research and the instrumentation I employed within this study, self-assessment sufficed to ensure ethical considerations were prioritised throughout the entire research process. Nonetheless, the research plan was also approved by my

dissertation supervisors. The ethics behind the interviews themselves, the questions asked, and how the data was analysed were a priority. Decisions were taken around this priority, such as seeking the feedback of two peers, one of whom has extensive experience with qualitative research methods. Internal biases were kept in check when conducting the interviews, noting down observations and analysing the data; the process of this reflexivity will be discussed below.

A consent form was provided to every participant with information on how and why their information will be used to help participants make an informed decision about whether or not they would like to be part of the data collection process. I also audio-recorded the interviews to analyse them better later; transcripts were made from the recordings to make the analysis process more manageable. Such recordings and transcripts were used only by me and will be deleted three months after being done to safeguard people's privacy. This process follows Utrecht University's Research Data Management Policy at the Faculty of Law, Economics, and Governance (2019).

3.F: Positionality and Reflexivity as a researcher

At the beginning of my internship, I was unfamiliar with the unique setting at De Voorkamer since their work culture differs from anything I had ever experienced; it is an alternative organisation with a work culture focused on social well-being rather than profits. Thus, as ethnographic research is built from the ground up, I had to develop an attitude of availability throughout my research to gather as much data as possible from the field to understand better how this organisation worked within its society. I needed to be open to new experiences and needed to be able to participate in different events to enrich my observational diversity. I also understood that emotional engagement with participants brought with it the possibility of unique insights (MacLean et al., 2006). This was due to observing how De Voorkamer's community held emotional ties with the organisation. Thus, one must understand the feelings tied to the organisation before its impact can be understood. Thus, emotional relationships were developed with my research participants, especially the persons within the organisation. This further enhanced the depth of my understanding of the

organisation and its impact both on its members and its participants. This was achieved consistently through the emotional bonds, morning hugs, birthday videos, and many other gestures of love and care. Though these actions I understood why people all over Utrecht, especially newcomers, kept coming to De Voorkamer. I could better understand my interviewees by being open and experiencing the team's love and positivity towards each other and the community.

Being an international student away from home, I was initially intimidated by the team, seeing as many of them were Dutch. However, once I joined the team and started getting closer to the members, I noticed that many were once newcomers to Utrecht and were ready to welcome and relate to me and my situation. Being an international student allowed me to understand De Voorkamer's impact on their community. Since the team was a mix of Dutch people, students and newcomers, my position as an international student was not looked down upon but viewed as a cultural addition. This showcased the way De Voorkamer views diversity as a strength. For months at De Voorkamer, I did not feel like an outsider in the space; instead, I felt like a newcomer with fresh eyes and experiences which people around me wanted to listen to and learn from. Having said this, there were challenges throughout my fieldwork, especially when friendships with participants started to form.

A challenge within this research method was creating boundaries within my research. Fine (1994) argues that 'blurred boundaries' exist between the researcher and the research participants. She argues that a part of ethnography is exploring these boundaries as researchers decide what and whom to include within their research and how we become involved in their lives (Fine, 1994). This included the ethical decisions regarding my relationship with participants, especially those I worked with weekly. It was challenging to keep my position within the team merely professional, especially when it came to moments when friendly events were organised. Thus, I decided to explore my friendships within the team further, be emotionally involved, and build friendships with some team members. To ensure that my role as a researcher was remembered, throughout my time at De Voorkamer, I introduced myself to participants and members as a student intern, basing my thesis on De Voorkamer while also taking care of communications duties. I introduced myself honestly to all participants and persons I met throughout my research to ensure they knew my role as a researcher. The distance and barriers created by my limitations required me to

methodologically use secondary data (Cunliffe & Karunayake, 2013); in my case, interviews were employed. By limitations, I am referring to the limited relationships I could build with people, knowing that I will be leaving the Netherlands in a few months as well as the knowledge that the primary reason I was there was to conduct research, unlike them, who were there due to work or with no particular agenda or required outcome.

My relationship with some of my research participants was created through my participant role within the organisation, as I worked with the organisation regularly for months. The privilege I held as a researcher, and the elitism of ethnography (Reedy & King, 2017) was one I was made aware of during my introduction at De Voorkamer. This was when I introduced myself to people and noticed what privilege I held as a student who could financially support myself and rent a residence and chose to move to Utrecht. In contrast, many people around me could not return to their country if they wished to. Ethnography as a whole is an elitist type of research (Hurlbert, 1976), as it means that you as a researcher have enough time on your hands to spend carrying out observations for your studies, which is a privilege to have (DeLuca & Maddox, 2016).

I knew how my research was being conducted from an advantaged point of view. This is because, as a researcher, I was gaining information and data for my research and could quickly leave the situation if I chose to do so. Knowing the imbalance of what I was gaining from the organisation and what I could give back, the aim of my research became, first and foremost, to assist the organisation. Thus, my understanding of my advantages and privilege motivated me to view my research as providing information to the organisation for their perusal while supporting them rather than just extracting information. This is why my research's primary aim is to serve as a feedback tool to the organisation so that they can better understand their perceived social impact on their community.

This research employs critical performativity to provide critical possibilities for an alternative organisation (Fleming & Banerjee, 2016). This was due to the aim of the study, which was to aid the organisation. Thus, I needed to recognise that the given critique must be constructive. My research then also used organisational ethnography's procedural virtues since it aims to give a voice to the organisation's participants (Reedy & King, 2017).

Through the way Banks (1998) identifies insider-outsider roles, I became aware of my role shift from being an external outsider at the beginning of my fieldwork to becoming an external insider. This shift was due to the community's acceptance of my role within the organisation and how I adapted to their values and daily customs. One of the main ways I integrated myself was by participating in weekly lunches, where I would eat with the team and sometimes cook for them, strengthening my relationship with the organisation and its members. Doing this made me feel like part of the team and, in turn, made me feel like I was giving something tangible back to the team at that moment, even if it was just a home-cooked meal. I strengthened my relationship with the team as making and eating lunch together was a way for us all to have a moment during the day to sit, talk and eat together as equals. This process was fundamental since being seen as an insider determines a researcher's access to insider information (Gallais, 2008).

I also viewed a shift in my role regarding who I was with. This is because, as time went by and I started attending events with volunteers within the team who were not present during weekly working hours, I was once again seen as an outsider, which supports Cunliffe and Karunayake's (2013) argument about shifting spaces and research identities. In such cases, I was okay with being seen as an outsider because, as one of my respondents put it, being surrounded by outsiders "is something that helped me feel more at peace with being an outsider because I did not feel so much like an outsider by meeting other outsiders." (Participant G). This made me realise that my position as an outsider at De Voorkamer and Utrecht itself helped me relate to my participants and helped others around me feel less alone.

All the aspects which make up my social identity determine my "approach, conduct, and [the way I] interpret [my] research" (Jacobson & Mustafa, 2019, p.2). Thus, I used a 'Social Identity Map' (SIM) (Jacobson & Mustafa, 2019) to understand my social identity as a researcher better. After working on my SIM, I was more aware of the bias that might become a product of my research. This is especially the case when looking at the privilege I hold as a middle-class, white, heterosexual person who never had to deal with social disapproval and racist or homophobic discrimination. Being more aware of this inequality between myself and many of my participants, I worked on my empathy skills. I kept my privilege in check, especially during discussions with newcomers who had difficulty getting to Utrecht.

