

What is SPRING?

Inequality between residents of Rotterdam is growing. Rotterdammers in vulnerable neighbourhoods are falling behind in terms of health and well-being. We believe that can and must improve.

We are SPRING, a research consortium of the Resilient Delta Initiative, a partnership between Erasmus University Rotterdam, Erasmus MC, Delft University of Technology and Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences.

Practice and academia

Our team consists of academic experts from the medical, technical and social domains. We work intensively with public authorities, companies, citizens and others. Together we conduct research in order to improve the lifestyles, living environment and life expectancy of residents of neighbourhoods like Rotterdam-Zuid, with the objective of reducing the differences in health and well-being in the city. We do that by means of long-term research with, for and by residents and other local parties. In this way, practice and scholarship go hand in hand at SPRING.

Convergence

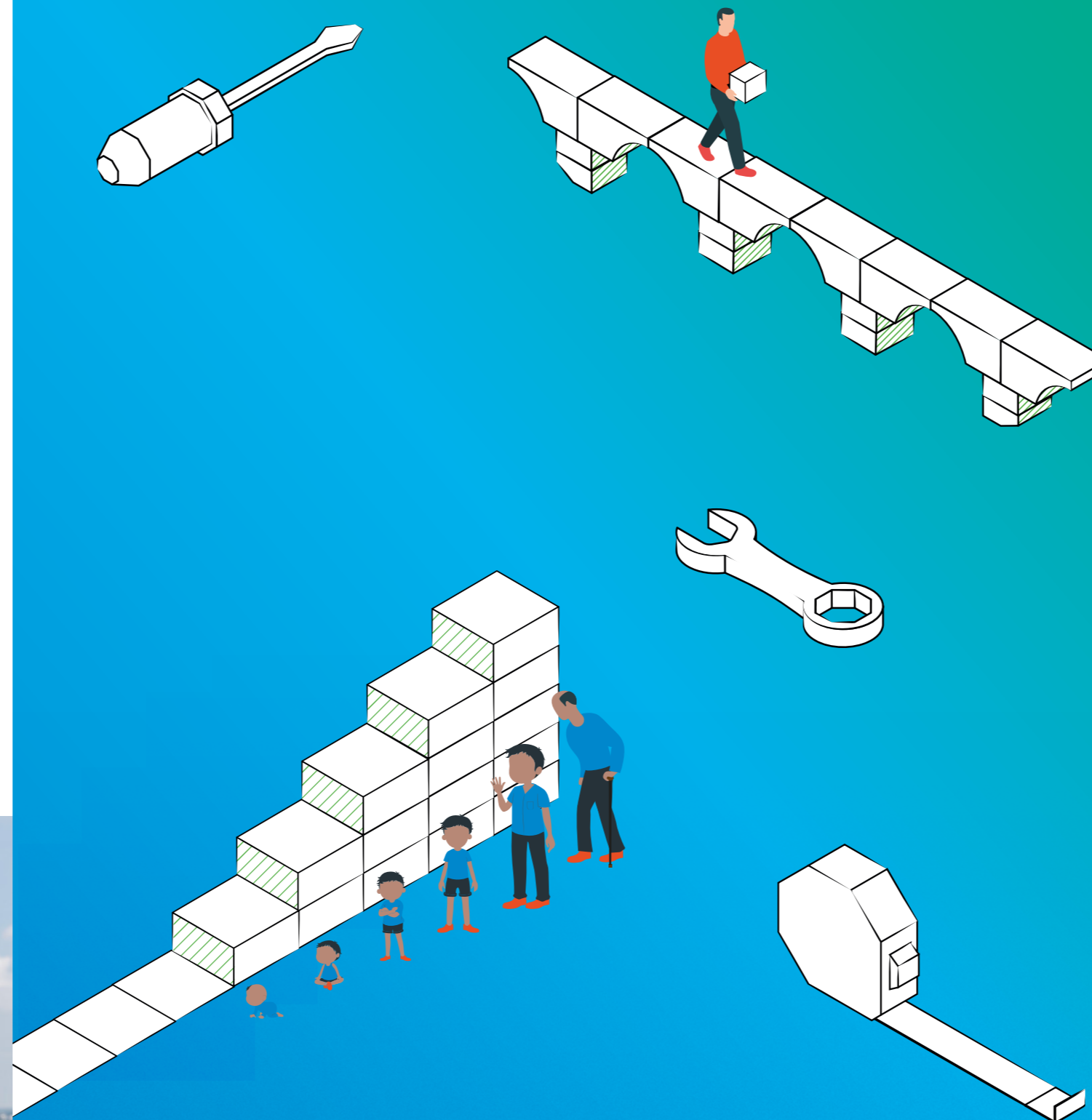
We currently face large and complex societal challenges. In order to be able to meet those challenges, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Erasmus MC and Delft University of Technology formed "Convergence": a unique partnership in which they bring together their knowledge and expertise. The Resilient Delta Initiative (RDI) is part of Convergence and is aimed at developing a resilient Rotterdam Delta region. The RDI research project SPRING contributes to that by reducing differences in health and well-being in the city. SPRING's focus is developed jointly with Rotterdam municipality and various other public and private partners, including NPRZ (National Programme for Rotterdam Zuid) and Veldacademie.



