SDG-based administration in the municipality of Rheden, the Netherlands

Accelerating contribution to the SDGs with a new operating system: the SDG-based network-organisation

In 2018, Rheden transformed its administrative structure based on five SDG clusters: welfare, sustainability, economical development, integrated area development, governance and security.

Initial situation

- Rheden is a medium-sized Dutch municipality in the eastern part of the province Gelderland with approx. 43,500 inhabitants.
- In previous years (2010-2016), the municipality’s management was characterised by an individual expert-based style of working. This led to a division into expert silos that complicated cooperation and efficient collaboration.
- The municipality’s employees did not work in multidisciplinary teams to meet the local society’s challenges.
- The framework of the SDGs delivered the required answer to solve these administrative challenges.
- The SDGs facilitate the organisational development towards a multidisciplinary challenge-driven municipal administration.

Objectives

- On the long run, behavioral changes towards a more sustainable society shall be obtained across Rheden and, if possible, beyond the municipality. Here, the global goals serve as framework of thinking.
- In 2018, Rheden developed a project and program monitor to supervise its progress in terms of Sustainable Development.
- In 2019, Rheden participates in various competitions. These include, among others, the European call for ‘Local Authorities: Partnerships for sustainable cities’
- Rheden aims at founding a Global Goal Academy which is intended to share experiences and good-practice examples with other municipalities.

Implementation

- As far as possible, project plans and activities have been aligned with the global goals. This includes the coalition agreement, the college strategic policy plan, program budgets and team plans.
- Rheden shares its experience with other Dutch municipalities, countries in the Global South (e.g. Rwanda, South Africa), disaster areas (St. Maarten) and other EU member states (e.g. Spain, Germany).
- In 2019, Rheden focuses on the internalization of the global-goal-thinking among the municipality’s employees and strengthening the team of global goals ambassadors. The aim is that every employee knows the global goals and delivers his/her contribution to their achievement.
- Additionally, the global-goal-thinking shall be spread among neighbourhoods, educational organisations and entrepreneurs. In this way it becomes a part of Rheden’s culture and society. Compared to other Dutch municipalities and beyond, this is an unique and distinctive bottom-up approach.

Achievements

Due to its activities in the field of the SDGs, the municipality of Rheden has already won several awards, among others:

- ‘Runner-up Most Sustainable Municipality of the Province’ (2018)