This was especially the case during an interview with a participant of De Voorkamer's events who was going through a difficult time in Utrecht. During the interview, as my interviewee opened up about their difficulties, I pushed my interview guide aside and prioritised their well-being above all else. I took my time to listen to them, provide them with assistance by directing them to the right services and ensure they had the support they needed. At that moment, I was grateful for my past work experience in the social sector, which equipped me with the knowledge and skills to support people in their time of need. After seeing that the participant was okay, I asked if they wanted to continue the interview, which they did. Though I continued the interview, I kept it short and chose my words and questions carefully, not wanting to take advantage of the trust they were showing me. After concluding the interview, I made it a point to go through the transcript multiple times and remove any information that could expose their identity or personal things shared during the interview.

As stated by Nicholls (2009) (as cited in Cunliffe & Karunayake, 2013), my understanding of the situation comes about within "the silences that may occur because of whom we decide to include as respondents and the way we phrase our research [and] interview[s]." (Cunliffe & Karunayake, 2013, p. 386) Transparency was a tool I employed within this methodological section where I wanted to discuss the decisions I made as a researcher and disclose the limitations which come about due to these decisions to make my research credible. I hope this research opens the door for improvement for De Voorkamer to create better societal change (King & Learmonth, 2015).

Chapter 4: Findings

I analysed the findings based on the aforementioned theoretical framework in this chapter. I outlined the importance of the relationship between De Voorkamer and its community and presented their power relations. I analysed how integration and inclusion played out according to these power dynamics to better understand the perception of De Voorkamer's impact on its community through inclusion. The way daily practices played out, as well as the values behind these practices was analysed. In addition, the way impact planning was aligned within the team and whether the community felt this planned impact was looked into. Furthermore, the way social capital was created through connections fostered within the space was considered a form of social impact (Edwards et al, 2012) within the research.

Finally, recommendations on how De Voorkamer creates impact will be discussed constructively to explore a more efficient social impact approach. Within Appendix 4, one can find a table of interviewees which will be helpful when following the below text. In addition to this, from here on out, De Voorkamer will be referred to as 'DVK'.

4.A: Inclusion at De Voorkamer: The feeling of home.

Whenever I step into DVK, I am met with the smell of coffee and something cooking in the kitchen, making me feel right at home. Entering the premises, I am greeted with a very welcoming environment, with smiles, hugs, and the accompaniment of soft music played in the background. This setting is in place every day, whether an event is taking place or it is just another workday.

I was not the only one who felt this warm environment, as respondents, participants of events and organisational members also spoke about this feeling DVK creates. When discussing what DVK is doing in the community and how it is doing it, one of the organisational members explained, "It is a connection, it is love, it's De Voorkamer" (Field notes from the author's ethnographic research p. 9).

During a discussion about the impact of DVK, a member described the impact of DVK as a welcoming feeling one gets when one walks through the door. They explained how

the values and principles of DVK are challenging to describe and often unspoken, yet they are shared by many who form part of DVK's community. I understood and related to what the members were trying to say, as through my observations, I noticed underlining practices which may seem commonplace but are there specifically to strengthen events and actions. Thus, below I employed a soft mapping technique to visualise the "easy-going and relaxed space" (Respondent A) which plays out at DVK. Soft mapping is a type of qualitative data representation that analysis and represents subjective findings through a visual and spatial format (Henderson & Segal, 2013). It is a way of showcasing complex and intangible aspects of a concept. Thus, this visualisation method was ideal for communicating the atmosphere presented at DVK.

Figure 3 (By Author with collaboration of Eva Van Rijn, 2023)

The above visual features diagrams, quotes and keywords taken from interviews and my field notes. This space feels like a home or a safe space to all my research respondents. This welcoming space comes about through different practices. One such practice which

makes people feel more included is the action of volunteers and organisational members asking them for help. When participants are asked to help cook or clean, they feel like they are being treated as part of the team rather than merely a visitor. All the volunteers mentioned that they wanted to start volunteering or helping out at DVK the first time they entered the space and attended their first event because they wanted to be a part of DVK itself.

Throughout many interviews, the feeling of 'being part' of DVK was linked to what the participants and volunteers gave back to the organisation. One of the volunteers said that at DVK; "When I do something, I do it from my heart. Even when I clean stuff, it feels like you're cleaning your home." This sense of 'home' comes from the practical ways DVK have made the space a shared space which belongs to everyone. They openly speak about how most of the furniture in the space has been created by participants, including chairs, tables, light fixtures, boards and so on.

Thus, Participants are welcomed into a space where they might find their photographs, lino prints or embroideries on the walls, or they might be drinking out of a cup made within the place itself. On the other hand, they might be eating the food they made with others before the event, or they might find themselves eating on the table they had just previously cleaned. These actions, which people usually do at home, such as pouring their coffee, cooking, washing dishes and entering the kitchen freely, make one more comfortable and confident in a space, as it makes it their own. Such practices enable participants to feel like the organisation trusts and welcome them.

This feeling of belonging was a reoccurring theme within my interviews. Thus it is interesting to understand what led people to have this same feeling. Edwards et al. (2012) identified this as the strongest theme within their research and linked the feeling of belonging to creating social impact. This was due to self-development, which takes place when someone feels like they belong in a space, which gives them the confidence to create networks and gain social impact. During an interview, Respondent C connected feeling accepted and free to be themselves with the atmosphere at DVK; "The atmosphere is so natural. You don't have to be anyone, just yourself.". This feeling of ease and acceptance was also noted by most participants and was linked to participants feeling like they could make mistakes and be themselves in the space. They were made to feel free to try new things, get to know people and ask for information. All this contributed to the feeling of belonging they felt

at DVK. Respondent B captures what DVK aims to do as an attempt to integrate newcomers to Utrecht by stating that;

"When you come to a new place, everything becomes different, laws are different, and people are different, and you feel like you don't know what to do or where to go […] also sometimes as a new person here and any place I mean, you can sometimes make mistakes, you don't know that this is wrong […] but people that came before you know that and will tell you; 'hey, be careful when you […]' You don't have to make the same mistakes like they did." (Respondent B)

All interviewees, participants, volunteers and organisational members perceived the welcoming feeling of DVK to the impact it creates within their lives. Below is Respondent D's visualisation of DVK in their lives, where they imagine DVK to be the grass surrounding his path from his hardships and providing him with a better experience in his life journey.
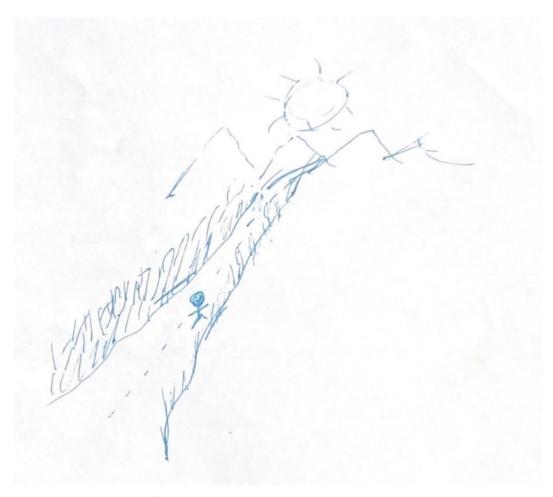

Figure 4 (By Respondent D, 2023)

This welcoming feeling, thus, seems to be what is necessary for people to connect to each other and build relationships. One of the organisational members touched on this by saying:

"I believe that the feeling of home is connected to many different elements, but I think that one of the elements is how you relate to people and how you feel part of something and how you have friends that are here for you to support you and how you feel understood which is always connected to people so this feeling of home which is partially connected to this […] part of it is to feel connection with people […] I think that feeling of home is a very important part of being able to feel grounded or for mental health even." (Respondent F).

