

THE INNOVATION JOURNEY

‘Natuurlijk Heel Leuk’ (Naturally much fun) is a social enterprise specialising in developing natural playgrounds and food forests with environmental and educational functions. Since 2018, Petra Eckhardt, Nancy Rietveld and Barry Blommestein run the business together as a general partnership. Their mission is to reconnect people of all ages with nature and each other through nature activities.



Figure 1. Founders of Natuurlijk Heel Leuk Petra, Nancy, and Barry (from left)

A shared passion for nature and social work brought Petra, Nancy, and Barry together. Petra specialises in ecological and permaculture design for gardens, schoolyards, and larger green spaces. Nancy excels in business operations, marketing, communications, and partnership development. Barry brings extensive experience working with children and individuals with learning disabilities.

THE INNOVATION IMPACT

Their integrative approach to green space design and outdoor area management is outstanding. ‘Natuurlijk Heel Leuk’ combines the design of

natural outdoor playgrounds and food forests with operational expertise to foster social inclusivity, engaging children, (grand)parents, refugees, and vulnerable groups.



Figure 1. The construction of a new food forest on the edge of Wijk bij Duurstede with educational and social functions (May 2021)

Their thoughtful approach enhances integration and solidarity by creating diverse playgrounds and networks across different villages in the municipality of Wijk bij Duurstede. This afforded them a LEADER subsidy in 2019 and an AMIF grant in 2020 for incorporating social gatherings and language learning for refugees. They maximise their innovative impact by collaborating with local stakeholders like private farm owners, school boards, care foundations, social housing providers, volunteer associations, and local governments.

USEFUL LINKS

<https://natuurlijkheelleuk.nl/>
www.groendoetgoedinwijk.nl/
www.facebook.com/natuurlijkheelleuk/?locale=nl_NL