

Maaike Creusen Wins Aedes Thesis Prize with Guide for Livable Earthquake-Affected Area



Maaike Creusen (student from the MBE department) is the winner of the Aedes Thesis Prize 2024. The jury unanimously awarded her for her research, which focuses on the role of housing corporations in improving livability in the Groningen earthquake-affected area. Maaike receives a prize of €2,500. Casper van Rietbergen (Utrecht University) took second place and won €1,000, while Yves Baljet (Maastricht University) came third, earning €500.

The Aedes Thesis Prize was open this year for the best master's thesis from the 2023-2024 academic year on topics related to the Dutch housing market, public housing, social rent, and/or housing corporations. From 25 submissions, the jury selected three winning theses.

1st Prize: Maaike Creusen on the Role of Housing Corporations in the Earthquake-Affected Area

Livability in the earthquake-affected area is under severe pressure. Groningen was already grappling with various challenges, but the earthquakes added an additional layer of complexity. The damage is both material and immaterial, involving health issues, depression, and stress. Housing corporations provide practical support, but tenants often feel powerless.

“Housing corporations in the earthquake-affected area make significant efforts to support social well-being. Sometimes out of necessity, as municipalities and welfare organizations are overstretched, but partly also driven by their own ambitions. Cooperation among them helps—they can present a united front to implementation agencies and share experiences. For example, temporary housing solutions are a significant logistical challenge for all corporations.”

“With my research, I contributed to the concrete development of the housing action plan. I provided a process description that can be followed to improve livability, based on the experiences of the Kr8 corporations. To enhance livability, collaboration with partners is crucial, and the process must start with the tenants—literally knocking on doors. During public meetings, the loudest voices dominate, but sitting down at the kitchen table gives a much better understanding of what’s happening and what’s needed.”

The jury praised the broad scope of the research, both qualitative and quantitative. According to the jury, Maaike worked in a thorough and systematic manner. Additionally, they were impressed by how applicable her guide is for other parts of the Netherlands.

Maaike was supervised during her graduation project by Harry Boumeester and Marja Elsinga from the MBE department and Geja Hagedoorn from the Wierden & Borgen housing corporation.