DVK also employed creative processes to facilitate a welcoming atmosphere and communication among all members. Respondent B looked at the way art is used during events as a way of being able to express his feelings by "drawing some pictures and make some pictures of how you are feeling." (Respondent B). This shows the creative way DVK enables different modes of expression. This is supported by expression theory which views art as a form of emotional expression (Matravers, 2016) and can be "very therapeutic" (Respondent G) for the participants. Respondent B explained the different creative processes which are part of DVK's events by saying:

"A lot of people like to go to poetry lessons or it's just nice to draw some pictures and make some pictures of how you're feeling. Other people like to come to dinners and try some new food and get to know new cultures […] some other people just like to come to listen to music and dance." (Respondent B)

Thus, the creative process is a way by which DVK facilitates communication and connection in a space where people with different languages from all around the world meet together. To combat the language barrier, DVK employs artistic and creative ways of doing things so that communication can play out between participants through the process of doing rather than saying. This type of non-verbal communication plays out through events such as music creation, lino printing and cooking, amongst other activities. Respondent G expresses this by saying:

"You don't have to speak the language to communicate and exchange and have like a bond with the person sitting next to you over what you're drawing, and you don't need to talk with the specific language about it. So in that way, the low threshold of participation is what makes it accessible I think." (Respondent G).

This process of inclusion starts off with an open and welcoming atmosphere which the community organisation needs in order to foster inclusion (Swan, 2013; Baak, 2019). When speaking about DVK, one of the interviewees (Respondent A) linked the impact creation of DVK with "The energy, positivity and openness of people who show you that they want you to be [there] and that they like you. I haven't experienced that in other places" (Repondent A). This, in turn, links the atmosphere in the space with the feeling of inclusion, which was felt by all persons interviewed. This feeling of inclusion was due to actions made by volunteers and members of the organisation who would greet people when they walked through the DVK doors and ask them for help with cooking or cleaning during the events. This made participants feel less like a visitor and more like part of the DVK community. Other actions used to make people feel included were individual messages being sent to volunteers and participants asking if they were interested in attending or helping out with specific events. Respondent A was not the only one who expressed their opinion about the uniqueness of DVK, as three other Respondents also mentioned that nowhere else compares to DVK with regards to how it makes them feel included.

This sense of inclusion created through interviews has been discussed to create a setting where people feel comfortable being themselves and speaking to others. An organisation member said this specifically about the creation of the 'feeling of home':

"I believe that the feeling of home is connected to many different elements, but I think that one of the elements [is] how you relate to people and how you feel part of something and how you have friends that are here for you to support you and how you feel understood which is always connected to people so this feeling of home which is partially connected to this […] part of it is to feel connection with people […] I think that feeling of home is a very important part of being able to ground or for mental health even." (Respondent F).

4.B: Building connections and social capital at De Voorkamer and its mental health benefits.

