

AMSTERDAM RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR SOCIETAL INNOVATION

APPROPRIATE ANSWERS FOR A SOCIETY IN FLUX



The Amsterdam Research Institute for Societal Innovation (ARISI), is looking for solutions to social issues in cooperation with scientists, educational bodies and professional practitioners. The ARISI is working actively on social innovation in urban environments such as Amsterdam, creating the best possible starting point for tomorrow's professionals.

Our world and our society are undergoing serious change. There is a clear trend towards greater individualisation, digitalisation, globalisation, decentralisation and more hands-off government. In such a situation, the emphasis on civil society becomes ever greater. A movement towards greater self-determination and voluntarism, de-legalisation and deregulation.

Together with or as co-creators with students, alumni, lecturers, professors, researchers, practitioners from the professional field, peer support workers and volunteers, through its research ARISI makes a contribution to finding appropriate answers to issues raised within a society in flux.

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RESEARCH GROUPS

POVERTY AND PARTICIPATION

Self-determination and self-sufficiency by ability will be central pillars of tomorrow's civil society. At present, many public service providers in Amsterdam focus on residents who display unhealthy or insufficiently healthy financial behaviour. If these services are insufficiently effective, they can impede the self-management of citizens, in financial terms as well as in many other areas.

Through its research, the Research group in Poverty and Participation aims to make a contribution to improving the effectiveness and professionalism of implementing bodies in the social sphere in order to improve the self-management of the residents of Amsterdam.

How can citizens autonomously develop and maintain the healthiest possible financial behaviour?

To achieve the best possible results in this research, the research group will identify those citizens needing support, what support they need at an individual level and promote the greatest possible degree of self-management as well as identify which interventions and methods contribute to effective, sustainable poverty and participation policy in Amsterdam.



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COORDINATION OF URBAN ISSUES

As a dynamic metropolis, Amsterdam has a stack of urban issues at district and neighbourhood level. Decentralisation and hands-off government are promoting a fragmented approach. Urban problems are best solved by bundling and coordinating knowledge and expertise. The research group Coordination of Urban Issues combines concrete, relevant knowledge of a particular urban issue with academic knowledge of effective coordination.

Research within this research group takes place within different geographically defined areas, each with its own concrete research and innovation agenda. Each project is focused around the question whether coordination of knowledge and experience can contribute to specific solutions for concrete urban issues at district and neighbourhood level.

How can varying insights from theory and practice be joined up to arrive at the best possible approach to urban issues?

The results of this research are then translated into general academic and applicable knowledge, contribute to strengthening coordination within urban practice and provide upcoming professionals with tools for working within an urban environment.



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COMMUNITY CARE

Amsterdam has a relatively high number of people with a need for care or support. As the city also has a highly diverse population, social cohesion is also under pressure. The Community Care research group investigates how people with a disability can play a full role in society given these urban issues.

How can people with a disability participate fully in an (urban) society?

One of the results of the decentralisation of tasks concerning long-term support and care is that Amsterdam plays a significant part in the creation of conditions for the retention of self-sufficiency and the promotion of integration of people with a disability. In this light, the research group explores how care in and care by society can be realised for this population group in the city.

An important area of focus within this research is the role played by professionals. Three themes are central to the research group's research programme: informal provision of care and cooperation with professionals, network development and network reinforcement, social inclusion and the role of professionals.



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CULTURAL AND SOCIAL DYNAMICS

Our society is in a state of great flux, both in social and cultural terms. Tendencies such as globalisation, digitalisation and decentralisation are changing the design of the cultural and social sectors of our welfare state. The research group Cultural and Social Dynamics examines how Amsterdam remains viable in this context society, given its nature as a large urban metropolis.

How can our dynamic society retain its viability in social and cultural terms in a large city such as Amsterdam?

How does the role of cultural expression change in such a dynamic, diverse society? How can community and participation be retained? By undertaking practice-oriented and theoretical research, the research group aims to find answers to these and other social and societal issues.

Together with other professors, lecturers and students, the research group makes an academic contribution to the identification of developments in social and cultural practice in Amsterdam, thereby equipping established and upcoming professionals to anticipate changes in society in the best possible way.



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IMPLEMENTATION AND EFFECTIVENESS IN YOUTH CARE SERVICES

In order to grow into adults, children need a safe and caring environment and need to get the opportunity to participate in society. In some cases, children and their families need help in order to achieve this.

The research group Implementation and Effectiveness in Youth Care Services investigates the desired design and delivery of services for children and their families. The group provides practical knowledge, tools and instruments to improve youth care services.

What services contribute most successfully to the safe and healthy development of urban youth?

All projects are practice-based and focus on implementation issues, child safety and urban education. Project outcomes add to professional practice and social work education and help to built effective services for children and their families in the urban area of Amsterdam.



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LEGAL MANAGEMENT

Quality of law and regulations is determined not only by content. Equally important is the quality of the execution. Regulations that are not implemented or enforced, justice that can only be obtained at great cost or after a long wait, or which is poorly explained, is of low quality for citizens and businesses.

The increasing possibilities in the area of knowledge and information technology, increasing attention to compliance and legal quality care and the increasing range of positions within the legal profession are giving rise to new questions for the Legal Management research group. Key themes within the research carried out by the Legal Management research group include de-legalisation, effective design of processes, use of digital aids and job differentiation.

How can legal services for citizens and organisations best be organised?

The research group identifies best practices in the area of the organisation of legal services, from which lessons for the future can be taken.