"A person's health and life expectancy should not depend on the place where they are born: that is SPRING's ultimate objective. In order to achieve that, a different form of cooperation is required: we need to share knowledge and learn from each other for the well-being of future generations."

Machiel van Dorst
Academic Lead of SPRING

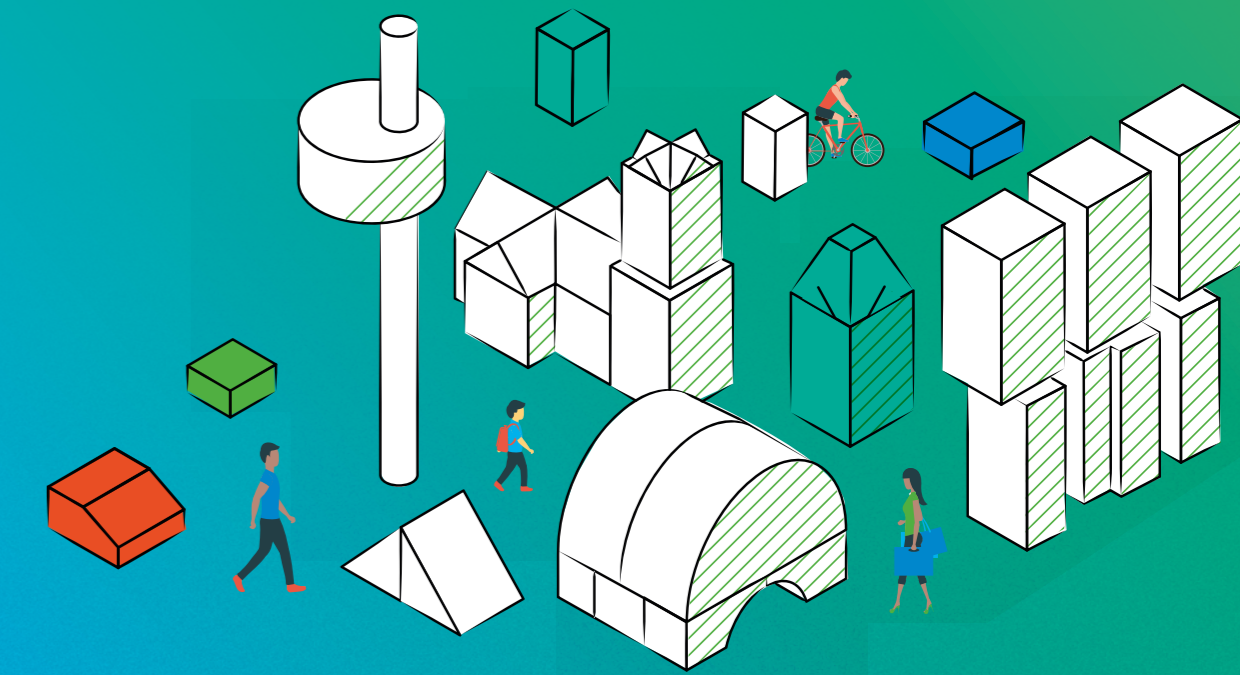
Guido Ripper



SPRING

Societal Progress & Resilience for INdividuals and Generations

For thriving residents of resilient cities



SPRING is a project of the Resilient Delta Initiative, itself part of Convergence.

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Van Raaij

“Achieving genuine participation is one of the biggest challenges for our society. If we are successful, residents will be able to act, influence and take responsibility for their own environment and well-being themselves. That calls for cooperation between all the parties involved!”