The organisation's success in making people feel included touches on an aspect discussed by Boon and Fransworth (2011), specifically, social inclusion's impact on one's access to social capital. This can be better depicted through the below diagram, where one can see the process at play in DVK regarding how social capital is created and the relationship between social capital and social impact. The diagram below, thus. showcases the process which occurs for community members of DVK to access social capital:
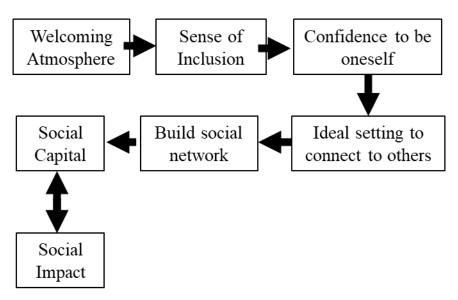
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┌──────────────┐     ┌──────────────┐     ┌──────────────┐
│  Welcoming   │ ──▶ │  Sense of    │ ──▶ │ Confidence to be │
│  Atmosphere  │     │  Inclusion   │     │   oneself    │
└──────────────┘     └──────────────┘     └──────────────┘
                                                  │
                                                  ▼
┌──────────────┐     ┌──────────────┐     ┌──────────────┐
│   Social     │ ◀── │ Build social │ ◀── │ Ideal setting to │
│   Capital    │     │   network    │     │ connect to others │
└──────────────┘     └──────────────┘     └──────────────┘
       ▲
       ▼
┌──────────────┐
│   Social     │
│   Impact     │
└──────────────┘
```

Figure 5 (By Author, 2023)

A sense of confidence, self-development and high self-esteem brought about by the feeling of inclusion has been linked by social theories (Leary & Downs, 1995) to create an ideal setting for the creation of social connections. In turn, social connections are linked to social capital, which Edwards et al. (2012) then link to social impact (in an interconnected way). The social connections people create and build within the DVK space expand their social network, and thus further build onto social capital (Boon & Farnsworth, 2011). In turn, social capital impacts people's lives through the opportunities which arise through their social networks, such as job opportunities and economic gains, as well as knowledge about cultural practices (Birch & Whittam, 2008). Within the above diagram, the relationship between social capital and social inclusion is essential (Leary & Downs, 1995) for creating social

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impact (Edwards et al., 2012). Through the process of fostering trust, cooperation, and collective action within communities through the practices of DVK, social networks, support, and social connections promote social inclusion, which results in social capital gains (Edwards et al., 2012). Respondent F also noted this and discussed the importance of connection to one's opportunities.

"For people who are new, a network is needed for people to become part of society to all the bigger steps in your life, I think starts from here […] so if you want to study language it starts from people […] work often starts from […] your network, you get to places which can offer you a job or if you want an education, it starts often that people navigate you in understanding the system of education or put you in opportunities to getting financial support to study […] All these things I think starts from a network, or feeling of home start from relating to the society that you are in. so I think that all these things are like intertwined with connecting people." Respondent F.

Apart from the connection participants made between 'feeling welcome' and 'feeling included', participants also linked the way they feel welcome to have better mental health. This is linked to many theories on the benefits of inclusion to one's mental and physical health, such as the correlations between strong social relationships and lower mortality risk. This thus indicates a positive impact of social inclusion on overall health outcomes (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2010; Appau et al., 2019) and the relationship between social support networks and better mental health (Kawachi & Berkman, 2001).

This feeling of acceptance and inclusion brings mental health benefits that directly impact participants (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2010; Jetten et al., 2012; Masi et al., 2011; Sani et al., 2015). In addition to this, DVK was also linked to somewhere where you can de-stress and a place that's "so good to go and forget about your problems" (Respondent B).

In addition to this, "All newcomers go to De Voorkamer, we can meet each other and speak to each other even about the bad things that happened to us during the trip here." (Respondent E). The ability for DVK to be a place where people can open up to each other about traumatic experiences in their lives has its impact on their mental health and their ability to move forward with a life in a new society (Zech & Rimé, 2005). Other benefits of

emotional experience are emotional healing and well-being (Zech & Rimé, 2005). This, in turn, creates ties to what DVK can do for people wanting to start a new life in a new city.

Another indicator of better physical and mental health (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2010; Cohen et al., 2003) is one's access to social capital, another focus of DVK since they are working towards building people's social networks. Thus, one can see the connection between feeling welcome and included in DVK's impact on their community's mental health and social capital.

Through my discussions with the DVK community and observations, I believe that the underlining impact created through these activities, events, and practices was due to how relationships are built within DVK and through DVK. Both of the members who were interviewed agreed on the importance that connection, networking and building relationships hold in the impact creation of the organisation. Respondent F discusses this by stating:

"Everything is connected, and I think in De Voorkamer, we are more focused on that part of social capital. I think through this social capital also the financial capital can come later on […] sometimes people do get connected to somebody here, and then they get a job, and there is a direct financial gain that is somehow traceable to this space. But I feel we are more focused on social capital... Once you have that base, you are ready to take the next step" (Respondent F)

DVK's aim of building participant's social capital was also mentioned by the second member, who spoke about the indirect impact DVK has in their participants' life;

"It's not necessarily the place that will find them a job, but it could maybe, you know, at any social exchange when you go out after work, you will meet people who might have something for you […]" (Respondent G).

Respondent B built onto this point and stated that places like DVK are "important because it expands your network. You get to know new people and you get information from people.". This perfectly summarises the significant impact DVK has on one's social network. In addition, Respondent D discussed the impact DVK had on how they could access "communities, friends [and] information about Dutch culture" (Respondent D).

From the above, one can see that social capital is one of the main focuses of DVK. Through my observations of the team, the importance of connection and the building of social networks among participants is acknowledged by all organisational members at DVK. Through my observations, I also noted that the organisation's ability to connect people stems from the way DVK encourages all of its community to "learn together, [participants and volunteers don't need to do things perfectly" (Respondent A). DVK is thus perceived as an open space for people to learn from each other. The ease and open-mindedness within DVK create opportunities for people to support each other and approach each other "it's so easy, you can approach anyone." (Respondent D). Through the creation of such a social and supportive space "People take care of each other" (respondent A). DVK, thus is aimed at people who are "new to this society or have less access points to society to start their lives here." (Respondent F). Further, the aim of DVK is not only to have people without these access points but also to connect people from different backgrounds.

4.C: The values around social impact creation within De Voorkamer.

By understanding the importance of creating connections within DVK, one can link how DVK views integration and how it forms part of a national integration process. With this, we can see that the organisational members of DVK perceive DVK to be an "access point to the outside world" (Respondent F). This was a shared idea amongst the team throughout my observation, with organisational members often viewing DVK as being one of the few places which welcome newcomers for who they are and in an informal manner. One can also see how the organisation perceived itself as a tool for creating connections between different participants. Thus, the organisation is perceived to view integration as aiding newcomers to form connections with people from different backgrounds. Thus, DVK is perceived to enable both parties (newcomers and Dutch) to learn from each other. Through the way, DVK practices integration, integration is seen as a two-way process that benefits both parties involved. (Parties, in this sense, refers to newcomers, Dutch people and people who have resided in Utrecht for a long period of time).

"Everything we do is focused on having these different parties interact with each other [...] Of course, we address a lot of people from [Asylum Centre Utrecht] because we want them to find their way here, because we see [DVK] as an access point to the outside world, but at the same time we are addressing the local society to come here as well [...] Through these projects that we do, all these different events which are developed by the people themselves are a way to build community and relationships [...] It's a two-sided process in which everybody can learn." (Respondent F)

The above discussion shows how DVK resists pastoral power dynamics and favours empowerment and open-mindedness over dependency and being all-knowing (Foucault, 2007). This type of attitude thus affected how they conducted the process of including persons from minority groups in their community. It also influences the integration process taking place, which aims to embrace differences and foster connections rather than socialising (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) newcomers in order for them to better fit into their new society. This refers to how DVK encourages diversity and cultural differences and aims for people to connect to others through these differences, which are viewed as aspects that make people unique and exciting. This goes against traditional ways of viewing integration, where integration is seen as a way of educating a newcomer on the social norms of society and supporting them in changing to fit into this new society. Organisational member F goes into this by saying:

"The idea is that the space is here to connect people who are new to the Netherlands, people who are here for some time or new or always and connect people on an equal matter than sometimes it's done. We don't want to connect people on a level of: oh, somebody is here as a refugee and this person is in need of something, but more on that, there's a person who has a lot of qualities and there's another person who has a lot of qualities and we can exchange in these qualities or we can build something together [...] we try and create this connection between people in an equal manner which I think is important to have if you want to build valuable relationships and in this way we try to create possibilities for people to build their network, for people who are new to build their first network basically here but also for people that have been here for a long time to maybe extent or maybe create another quality for their connections that they have or a different understanding of different backgrounds.