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MANAGEMENT OF CULTURAL CHANGE

The research group Management of Cultural Change carries out research into and advises on changes of culture within organisations and neighbourhoods. Cultures arise when groups of people organise themselves. It is not the case that these cultures automatically make the best possible contribution to the goals of the organisation. For this reason, many organisations experience a need, after some time, to redesign their culture.

Our changing society also demands changes in culture within public services within the city of Amsterdam. Decentralisation means that more cooperation has to take place between more different services. Differences in culture can lead to friction. A more hands-off government and increasing civic participation also requires a shift in organisational culture. Finally, this research group investigates how integrity, at the heart of a healthy society and economy, can best be promoted within organisations.

What changes of culture within organisations and neighbourhoods are necessary in relation to urban issues such as decentralisation, civic participation and issues of integrity?

The research group involves students from Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences in its research, giving these upcoming professionals a sound preparation for their vocational work.



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OUTREACH WORK AND INNOVATION

A section of our society finds itself in a vulnerable position. Many of these citizens are not reached by the regular provision of help and services. The research group Outreach Work and Innovation investigates how these citizens can escape from their socially perturbing position and how they can become self-sufficient.

How can professionals help increase the chances of recovery, social advancement and self-sufficiency of vulnerable citizens?

The central question in the research is how outreach professionals can better make use of the capacities of citizens of concern and their social networks. How they can effectively support these citizens towards self-sufficiency. And how to deal with clustered problems, i.e. (usually) a combination of psycho-social, material and physical problems, often linked to psychiatric issues.

The research group focuses in its research on the synergy between formal and informal care, between formal and informal education, between theoretical and practical knowledge development and between area-specific and recovery oriented outreach work.



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YOUTH SPOT

Both society and youth culture are permanently shifting in Amsterdam. The Youth Spot research group investigates how youth work must innovate to retain its connection to young people and society while at the same time improving in terms of professionalism and effectiveness.

The research group focuses on three issues: development-oriented working, diversity and participation. How can youth work offer the best possible support to the personal, social and societal development of young people? How does youth work relate to urban issues such as diversity and social exclusion? And how can youth work strengthen participation by young people in a society that is shifting from a welfare state towards a participatory society?

How can youth work innovate to accommodate perpetually changing (youth) culture and developments within society?

The practice-oriented research by Youth Spot contributes to professionalisation of youth work throughout the Netherlands. The projects are carried out by mixed teams made up of youth workers, lecturers, researchers and students. Youth Spot organises conferences, gives workshops, lectures and guest seminars, creates educational materials and method descriptions and publishes books and articles.



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DEVELOPING THE TALENTS OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN VULNERABLE SITUATIONS (RAAK-PRO)

CASE STUDY

How is it possible for all young people, including those in disadvantaged circumstances and young people with disabilities, to participate more fully in tomorrow's civil society and solve problems themselves, instead of making use of expensive, specialised care?

In our society, success in life increasingly depends on people making the best possible use of their own talents and their own efforts. Talent programmes are used to help develop the talents of young people who have not been able to get ahead by themselves or with the usual degree of support.

The idea that such talent-oriented approaches actually have a positive effect on participation in society by young people in vulnerable situations is as yet unsupported by scientific research. However, this approach corresponds to the assumption that environmental factors (social support) and individual factors (self-image and self-control) play a role in preventing problematic behaviour.

In this project, researchers from ARISI filter out success factors from existing practice and attempt to give insight into these and enable them to be passed on. They will apply knowledge and experience gained in the field across the entire chain through publications and implementation in the development of education and the professional field.

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Master's, professionalisation and doctoral programmes

The Graduate School is part of ARISI, offering education and innovation in professional practice on the basis of knowledge developed within the ARISI research groups.

The Graduate School offers three master's programmes focusing on professional practice:

- ▶ Master Legal Management
- ▶ Master Social Work
- ▶ Master Urban Management

The programmes offered by the Graduate School also include activities geared to further professionalisation of professional practice in the form of courses, classes, development processes, lectures, masterclasses and seminars. Finally, the Graduate School works on the development of education and support for researchers (lecturers) working on (practice-oriented) doctoral theses within ARISI.

CONTACT

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GOOD PRACTICES DEBT SERVICES AMSTERDAM

CASE STUDY

How can the fragmented implementation of debt services in Amsterdam be made more effective?

At present, seven social services providers (known in Dutch as “Madi’s”) implement debt services in Amsterdam. They all follow – within the frameworks set by the local authority as the client – relatively unique policies. There is as yet still little evidence-based knowledge about effective support in the world of debt services. By obtaining greater insight into what does and what doesn’t work, the effectiveness of debt services can be greatly improved.

The Good Practices research into Debt Services in Amsterdam by the research group Poverty and Participation is geared to the description of the various implementation practices.

By arriving at a methodical description of these debt services activities, researchers from this research group investigate which parts of the practical implementation are (plausibly) more effective than others, and why. At the same time, the knowledge present in the field is ‘tapped’, systematically described and assessed as to the plausibility of its effectiveness.

In this way, the research is drawn from two sources (practical and academic), in order to provide better insight into the fragmented implementation of debt services and give practice-oriented advice on this.

AMSTERDAM RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR SOCIETAL INNOVATION

As society is transformed, professional practice follows, taking on other forms and demanding further development of knowledge. Working on a more just and viable society – core tasks of Social Work and Law at AUAS – demands new academic foundations.

Various research groups with ARISI make a contribution to this changing society by carrying out practice-based research. This means future professionals studying within the various social, cultural, legal and behavioural bachelor’s and master’s programmes at Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences are well prepared for and able to help shape professional practice within this civil society.

The research carried out by ARISI contributes to key areas of focus within our university, including Urban Management, Urban Vitality and Enterprise.

CONTACT

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