

CONSCIOUS KITCHEN

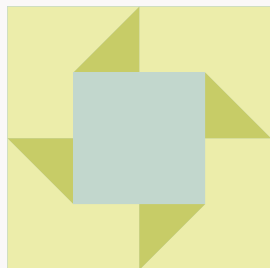
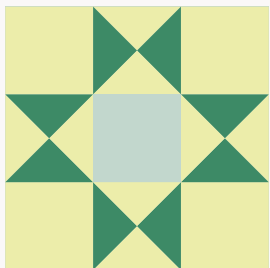
DEN HAAG

Authors:

J.E.K. Gutke, A.C. Lesser de Mello Silva,
A. Beekenkamp, C.F. Chevry, B.A.P. Polderman

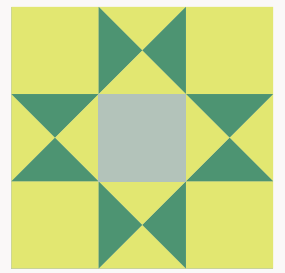
References:

1. Shapiro, P. (Personal communication, 1 november 2023)
2. Conscious Kitchen. (2019) About Conscious Kitchen. Accessed 2023-11-16 from <https://www.consciouskitchen.nl/about>



CONSCIOUS KITCHEN

DEN HAAG



COMMUNITY KITCHEN



THE STORY OF CONSCIOUS KITCHEN

D E N H A A G

Conscious Kitchen was founded by an international friend group that met during their studies. The group bonded over their passion for sustainability and past experiences of dumpster-diving in their home countries. To their dismay, that activity turned out to be illegal in the Netherlands. To fill the void in their green hearts and stomachs, they decided to establish a non-profit communal kitchen in order to rescue food from becoming waste. (1) With surplus food from the local markets, Conscious Kitchen wants to raise awareness about **sustainability**, foster a sense of **community**, and inspire reflection of **conscious living**. (2)



Ideals

The dining experience aims to inspire **conscious living** through being a space for reflection of our motivations in life.

The organization wants to promote **sustainability** through reducing food waste, sharing vegan meals and being a fertile soil where new sustainable ideas can grow.

Conscious Kitchen wants to be a platform that **strengthens communities** through bringing people together over food and creating new friendships



SOCIETAL CHALLENGE

This zine explores an issue Conscious Kitchen has come across over the years. As one of their ideals is community building, they want their dinners to be attended by many people from different backgrounds. However, this is not happening as much as they would like it to at the moment. Conscious Kitchen has trouble reaching out to diverse communities.

It is mainly a societal issue, as Conscious Kitchen would like to see a more diverse audience joining their dinner, as well as volunteering at their events. At the moment, there is still a typical crowd that volunteers and joins their Tuesday dinners, and their aim is to reach more people who are currently not reached.

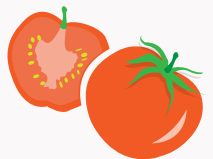
The challenge could be seen as two-fold:

Therefore, the core of the societal challenge presented by Conscious Kitchen is their current **limited outreach**. This is both in terms of quantity and diversity. The problem hinders their overall goal:

- **The quantity of the outreach**
Overall, they want to attract more attendees and volunteers from their present platforms like universities, as well as through other new channels