And then through that, create basically a society where people are relating in a better way to each other. So really, that is the bigger thing that we are trying to achieve." Respondent F.

The type of two-sided integration which DVK aims to achieve is difficult to do on equal terms within a team. This is because two-sided integration views the newcomer and Dutch as equals who should learn from each other. Within such a relationship, an integration process would facilitate connections between the two groups rather than changing one group to fit in with the other. This process is especially difficult to achieve since DVK works with many volunteers with unique expectations and interpretations of their organisational roles. This can lead to different attitudes towards the way they treat participants and fellow volunteers (Rousseau, 1989). To combat this, DVK has ethics behind volunteering. They communicate with volunteers and participants, especially Dutch participants who might be further privileged (Johnson, 2006) than other participants or volunteers within the space. Thus, employees of DVK are in constant communication with volunteers and constantly share their perceptions on what contributing to DVK should look like (as explained by Respondent F above).

Respondent F discussed instances where volunteers had been perceived to have different ideas about the values behind DVK. In such instances, the values of DVK were explained to them, and a discussion was had about whether they shared these values and if they were still interested in being part of DVK.

"In the past, a lot of people come here […] and they come here as a Dutch person, for instance, to help someone, and this is exactly what […] I feel I wouldn't want, I don't want somebody to come too much with the feeling that they're helping, of course you feel like you're contributing to something which is maybe community or it's like an ideal of the world where people can actually be together in this kind of way but I want people to come here with the feeling that they are learning from eachother. Whatever group you're coming from […] you come here to learn and exchange in the same manner as the other person is […] so the idea of help I feel is problematic." (Respondent F)

The above response showcases the internal values at play in DVK. This goes with the way DVK views itself as a meeting place and a place for cultural diversity rather than a place for integration. Of course, integration then plays out in the space, but the aim is far beyond

integration and views integration as the facilitation of connections. This idea that DVK is not a place aimed at 'helping' newcomers is shared by all the team, who seem not to victimise newcomers (though still acknoledging the disadvantages they may face in this new society) but view them as equals and provide them with an opportunity to meet new people. This showcases the way people at DVK enrich each other's lives. No one person is viewed as being more valuable than another. DVK's rejection of 'helping' people is another way they reject pastoral power (Foucault, 2007) and move towards an equal sense of integration and inclusion, which acknowledges disadvantages without victimising individuals and creates a space where everyone feels empowered.

A way of combating structural inequality (which might arise within this type of community organisation) was co-creation (Schrover, 2021) since it empowers participants and volunteers and enhances their engagement and impact on the organisational practices. Co-creation at DVK occurs through active participation, engagement, and equal inclusion of organisational members, volunteers and participants in the decision-making and problem-solving process (Avelino et al., 2019). Co-creation was essential to give power to participants and volunteers to shape the projects to what they deem necessary (Ainsworth & Hardy, 2008). "Co-creation is essential in connecting people in an equal manner, and I think it is also essential for us as a space to create a space that is felt by the people themselves that it is theirs and that is not something offered to people, but it is owned by the people who are engaging with it." (Respondent F). This co-creation process "was a conscious decision from the start." (Respondent F) and has changed through the years as more employees have entered the organisation and volunteers have changed.

"It's done in different ways, so in the past, we would have […] workshops with different steps that would lead to making a new project. The very first thing that we did was like an Arabic coffee house that we developed. This basically was the first project in 2016 where we did brainstorming sessions together, and we were looking at the skills of the people in the groups and how we could facilitate these skills to actually make a part of the project […] Later, it was that maybe community members […] [or] employees would see a specific need.

[…] We've had people addressing us, so community members come in to say, like, hey, for instance, there is the Dutch style café. But we also think that it would be great to also

do an Arabic style cafe. Can we do that, and how can we do that? And then we would find ways to support that and create the space to do so […] Community members are actually engaging in artistic processes to create something together for the space. I don't know. There are many different ways of how co-creation takes shape." (Respondent F)

It is then up to the team to see whether the project proposed aligns with our vision and enhances the values DVK wants to promote and whether they have the human resources to make such a project happen since it is essential for organisational members to keep in mind the organisation's aims and centre their decisions around their mission (Blokland & Reniers, 2021). Respondent F spoke about their role in keeping the team on track when it comes to the organisation's values by stating:

"bring it back to what our mission is because there is so much that we are trying to do because everyone here is very motivated, which is very nice, but also, in the past, there have been moments where it has become too much for people" (Respondent F).

This limits the level of social impact that DVK can have on society since volunteers and employees have their own limits on what they can do. The way this Respondent spoke about organisational planning highlighted the organisation's importance to its member's well-being. This is a way DVK ensures that their impact on their own lives and their members' lives is positive and that people are not led to burnout. The way decisions are finally taken also showcases the hierarchy within DVK, which is still present even though participants and volunteers are given a voice in decision-making processes. The organisational hierarchy at play, which I observed, can be seen in Figure 6 below. This figure was done in the shape of a pyramid to depict the distribution of power within the decision-making process and to showcase that the lower one belongs to the hierarchy, the more people are in that category. For example, there are fewer than ten paid employees at DVK, but they have more power within the decision-making process than participants, who are hundreds of people. This does not mean that they do not hold any power or are not given importance within the creation process within the team, but that their decision will need to be approved by the people on top of them. This top-down approach within the organisation is a logical course of action since the more people are involved, the more leadership and guidance there is needed when making organisational decisions.
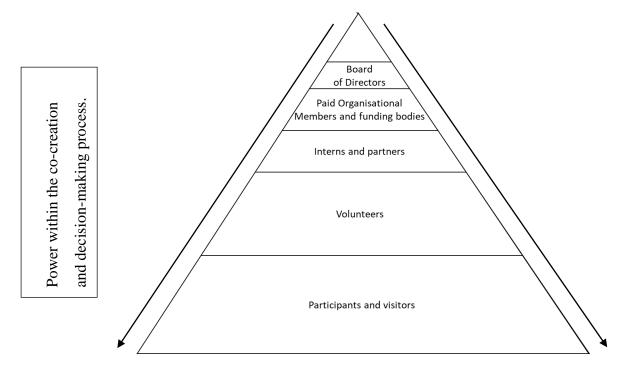
Power within the co-creation and decision-making process.

Board of Directors

Paid Organisational Members and funding bodies

Interns and partners

Volunteers

Participants and visitors

Figure 6 (By Author, 2023)

This hierarcle and formal manner of making decisions within the team contrasts with the informal nature of DVK and the equality it tries to foster. Having said this, this formal structure, though it does not exactly align with the equality and inclusion DVK stands for, is necessary to keep the organisation running smoothly and in order. What is important to note in the top-down structure above is that, though the DVK community is not equal in the decision-making process, they are equal in the social setting of DVK, "I am one of them" (Respondent C). This showcases the way formal processes are at play internally within the organisational structure. This then contrasts with the informal way events and activities play out externally with participants. Through my observations within the team I could see that at times these informal and formal practices clash and create many grey-areas when it comes to organisational roles.

It seems as though the way that the organisation recruits employees and volunteers is done in a way where people with the organisation's same values around equality and inclusion are given priority above all else, as seen through my observations of the current team and the recruitment processes taking place at the moment. In extreme instances, one organisational member only needs to showcase their hierarchal power over the rest of the community. This is because there is the importance given to volunteers since, without them, there would not be enough human resources to organise, host and hold the events that they organise. While speaking to one of the organisational members (Respondent G), I asked about the role volunteers hold within the organisation, and they said:

"There's a lot that is in [the volunteer's] hands, they can decide what activity […] they're going to have and what kind of material they need. If they're doing it totally open or if they want to do it in collaboration with another organisation." (Respondent G).

This shows that different scales of decisions are distributed among different people within the DVK community. Through seeing the above and observing the attitudes the employees have around volunteers, it is clear to see that they trust their judgment and trust them with handling the space. The volunteers also feel this trust, as all the volunteers I interviewed expressed that they do not doubt that DVK trusts them and that they are valued. This could be linked to the personal messages sent to volunteers to ask for help and to thank them after events, as well as the way volunteers are thanked for their help during events, where volunteers at times are publicly praised for their contribution, whether it was cleaning up and cooking or running the organisation of an event. All the volunteers who were part of my interview process felt that they influenced DVK and the type of events and decisions made.

When asked who makes up the volunteering teams, Respondent G said:

"It's been both internationals and Dutch people, but it has been mainly people who have time also to volunteer, so it has often been students who are doing studies that are maybe related, maybe not related to the [specific event] […] Other times it is people who are a bit older and who are not necessarily very busy with work, so they also have a bit more time to spend." (Respondent G).

The impact availability has on volunteer participation was also noted by Respondent A, who said that their volunteering hours are based on their availability. It is also interesting to note that this volunteer viewed their ability to attend events as a determining factor on whether they are part of DVK. Thus the more time they spend at events, the more involved they feel. Respondent B also noted this and said that he feels outside of DVK as he has not gone frequently to events and needs to contribute more to the space from his end.

