

Kampen Flood Brigade

In partnership with the OECD Studies on Water: Stakeholder Engagement for Inclusive Water Governance

Published On: 03 November 2015

Organisation: Groot Salland, Dutch Water Authority

Country: Netherlands

Level of government: Local government

Sector: Environmental protection

Type: Organisational Design

Launched in: 2003

Overall development time: 1 year(s)

Link to the innovation's website

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Description

Another example of operational stakeholder engagement takes place in the Netherlands. In 2003, a “flood brigade” was established by volunteers, along with the regional water authority, to contribute to flood protection in Kampen. Citizens willing to contribute follow a specific training and must be in good physical condition to help maintain removable structures such as stop logs and valves.

The regional water authority organises two annual gatherings for the flood brigade members: one aims to train new volunteers and encourage social cohesion among people involved and the second aims to share information about broader flood protection issues, safety and urban heritage. The brigade is organised in teams with clear tasks established in a manual.

Team leaders' performance is evaluated every year by their colleagues. The initiative has spread throughout the country and regional water authorities provide training for volunteers to act as “dike guards” and monitor the condition of the flood protection infrastructure on a regular basis.

Why the innovation was developed

- The historical Hanze-town Kampen and its hinterland are protected by a unique system against floodings from the river IJssel. Since 1995 and 1998, inhabitants value safety against flooding.
- The flood protection was completed in 2006. It stretches over 2 km historical urban area (protected city front), including 1.5 km old bailey and over 200 historical houses. At 84 locations removable structures (stop logs and valves) are part of the flood protection system.
- Preservation of the historical waterfront (local political choice).
- From the start, citizens have been involved. Members of the brigade have the wish to act, to see results, to take responsibility and to make a difference.
- Government
- Water institutions
- Civil society
- Fire brigade, army, police

Results

Efficiency

- Cost-saving: Execution by a profit organisation would multiply the costs (availability, standby, action).
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Effectiveness

- Sustainability/resilience: A substantial practical contribution to a resilient local society and collective self-reliance.
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Service quality

Responsiveness:

- Acceptability/ownership of stakeholders involved: Awareness of citizens that they live in a risk area for flooding, Willingness to contribute to flood protection (in euros and in kind), water-inclusive thinking by the citizens.

Development

Design

The Groot Salland water authority, and then the Kampen Municipality.

Testing

- The RWA provides the coordinator and an executive team. All team leaders, the executive team and the coordinators hold a yearly evaluation meeting.
 - All members give their evaluations to the coordinator in writing.
 - The police and the fire brigade hold evaluation meetings yearly with the coordinator.
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Implementation

Tools used:

- Advertisement for volunteers, selection of volunteers, communication with volunteers. The RWA organizes two gatherings yearly.
- In September the yearly training event takes place. This is also a network even: coffee, talks, presentations. After the training the RWA provides the volunteers with a traditional meal.
- Volunteers are rewarded with a fee of EUR 51.
- In Spring, information sharing on flood protection, safety, urban heritage, and historical Hanze-trade is sometimes combined with site visits at the contact meetings.
- Occasionally, the Flood Brigade is activated for promotional activities of the regional water authority.

Resources used:

- Total yearly costs of the Flood Brigade amount is EUR 100 000 (expenses of the RWA).
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Challenges and solutions

- Earlier experiences with dike guard organisation has been of use. An additional challenge has been the access of private houses (individual property), as some of the structures have to be raised inside houses.
- Development/deliberation: In the early phase, how to mobilize the voluntary brigade and how to train them were issues.
- Implementation /operation: Besides the yearly exercises, the real application in crisis situations is incidental. In this situation, the challenge is to keep up the motivation of the volunteers.
- Conception/design: The concept is well documented. The execution is disciplined. Each team has a clear task, laid down in a manual. A protocol for access to private property is operational.

Lessons Learned

Lessons Learned

- Build the network on the interests of the volunteers, their passion is the driver for success.
 - Based on their interest, related information on flood protection was welcomed.
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Conditions for success

- A clear need, a clear appeal, a clear task, and membership providing status and social coherence.
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Other information

The Flood Brigade has now existed for 10 years. Most of them are active from the start. When they reach the age of 70, volunteers have to withdraw. No specific advertisements are needed to keep the amount of 200 volunteers. Around 20 candidates register yearly on the website of the RWA.

Similar with the Kampen Flood Brigade, most Dutch water authorities appointed 'dike guard'-teams, surveying the condition of the flood protection infrastructure 24/7, in critical periods. These dike guards are civil volunteers. Training programs exist to prepare these volunteers for their task. For more information, visit: <http://www.wgs.nl/veilige-dijken/hoogwaterbrigade/>.

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