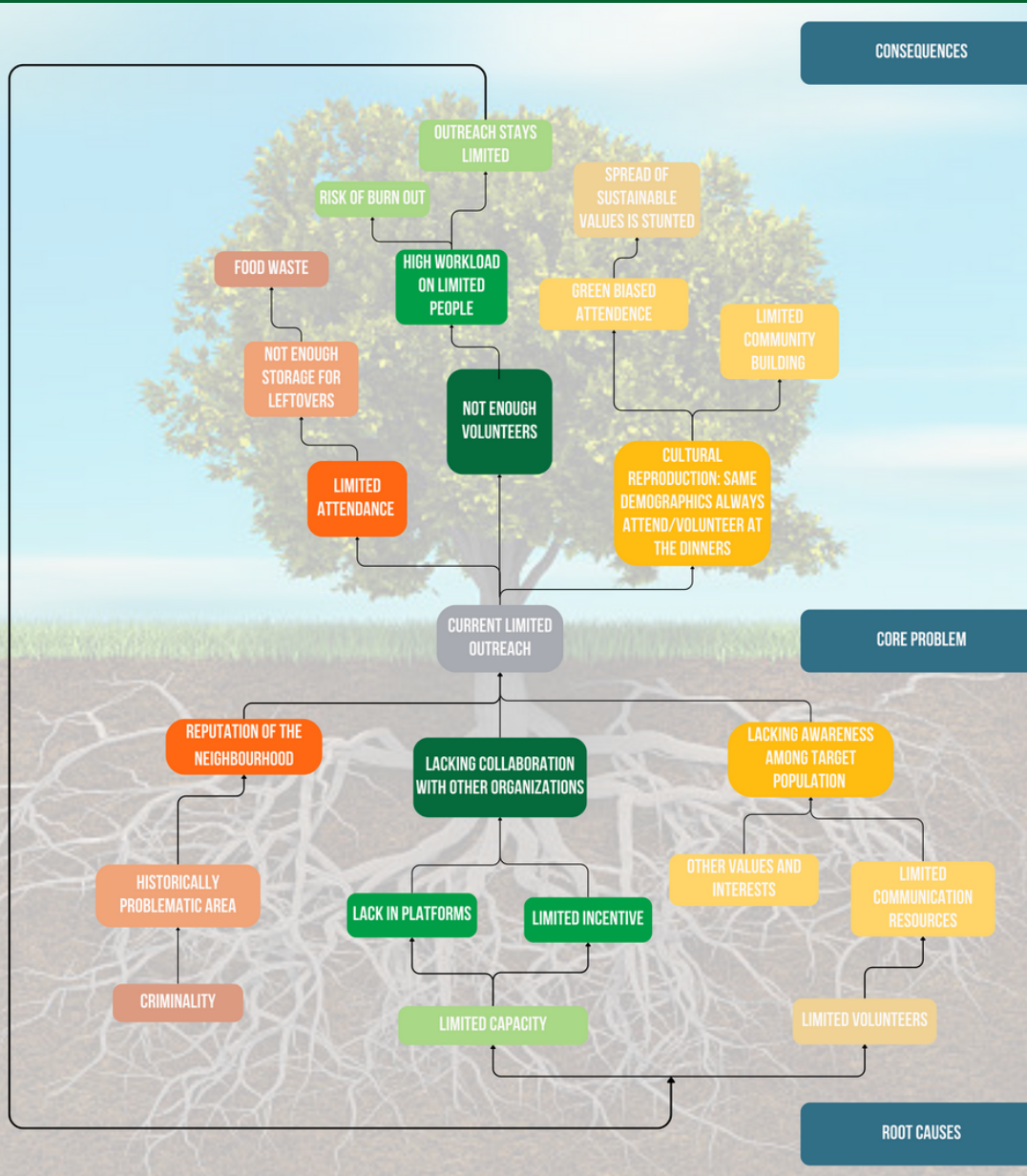
“To bring people together over the satisfaction of saving food” (2).

- **The lack of diversity in attendees**
Currently, the homogenous environment at the dinners might discourage new communities from attending. This problem reinforces the cultural reproduction at the dinners which in the end prevents community building.



PROBLEM TREE

SOCIETAL CHALLENGE ANALYSIS



Our core problem is the **current limited outreach** of Conscious Kitchen: that is, a relatively limited and homogenous group of attendees and volunteers. This leads to an environment that reproduces the current group's set values and that might not seem welcoming to actors who are not a part of this homogenous group in the first place. Conscious Kitchen's goal is to reach more actors from more diverse groups of society they aren't reaching yet.

The starting point of the problem-tree analysis was using the notes we made from our meetings with Conscious Kitchen. We found some key ideas in the notes that could be traced to either the causes or consequences of their limited outreach. From there we started to build our problem tree, always linking back to the core problem.

The process of building the problem-tree uncovered **feedback loops** between some of the causes and consequences.

The current limited organisational capacity and number of volunteers restricts the ability to handle collaborative projects with other organisations or to manage larger advertising and communication campaigns. These causes lead to Conscious Kitchen's current limited outreach. This, in turn, makes it difficult to recruit new volunteers, which means the collective is short on the helping hands needed to cope with the many tasks and projects of Conscious Kitchen. These include outreach activities, which then remain limited and the cycle is perpetuated.



WHO IS INVOLVED?

To tackle this societal challenge, a number of stakeholders are of great importance. The most important stakeholders are grouped into 5 categories.

Venue: The weekly dinners take place at 'De Helena', which is a community centre, consisting of many organisations. Conscious Kitchen rents this space from the organisation Goed Eten. Goed Eten, as well as De Volkskeuken, hosts similar dinners in this venue on different weekdays.