4.D: Understanding the impact created through forming a safe space and the values behind it.

During my interview with Respondent B, I asked them to explain the visual impact of DVK on their life. As a response, they visualised the process of finding out about DVK events and how happy this made them. Below one can see this visualisation and understand this simple demonstration of the initial impact DVK has in people's lives.

Figure 7 (By Respondent B, 2023)

Respondent B explained this process as one which has a positive impact on his mental health and his sense of belonging by saying:

"You first come to the Netherlands and you are confused, sad and don't know what to do. Suddenly you find a poster of De Voorkamer for an event, and you get so surprised.

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When you arrive there, you find that people are dancing and happy and you like it." (Respondent B).

This welcoming atmosphere discussed above is an intentional feeling the organisational members aim to create by "countering the hostility that exists in the Netherlands". (Respondent G). In this sense, the impact aimed to create shows newcomers that people in the Netherlands celebrate their differences and are happy to have them here. The above showcases one aspect of DVK's impact creation: sometimes, their impact is as simple as providing a space for people to have a fun time.

This aim of DVK seems to be shared amongst the team; when it comes to the way the organisational members organised DVK's social impact, many of the social impact strategies discussed during interviews and throughout my observation were similar, showing great promise in the way the organisation looks at their social impact (Branson, 2008; Blokland & Reniers, 2021). Respondent G discussed the impact they focus on. Though there is thought behind the social impact of media posts and artworks and how this influences their community, their primary focus is on the event's social impact on the participant's life. They go on by stating that:

"I am more busy thinking of impact while organising the courses, the talent development and things because then I'm really thinking of how useful is this and how will this be used later by the person who follows the course, and what can it allow them to do or discover." (Respondent G)

It is also interesting to see how DVK impacts its organisational members. As discussed before, it puts to play an alternative way of working where social well-being is the main focus, with trust and support being pillars of the organisation's working style. Respondent G discussed the impact that this type of work environment has had in their life by stating that:

"It really blurred the boundaries between work and activism and personal artistic practice and friendship. So it kind of blurred the lines between social and professional and personal and collective family. You know, it's really blurred lines for me, and I see this positively because it kind of challenges the idea that work has to be something that is boring and bureaucratic. I feel like I can't go back to working in an office the way I did, where you get orders to do something, and you have no say in the ethical part of it." (Respondent G)

This brings to light the way that employees, as well as volunteers and participants, feel part of DVK. This also highlights the two-sided impact of DVK on its community's life and, vice versa, its impact on DVK itself. Some linked DVK to their home and family, while others saw it as a place where they do not feel like outsiders because being an outsider within DVK makes you an insider. This refers to people's perceptions that DVK is a place for outsiders, whether you are a newcomer to Utrecht, the Netherlands or Europe. Here, the acknowledgement of exclusion felt by many participants created an unspoken bond between the DVK community. Being an 'outsider' was no longer bad, as this place was somewhere where you could be yourself and your differences are celebrated.

What also came out of the interviews was the way that Respondent A would plan their week based on the events that would be happening at DVK. This shows the daily impact DVK has on this volunteer's life. This led to three participants stating that DVK was a specific reason why they would like to stay in Utrecht. Respondent A drew an anchor, seen below, to visualise DVK in their life.
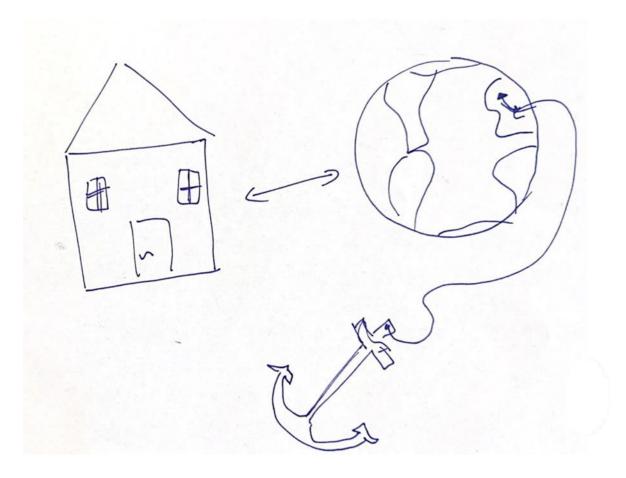
Figure 8 (By Respondent A, 2023)

The above drawing shows that the participant connects home and the world together since they feel like DVK is their second home and that it connects them to the world. This was also the case with Respondent E, who stated that DVK "feels like you have all the world at your hands." (Respondent E).

One of my interviewees explained how, thanks to DVK and the people they met within the space, the life which took them around two years to build in another country took two months to build here; Thanks to "De Voorkamer, I did it in 2 months". (Respondent D)

Apart from this, there is also the feeling of safety and acceptance in the space. Respondent E links the feeling of respect that they feel within the space to the rules which are encouraged within the space. "We make a deal when we get to De Voorkamer that we should respect each other, that there is no difference between anyone, and that respect is the foundation of all our decisions and discussion." (Respondent E)

This then led this participant to become more open-minded and respectful to people around them who have different opinions and values. This shows that DVK impacts people on a deeper level, with this participant internalising DVK's rules around respecting different opinions and people. to becoming more tolerant and also liking things they did not use to beforehand.

"It gets people together and gets them to understand each other and listen to each other. Before, if someone came and had different ideas, I would just go out, not listen to them and not be interested in what they have to say. At De Voorkamer, I'm not the same. There are lots of things I didn't like, and now I like it." (Respondent E).

This statement shows DVK's impact outside of its doors and in people's day-to-day life living in a different cultural setting. This also shows how creating a safe space leads to better inclusion, and in the creation of the ideal place, one can form deep connections and experience self-development (Edwards et al., 2012). It is also important to note that providing a safe space enhances the feeling of being included by some while excluding others. This refers to how DVK's open-minded and inclusive values, in turn, exclude people who do not share these views. In addition, there are also instances that may arise that will require the exclusion of a few to ensure the safety of most DVK participants.

As DVK grows as an organisation and their number of participants grow with it, creating a safe space will not only become more complicated but will also require the organisation to have to make decisions between inclusion, which is their priority, and their community's ability to feel safe within the space, which is also a priority.

4.E: Improving the current impact.

Through my observations and discussions with the DVK community, I noticed that the type of events they plan is centred around the assumption that one is an extrovert or has extroverted tendencies. This limits the accessibility of the events for some people. Mental health can also impact a person's ability to attend DVK events, as they require energy to keep up with an activity or socialise (Corrigan & Watson, 2002). This was the case for one

participant of the study who said that their "mood determines whether [they go] to De Voorkamer or not. When my mental health is low, I stay away." (Respondent B). This participant was going through a hard time and was staying away from DVK as they felt they did not have the mental energy to attend events. This is not a one-off situation, seeing as many people who immigrate to a country go through periods of loneliness and mental health problems (Bhugra & Becker, 2005). As one of DVK's main target groups is newcomers, events addressing mental health or simply events intended for introverts would result in DVK having a more significant impact on people going through a difficult time (Chan et al., 2014). In addition to this, mental health training should also be provided seeing that organisational members and volunteers are likely to come across people during events who might be suffering from mental health problems.

I discussed this with Respondent A, who also noticed this need and suggested a different type of event that DVK could arrange. DVK could open its doors to anyone who would like to stay at DVK to do what they need and would like to be around people but not feel the social pressure to interact with the people around them. This would be an open space where people can read, create art, play music or be around people who would just like some company.

Another suggestion for DVK was the way it could have more informal education events or courses. Respondent B expressed this by stating:

 "Somethings here are so complicated […] also the culture. Sometimes people come here and do things that aren't normal here, and you don't know. Instead of getting to know that by experience, you can learn it from someone who comes before you who is telling you from their experience." (Respondent E).

This touched upon on a type of informal education where the person guiding the event would be another person who is further in the immigration process than most so that there is a more formal atmosphere where people can learn from someone who went through similar experiences.

Another subject participants touched upon during the interviews is the accessibility of information about events. They felt the available information was more directed to people

who already know about DVK and knew where to look for the respective information. Though the WhatsApp channel was praised for being informative, it is not accessible to people new to DVK and has not yet been added. A volunteer interviewed and other volunteers I spoke to during my time at DVK also felt that some event information was usually given last minute, which made events less accessible to people who have busy schedules.

Another aspect of DVK which could be improved is the organisation's ability to guide people to services or institutions they might need. Due to the way, DVK is centred around newcomers who might need social, cultural or institutional guidance, having people knowledgeable on such subjects would significantly bridge this information gap (White, 2017). It would also be helpful for DVK to have better partnerships with mental health and social work services since some participants might need such services but would not have access or knowledge about them.

On a more structural and organisational note, the organisation's current transition from an informal system that the organisation used to facilitate a safe space, to a more structured approach shows how their partnerships (especially with the municipality) influence their inclusion process (Ghorashi & Rast, 2018). Through my observations of the organisation, I have noticed a need for more precise and explicit organisational values to maintain the generation of social impact that it is currently fostering.

One of De Voorkamer's strengths is how informality is used during daily practices to make their community feel included and at ease. These informal practices encourage their participants to practice kindness, empathy and respect. Though this informal, relaxed way of working has been linked to the organisation's success in the inclusion process, it needs to be improved within its internal policies and procedures planning (Baer, 2012). Right now, some roles and processes foster inclusion in an informal and non-hierarchal manner, while others work towards a more structured, safe space. The organisation should ensure a more structured and formal way of organising in order for them to foster inclusion in a relaxed manner with participants.