Frances Brazier
Lead of the SPRING Young People and Exercise pilot

Keeping an eye on the bigger picture

SPRING is interested in the social, physical and administrative context in which people live. Which is why we have people with different professional backgrounds and work with people who have knowledge from daily practice. In this way, we investigate how well-being is affected in each stage of life. Relevant questions include: which neighbourhood are you born in? Can you play outdoors safely there as a child? Does your environment promote healthy choices? Is there sufficient employment? Are the care and other amenities in the neighbourhood accessible?



In – and with – practice

We want to understand what truly contributes to the health and well-being of residents in vulnerable neighbourhoods. We can't do that alone. For this reason, we are joining forces with residents, public authorities, universities, businesses and other involved organisations. They all have a different, valuable perspective on the matter. And, no less importantly: indispensable knowledge of practice.

Challenges and solutions

We sit down with policymakers, professionals and residents of Rotterdam-Zuid. But also with other parties: from GPs to project developers and from healthcare insurers to temp agencies. By bringing all that knowledge and experience together, we can obtain a good picture of the challenges and of possible solutions. We try those solutions out in – and with – practice in various Living Labs. In this way, we learn what does and doesn't work in practice.

From insight to policy

We share the knowledge we gain in this way with academics, municipalities, business and above all with residents.

We make the solutions available to everyone that can benefit from them, not just in Rotterdam but also in other cities within and outside the Netherlands. Because we involve municipalities and policymakers in formulating the problem right from the start and include them in creating solutions, we increase the chances of insights from research actually being translated to policy. In this way, SPRING is working to achieve lasting improvements in the health and well-being of residents of vulnerable neighbourhoods. Because thriving residents make for resilient cities.



“Academic research has long been based on the knowledge of the academics themselves. But a genuine solution to a societal issue requires more than that. For this reason, we gather knowledge from citizens, professionals, public authorities, companies, academics and others.”

Renske Keizer
Academic Lead of SPRING

Systematic approach

We don't focus exclusively on the individual, because a person's well-being depends on many different factors. Our approach is systematic: we look at the bigger picture. We take everything that can affect people's well-being into account: work and income, living environment, home situation and health. Sometimes, something goes wrong with one of those factors. For example, an unsafe living environment, financial problems or a difficult home situation. Because factors are often interrelated, that will also impact on the rest, making it harder to focus adequately on your health. If we are to achieve lasting improvements in health, we need to be able to step back and see the whole system.

Solutions

Within SPRING, we are developing various pilots. In one of them, we are working with teenage girls from Rotterdam-Zuid to explore what they need to embrace an active lifestyle. We are focusing specifically on young people because they often remain invisible. Moreover, research shows that they are harder to involve in activities. The idea was suggested to give them a platform to express themselves and develop their talents. They can choose between dance and exercise, image and voice or a different style. This platform brings the offline world together with the online world, because for young people that is a major part of their lives. The ultimate goal of this pilot is to improve their mental and physical health.



Frank Herwig



“In the NPRZ, we work together to reduce the deficits experienced by Zuid residents in terms of school, work and housing. SPRING builds bridges between disciplines which currently have little connection with one another. Ordinary life has become too complicated for many people, and that also expresses itself in their health. SPRING means to do something about that!”

Marco Pastors
National Programme Rotterdam South (NPRZ)

Healthy neighbourhoods: urban design has a major influence on the health differences between population groups and neighbourhoods. Which is why we involve town planners in the Living Labs. And we also take account of the role of the built environment in relation to the social environment. Which amenities, green routes or infrastructure already exist in the outdoor space for healthy travel, sport and exercise? How can we help old people stay in their own homes for longer?

Work and health: income plays an important role in health differences. This Living Lab is focused on supporting people to find and stay in work. The transition from school to work is a key phase for young people. Education and available work are not always well matched. As a result, young people run the risk of not being able to transition smoothly from education to the labour process. In the long term, this can negatively influence their health, among other things.

Data

There are many factors that have an impact on health. In order to counteract health differences, a lot of knowledge is therefore required. That knowledge is distributed among many different parties, including residents. In the Living Labs, we gather data from daily practice. We combine that with data we collect from sources like the CBS and businesses, plus data from other academic research. We bring all that knowledge together, so that we can draw evidence-based conclusions.

Living Labs

With SPRING's Living Labs, we are turning Rotterdam into an ecosystem for open innovation. Our academics investigate an issue on location, together with involved residents, Rotterdam municipality, civil society organisations and other stakeholders. We gain knowledge and try out methods directly in practice.