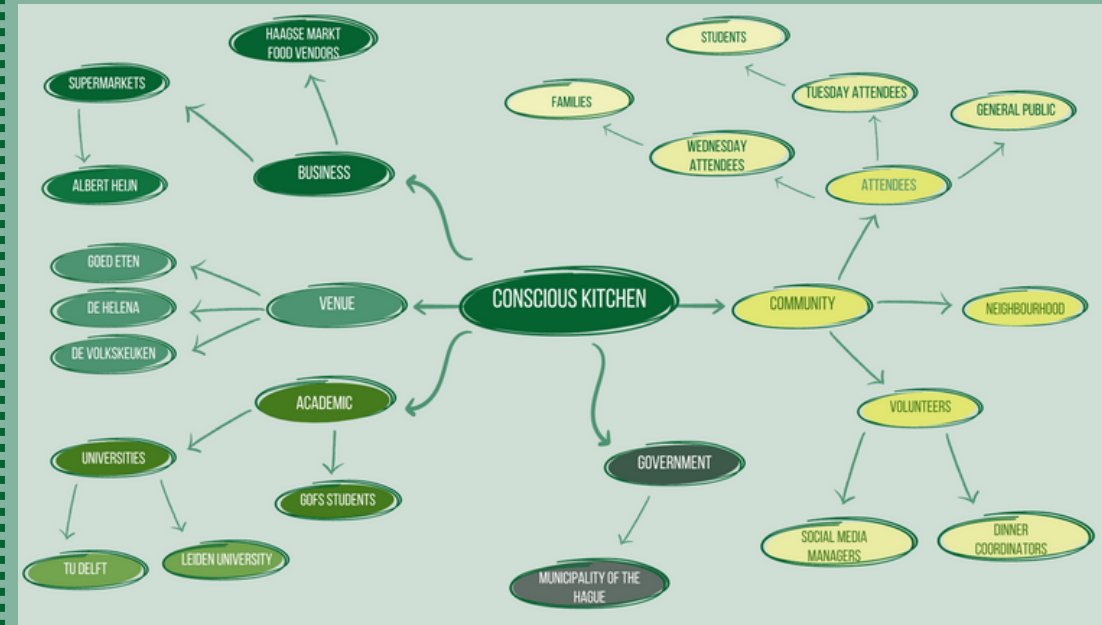
Business: Collaborating with The Haagse Markt is vital for rescuing food since the dinners mainly consist of leftover food, gathered at the market. Supermarkets, mainly Albert Heijn, provide additional necessary groceries.

Community: Volunteers are essential for facilitating the dinners because Conscious Kitchen is a non-profit organisation heavily relying on these volunteers. Attendees' participation is equally essential to tackle food waste by consuming the food.

Government: The municipality owns De Helena and enforces a food waste tax for market vendors, incentivising them to support Conscious Kitchen's cause.

Academic: Universities collaborate with Conscious Kitchen for research, such as Leiden University and TU Delft. Us, GofS students, are also part of this category.

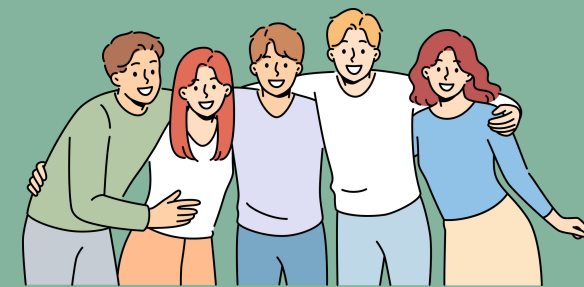
STAKEHOLDER MAP



In the map above, the important stakeholders for this societal challenge are visualised. They are categorised into 5 groups, and further specified.

All these stakeholders have a vital role in increasing the current outreach to ensure more diverse attendees' groups.

"We love attending the dinners at Conscious Kitchen!"





Potential new stakeholders should not be forgotten. With the aim of expanding its outreach, Conscious Kitchen will gain new attendees, building on their diverse community. Taking growth into account, Conscious Kitchen can reach potential new partners that want to work together, supporting their goals.

“As students, we love volunteering at Conscious Kitchen. It is a nice space where you can connect with the community and prepare a delicious meal”

“After a day at the “Haagse Markt” I have a lot of food leftovers, which I am happy to donate to Conscious Kitchen. Now it can be used for a nice dinner!”



TOWARDS CHANGE

Developing a Theory of Change was key in reimagining ways in which Conscious Kitchen could tackle its current obstacles. By first defining the main problem Conscious Kitchen was facing, we thought about a strategy by going backward in imagining solutions.

From the problem identified, we moved to the needs encountered, then to resources either available or possible to make use of, and then to the activities that can assist Conscious Kitchen in reaching its objectives. The short- and long-term outcomes could then be better visualized, helping to bring about motivation and drive towards change.