Another important aspect is the importance of their formal and informal practices within the organisation's perceived success by its participants. Formal procedures are

essential for the planning and networking aspect of the organisation. Nonetheless, the informal way of working also builds networks and creates social impact directly through their connections with their participants. Thus, informal procedures and the way team members socialise with participants and partners should be more critical in their daily practices. In this way, a clear line between the formal and informal processes can be created, which will aid the organisation in better understanding their formal and informal duties within their respective roles and make way for better planning and time management.

On another note, when asked about what DVK can do to improve or increase its positive impact, all participants praised DVK and said that DVK is doing so much good and has such a positive impact on their lives. This goes along with the suggestions given, which were all centered towards increasing what DVK is doing, rather than change their approach, as the approach currently taken was unanimously praised and positively impactful to all.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The findings from the ethnographic observations and the interviews within my research showcase how De Voorkamer's community members perceive social impact in multiple forms. The immediate impact was observed through the inclusion efforts that De Voorkamer has implemented. The feeling of home and belonging, how connections are fostered, and how social capital is gained are emerging themes within the research regarding their perceived social impact creation.

It is interesting to note how participants viewed the organisation as addressing their immediate needs through the social inclusion the organisation fosters. They are given by De Voorkamer a place to feel like they belong, an aspect which all participants focused on in their interviews. On the other hand, though the organisational members gave importance to the inclusion process, they also kept in mind the long-term benefits of this inclusion and viewed it as a way for participants to avoid the risk of poverty, social exclusion and other risks tied to such exclusion (Levitas, 2006; Gopalakrishnan, 2018; Burchardt, 2000). This showcases the De Voorkamer team's awareness of the spillover effects they generate in their participants' lives.

This highlights another critical insight which was gained through this research; the importance both organisational members and participants gave to the spillover effects De Voorkamer generated. This was viewed by both groups as long-term impact that De Voorkamer aims to create, rather than being seen as merely spillover efects (Edwards et al., 2012). As Brown (2017) stated, spillover effects are one of the more significant ways third-sector organisations impact their community. This is the case for De Voorkamer, who empowers refugees and migrants and aids them in self-development. Another critical spillover effect re-occurring within this study is how mental health is positively influenced by how De Voorkamer fosters inclusion and a sense of belonging. This shows the organisation's success in combatting exclusion at a personal and organisational level and fostering inclusion at different degrees. De Voorkamer can adequately manage this positive spillover effect on their community's mental health by providing mental health training to the staff and volunteers, specifically; mental health first aid.

Another point of improvement could be implemented through providing more informal education opportunities. Though De Voorkamer values informal education and peer-to-peer learning, these events are perceived as something outside of the organisation's main

focuse. Seeing how such infromal learning events can help community members navigate the complexities of Dutch culture and society, this research encourages more of these events. Furthermore, De Voorkamer's events should be made more accessible and perhaps less socially intimidating to those going through particular mental health challenges. This can be done through various means, such as creating online activities which would not require an individual to leave their home or physically interact with others. This suggestion is based on my discussion within my findings, where two participants of De Voorkamer events mentioned how events are, at times, too extrovert-friendly, making them more reluctant to attend. De Voorkamer could also benefit from more intentional impact planning and formal evaluation processes to ensure its programs and activities recognise and better understand its community's diverse needs.

The social impact perceived by respondents within this research was felt at different levels but was always tied to a sense of inclusion. Some explained that participants felt the initial impact of the organisation's events at the surface level and viewed De Voorkamer as a place to "just have fun" (Respondent B). In contrast, others viewed this impact at a deeper level. The discussed social impact refers to how De Voorkamer changed a participant's mindset to be more open-minded and tolerant of others. In addition, the impact was also seen through a networking lens, where community members could form bonds with their community, strengthening their social ties with the community as a whole and creating friendships.

The sense of inclusion that De Voorkamer succeeded in creating is linked to De Voorkamer's resistance against Pastoral Power (Foucault, 1976) and traditional governmental tactics (Kangas-Müller et al., 2023) of integration and inclusion of newcomers. Thus, De Voorkamer's success in creating an inclusive space boils down to their overall focus on equality between participants and how diversity and respect are encouraged through solid organisational values. These daily practices and values at De Voorkamer form part of the organisation's impact on its community (Janssens & Steyaert, 2020). This can be seen in how De Voorkamer encourages community members to share their stories and experiences in a safe space.

Furthermore, power relations are at play, which enables genuine connections and a safe space. Social connections are built through these relations, which create pathways

towards social inclusion and participation. Through co-creation and involving community members and volunteers in the creation and planning process, De Voorkamer resists top-down integration and the usually observed inclusion efforts of institutional approaches (Foucault, 2007). This is a way De Voorkamer distinguishes itself from other integration attempts and creates a bridge for a current societal gap within immigration processes (Alba & Nee, 2003; Heath & Cheung, 2007; Schlueter & Meuleman, 2017).

Looking at the discussion above, De Voorkamer can be viewed as a bridge between individuals and society. This bridge then makes way for social capital and was also linked (in the long term) to financial gains by organisational members in terms of economic independence. This parallels Birth and Whittam's (2008) view of third-sector organisations, which was discussed in the above theoretical framework. When looking at the UNDESA (2016) definition of social inclusion, one can see that De Voorkamer has successfully created an environment which is "improving the terms of participants in society for people who are disadvantaged" (UNDESA, 2016, p. 20) through their practices and impact creation. One of the main ways they do so is through creating opportunities for participants to access social capital (Boon & Farnsworth, 2011), enabling them to participate fully in society (Levitas, 2006). One can see that the impact created is achieved through the inclusion process. This process successfully generates impact due to its approach to establishing an ideal environment for connections to be built to foster social capital (as demonstrated in Figure 5 above). This sense of inclusion is tied to the feeling of home presented by De Voorkamer which creates a feeling of belonging among the participants.

The findings of this research illustrate how the relationship between De Voorkamer and its community is necessary for creating a feeling of inclusion and belonging. Power dynamics also play an essential role in creating and developing this relationship since De Voorkamer, like other organisations, has its hierarchy at play. Thus, to make sure all voices are heard, a co-creation process is prioritised within the team. Through this process, De Voorkamer empowers community members by involving them in decision-making processes and, in turn, treats them as equals. This aspect of the organisation's practices makes De Voorkamer an inclusive society (Kangas- Müller et al., 2023). Thus, the methods by which integration and inclusion are done within De Voorkamer are ways in which community members, especially newcomers and refugees, are empowered to be part of their integration

process (Ghorashi & Rast, 2018). Having said this, my observations of participant feedback suggests that this co-creation process could be developed further to meet the needs of their perceived growing number of volunteers and participants.

Though De Voorkamer is perceived to impact society positively, all processes can be improved. Thus, some suggestions for improvement include increasing the accessibility of information about events and programs, especially when it comes to people who do not have access to technology. There should be more of a focus on ways by which De Voorkamer can be promoted by word of mouth and other community boards in addition to their current partnerships. Furthermore, the employees and volunteers at De Voorkamer should be better equipped with the basic information needed to support and guide visitors and newcomers facing social, mental and/or economic problems. In this way, De Voorkamer can become a bridge towards the service their participants might need to learn to exist in Dutch society.

In this way, the organisation would better organise itself and use its leverage that they built through the participants trust to better benefit individuals. Thus, if individuals face different barriers which the organisation managed to overcome through their ways, they can better understand what type of needs (beyond a safe space), their clients need in terms of risk of exclusion, economical independence, access to housing, health services, and, care and social services. They can liaise with local and regional systems which are applicable, to explore new ways to access such services. This could thus be a way in which they expand onto their current positioning and impact as an organisation.

So far, the organisation's impact has been at an individual level. This is due to providing such a safe space, a feeling of belonging and community, with a spillover effect on a person's mental well-being. However, this organisation has significant potential to take further steps to create a more profound social impact. At a societal level, the type of work De Voorkamer is doing is already significant as the value of inclusion and belonging enables people to feel supported in informal ways. In the absence of such schemes, these individuals may be at risk of social exclusion, which could lead to various negative consequences, depending on their individual socioeconomic circumstances and personal realities.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

