

# TURNING THE GREEN HEART INTO AN ATTRACTIVE CANOEING AREA



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# INTRODUCTION

- Topic:
  - Findings of our research on canoeing in the Green Heart Area
- Our team:
  - International group of seven students from Wageningen University
  - Study background in Tourism and International Development
- Our project:
  - Commissioned by Gerard Agterberg (Programmabureau Groene Hart)
  - Started during the Versnellingkamer



# CONTENT OF THE PRESENTATION

- The research
- Roles of stakeholders
- Potential of canoeing in the Green Heart
- Limitations of canoeing in the Green Heart
- Conclusions
- Advice for stakeholders
- Advice for future research (HBO)
- Questions



# THE RESEARCH

- Research question:
  - What is the potential of turning the Green Heart into an attractive canoeing area?
- Sub questions:
  - What is the current perspective of regional and local stakeholders on the present and future state of canoeing in the Green Heart?
  - Which stakeholders can play a role in developing canoeing in the Green Heart?



# THE RESEARCH

- Qualitative research on canoeing in the Green Heart
- Methods used:
  - 14 in-depth interviews with entrepreneurs, canoe clubs, municipalities, provinces and other stakeholders
  - Phone interviews with schools and tourism agencies in and around the Green Heart



# THE RESEARCH

## **The Significance of the research:**

- Provide insights in views from different stakeholders on canoeing in the Green Heart area
- Provide clear advice for stakeholders
- Explore a potential market (schools)
- Provide creative and feasible ideas for future projects





# THE RESEARCH

## **The Limitations of the research**

- An international team working in a Dutch environment
- Short time period



## RESULTS SUB-QUESTION 1

- What is the current perspective of regional and local stakeholders on the present and future state of canoeing in the Green Heart?





# CANOE CLUBS & TKBN

## ○ Current state:

- Are happy with some of the improvements that have been made
- Satisfied about cooperation with other clubs
- Appreciate the increased attention for canoeing
- Physical infrastructure is still lacking

## ○ Future state:

- Ideally a landing place every 4 km
- More arrangements
- For see growing number of individual canoeists
- Natural beauty of the area should be protected



# ENTREPRENEURS

- Current state:
  - Praise beauty of the area
  - Diverse market
- Future state:
  - Mapping
  - Collaboration with governmental institutions
  - Complex organizational structure
  - Business is steady or declining



# MUNICIPALITY

## ○ Current state:

- Canoeing perceived as small
- Low return on investment
- Perception that people want passive recreation
- Focus on sloepen

## ○ Future state:

- No concrete vision
- Potentially low return on investment
- Prefer private-private partnerships
- Canoeing combined with other activities



# REGIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

## ○ Current state:

- Canoeing is small
- Low return on investment
- Complex organizational structure

## ○ Future state:

- Desire a better organized canoe network
- Desire a better organized and focused promotion
- Stress importance of making the benefits clear
- Potentially low return on investment
- Canoeing will remain small



## RESULTS SUB-QUESTION 2

- Which stakeholders can play a role in developing canoeing in the Green Heart?



# CANOE CLUBS AND TKBN

## **Internal view**

- Volunteering
- Advisory role (new routes)

## **External view**

- Checking the routes and reporting if something maintenance is required
- Need to promote (initiating a canoeing event e.g.)





# ENTREPRENEURS

## **Internal view**

- Willingness to invest but with support from others stakeholders (municipality, water board etc.)
- Acknowledging their responsibility in being active and taking initiative

## **External view**

- Work together and cooperate with other entrepreneurs
- To find other solutions for subsidies and not only relying on the province and municipality



# MUNICIPALITY

## **Internal view**

- Facilitating public-private partnership
- Maintenance of the routes if part of the existing budget

## **External view**

- Responsible of providing physical infrastructure in cooperation with entrepreneurs and canoe clubs
- Facilitating public-private partnership (flexible regulations & clear contact person)



# PROVINCE

## **Internal view (Utrecht)**

- Maintaining the route networks they created, not investing in further development of the routes

## **External view**

- To invest (financially) in canoe networks
- A partner in creating a good investment climate for water recreation



# PROGRAMME BUREAU GREEN HEART

## **Internal view**

- Bringing stakeholders together
- Facilitating promotion, advice and support
- Solving bottlenecks

## **External view**

- To bring stakeholders together

The internal view matches with the external views.



# VERENIGING REGIO WATER

## ○ **Internal view:**

- Improve recreational & economic potential of the Green Heart.
- Bringing parties together
- Solving bottlenecks
- Promote potential of Green Heart



# OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

- Waterboards (Waterschappen):
  - Main role maintaining quality & safety of waterways
  - Responsible for providing permits
  - Could play potential larger role in maintaining canoe routes
- ANWB
  - Promotion & mapping





A person is seen from behind, paddling a canoe on a calm river. The background is filled with tall reeds and a clear blue sky. The image is slightly blurred, giving it a soft, natural feel.

## ○ Recreatieschappen

- Neutral party, can bring together different stakeholders
- Can take up task to develop canoe routes

## ○ Natuurmonumenten

- Educational role



# POTENTIAL OF CANOEING IN THE GREEN HEART

- Trends:
  - Increase in number of elderlies
  - Growing interest in nature, peace, and healthy activities
  - Growing interest in action & adventure
  - Short holidays in Netherlands is growing
- Current state:
  - Beautiful area, with plenty of natural resources
  - Increased focus on small water recreation
  - Existing canoe routes
  - Enthusiastic entrepreneurs & willingness to cooperate in certain areas
  - Supportive organizations (PBGH & VRW) that bring all stakeholders together
- A potential new market for canoeing (schools)

# LIMITATIONS

- Weather dependent
- Budget cuts
- Limited willingness to invest from government
- Stakeholders tend to stay in their comfort zone, rather than looking for alternative ways to operate (collaboration)
- Enthusiastic stakeholders are hindered by bureaucracy



# LIMITATIONS

- Complex organization structure
- Nobody feels responsible for investing money and maintenance of the canoeing network
- Canoeists are not assumed to be big spenders, economic benefits are limited
- Some routes are poorly maintained



# CONCLUSIONS

- There are gaps on how several stakeholders see themselves and how they were seen by other stakeholders
- There is a potential in combination with other activities for example with sloepen and other land and water based activities
- Some of the limitations arise out of the complex organizational structure, which makes it more difficult to set up collaborative relationships.





# ADVICES

## ○ Stakeholders:

- Pride with the brand “Groene Hart”
- Collaboration
- Clarifying organizational structure (role)
- Maximize the market potential → schools
- Look for other ways of funding, example :Crowd funding
- Strengthen online presence and promotion (TKBN)





# ADVICES

## ○ Green Heart Academy:

- Project for HBO students about an app for smart phones (Tourism and ICT HBO students working together)
- Make a video about water recreation in the Green Heart
- ACT project for WUR: comparing water recreation in Friesland and Green Heart
- Research on how many canoeists and how much money they spend



**THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!  
QUESTIONS?**