NEEDS

- **Structure of internal organization:** better task delegation brings up a healthier workload for everyone
- **Operationalizing knowledge transfer:** protocols, standard procedures, and instructions can be better laid out in order to save time that would otherwise be dedicated to training hours
- **Expansion through collaborations:** in order to create solid, long-lasting relationships that will strengthen Conscious Kitchen's community both in numbers and diversity
- **Funding:** by disposing of more funds, volunteers who would not be able to help during the dinners and other activities due to financial constraints could be compensated

(VERY VALUABLE) RESOURCES

- Volunteers
- Student associations
- Partner organizations
- Other communal kitchens
- Funding institutions



THEORY OF CHANGE

ACTIVITIES

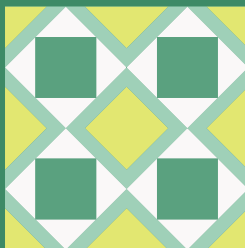
- **Campaigning at festivals:** food stalls at the various festivals held in The Hague and in other cities can offer valuable opportunities for new insights, initiatives, and collaborations, by reaching groups that are either already involved in food justice movements or not yet but would love to.
- **Funded workshops and dinners with university students:** Working with student associations and green offices can increase outreach and profitability. Combined with workshops, it is the recipe for success!
- **Exchange of experiences with other communal kitchens and NGOs:** Skills and recipe sharing are two ways in which communities can be strengthened and supported by each other. Past collaborations can also be revisited in order to reimagine solutions to problems that are common to one another.
- **Biannual evaluation of outcomes:** Evaluating the outcomes of the activities undertaken each semester can assist in future planning and learning activities.
- **Quarterly thematic dinners and events:** We propose four different themed dinners throughout the year, linked to both important dates in the activist calendar and important community-building holidays, in order to include a more diversified community.
- **Biannual fund application and diversification meetings:** This will ensure that time and capacity are allocated to financial activities that would otherwise not be prioritised.
- **Diversifying the campaign:** We suggest reaching out to audiences that do not integrate the group of "usual suspects".

Short-term outcomes:

- Increased visibility
- Higher financial capacity

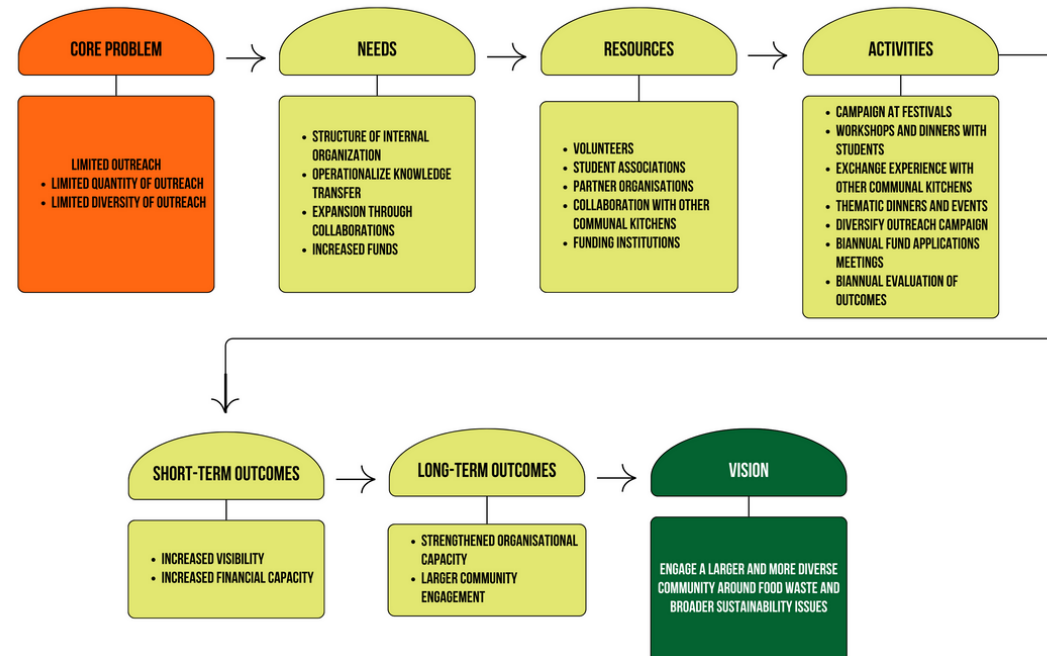
Long-term outcomes:

- Strengthened organisational capacity
- Larger community engagement



THEORY OF CHANGE

IMPROVE CONSCIOUS
KITCHEN'S OUTREACH



VISION

Engaging in a larger and more diverse community around food waste and broader sustainability issues



REFLECTION

We believe in this organization and want to see it thrive. We wanted to come up with actionable ideas for Conscious Kitchen to keep growing and promoting change, **one plate at a time.**

The Theory of Change is a dynamic tool because it evolves as the organisation learns and adapts, and we hope that this work is useful for Conscious Kitchen, in order to increase its community, ensure its sustainability and keep promoting a conscious lifestyle.