In conclusion, when considering the limitations of this research, potential bias must be acknowledged due to the subjective nature of the ethnographic study conducted by a single researcher. This could have limited the understanding of De Voorkamer's perceived impact. Additionally, while the qualitative study provided rich insights into the organisation's perceived impact on its community, it may have yet to capture in full the broader societal impact, particularly regarding long-term effects that are challenging to anticipate. Another area for improvement is the limited number of recommendations provided in the study, as participants expressed gratitude towards De Voorkamer, making it difficult to provide critical feedback. Lastly, a limitation of this study was my limited access to information regarding funding procedures, partnerships and statistical information about the growth of the organisation's participation rate.

Nevertheless, the research provided various results that can contribute to De Voorkamers future. Firstly, the research supports Edwards et al.'s (2012) "Modelling Social Impact" theory, which suggests that social impact formation begins at an individual level and gains strength through network generation. The findings of this study also align with Edwards et al.'s research on the impact modelling process, which highlights the potential for a broader understanding of long-term and short-term social impact within local research. Therefore, in line with Edwards et al. (2012), conducting more research on the social impact created by local actions and organisations is recommended to develop a social way of measuring an action or an organisation's impact. Through this research, an individualistic approach to understanding a community organisation's perceived social impact has been created and presented to add on to the current scholary research being conducted regarding social impact and community organising.

Further research is recommended in community-based organisations to better understand the process behind social impact in these contexts. It would also be helpful to focus on the long-term impact of community organisations within their respective communities. This information would encourage future community initiatives and assist current and future organisations in their impact planning. This is linked to the way this research can be used as a practical and constructive way De Voorkamer can build onto the great work they are doing within society. On a social level, this research indirectly aims to improve the lives of the De Voorkamer community by suggesting ways the organisation can

enhance their way of work. In addition, this research showcases the importance of community organisations and bottom-up approaches and hopes to influence future funding and policy making decisions around such initiatives.

In conclusion, this study emphasises the significance of community-led spaces like De Voorkamer, highlighting the encouragement of inclusion and belonging within a welcoming setting that caters to immigrants, refugees, and Dutch nationals. By prioritising the creation of relationships among individuals from diverse backgrounds, De Voorkamer generates social capital, leading to extensive social impact. Thus, answering the question; 'How do the community members perceive the social impact of De Voorkamer?', De Voorkamer is perceived by its community to be successfully creating a space where community members can feel at home and establish meaningful connections to enrich their lives.

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Appendix 1: Fieldwork Report

During my fieldwork at De Voorkamer, I aimed to contribute to the organisation directly through having a practical role within the organisation and also through my research. This is because I had a role within the communications team which entailed weekly tasks I needed to do for the continuous running of the organisation.

When it comes to my contribution from a researcher's perspective, I conducted my research to provide feedback to the organisation about how their social impact creation is being perceived internally and externally by participants and volunteers. My thesis is my contribution to the organisation as it is research that the organisation thought would be useful to better understand their role within their community and whether they are achieving their impact plans.

My role within communications was a previous role given to other students and interns within the organisation. This role entailed creating social media posts about events happening at De Voorkamer or events that had already happened. This role was crucial for the organisation since it made events more accessible to their participants. Thus, it was a way of marketing and communicating events to their social media audiences.

This role helped me tap into my creative side since it entailed writing posts in an easy-to-understand and exciting format and creating stories and posters for De Voorkamer's Instagram and Facebook pages. I would have to stay updated with the images taken during events to use them for advertising. I would also use pre-existing design material to create new posters for upcoming events.

To accomplish the above role, I worked two times a week, from nine in the morning to five-thirty in the evening. I would be mostly physically present to conduct my role within the space. My week would start with a communications team meeting where we would see what events are coming up and what social media posts and stories need to be scheduled for the week. I would then gather information and material for the posts from people running the events and ensure all the information was correct. I schedule these posts and designs and

write the material for them. Then, on my second day of work for the week, I would use that day to finish off any communications duties I had left and continue working on my research about the organisation. My ability to focus on my research at De Voorkamer itself aided me in capturing observations in real time and analysing them right after they happened, which helped me gather data more efficiently.

As De Voorkamer employs many interns, it was easy to fit into the team dynamic since it felt like a position needed to be filled, with clear-cut tasks to be done. Since students and interns were commonplace within the organisation, the organisational members were used to having interns around. They were very welcoming and grateful for my contribution to the team. Through my role, I noticed De Voorkamer's significant dependency on unpaid work since most of their events are in operation thanks to volunteers. This worked to my advantage as it is an organisation that did not look at me as a student but rather as someone contributing to their aim.

Interestingly, my favourite duty within the team was not my formal role as an intern (which entailed research and communications). However, it was the by-monthly duty I would share with another team member, which entailed me having to help cook lunch for the team. This role was informal yet significant as it helped us all bond and made me feel like I was not cooking as a duty but making lunch for my colleagues to enjoy.

Overall, my fieldwork was a very positive experience as I learned many things. I learned formal and valuable things, such as how to market events through social media and design things, but I also learned how to work in a team. Through the interactions I had during my fieldwork, I learned that communicating and creating a relationship with those around me influenced my performance within the team greatly. Lastly, something I value above all else is the way I was trusted to interact with participants and help them feel welcome. This taught me a lot of social skills, which aided me personally and helped me build my confidence since I had to start conversations with many people I did not know. Thanks to my role at De Voorkamer, I got to meet many interesting people, learn valuable things, help connect with the community, and grow.

Appendix 2: Interview Guide

2.A: Interview with full time members of De Voorkamer team:

What is your role?

How long have you been working with De Voorkamer?

How many hours do you work with the organisation weekly?

Why did you choose to work at De Voorkamer?

How would you describe the impact De Voorkamer creates?

What social impact do you think the organisation creates in participant's lives?

What impact do you think De Voorkamer creates within the surrounding neighbourhood, if any?

How do you think this can be improved to create a greater impact?

In what way does your work influence your life?

Is there anything else you would like to add?

2.B: Interview with volunteers of De Voorkamer team:

What is your role?

How long have you been volunteering with De Voorkamer?

How much time do you spend working with de Voorkamer (such as the time spent at events and planning)?

Why have you chosen to volunteer with De Voorkamer?

Why do you volunteer with that/those specific event/s?

How would you describe the impact De Voorkamer has?

What social impact do you think the organisation creates in participant's lives?

What impact do you think De Voorkamer creates within the surrounding neighbourhood, if any?

How do you think this can be improved to create a greater impact?

In what way does your work influence your life?

Is there anything else you would like to add?

2.C: Interview with participants of De Voorkamer events:

How long have you been attending De Voorkamer events?

What type of events do you enjoy attending?

Why do you choose to attend these events?

What makes you want to keep coming to their events?

Why do you think peple attend these events?

What type of effect do you think De Voorkamer has on the community?

How have these events effected your life?

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix 3: Observation List

- People's understanding of social impact and what impact De Voorkamer is trying to make.

- Values and goals of the organisation and the way they are relevant or not in their daily operations.

- The way full time members interact with volunteers and participants.

- The relationship between volunteers and full-time workers.

- The relationship full-time workers have with participants.

- The way an event's impact is taken into consideration in the planning process.

- The way the organisation's daily decisions and actions impact the organisation itself, the community, and prospective participants.

- The organisation's partnerships (including funding agreement) and how this impacts their operations and goals.

- The way different people speak about and describe De Voorkamer.

Appendix 4: Table of Interviewees

	RESPONDENTS
VOLUNTEERS	Respondent A is a female volunteer who has been attending events and also volunteering at De Voorkamer for around one and a half years. She is between 30-39 years old.
	Respondent D is a male volunteer who has been attending events and also volunteering for around one year. He is between 20-29 years old.
PARTICIPANT OF EVENTS	Respondent B is a male participant who has been attending De Vookramer's events for around a month. He is between 20-29 years old.
	Respondent C is a male participant who has been attending De Voorkamer's events for around four months. He is between 20-29 years old.
	Respondent E is a male participant and has been attending De Voorkamer's events for around three months. He is between 40-49 years old.
ORGANISATIONAL MEMBERS	Respondent F is between 30-39 years old and their gendre and the employment period at De Voorkamer will not be provided due to the limited amount of employees which would make the respondent identifiable.
	Respondent G is between 30-39 years old and their gendre and the employment period at De Voorkamer will not be provided due to the limited amount of employees which would make the respondent identifiable.