

Case study

From online connections to offline encounters in Weert and Nederweert



Introduction

Punt Welzijn, a service-oriented welfare organisation in Weert and Nederweert, works to improve liveability in the neighbourhoods and encourage residents to make the most of themselves. They focus on various target groups, ranging from children to seniors and from caregivers to newcomers.

In 2019, the organisation started using the online platform of Hoplr. This platform proved to be an effective way to connect people, match help requests, and strengthen social cohesion in the neighbourhood.

We spoke with Bouke Kouters, Neighbourhood Worker and Social Worker, about his experiences.





Improving neighbourhood liveability.

Bouke enthusiastically talks about his role. It's clear to see that he has a passion for his work.

"As a Neighbourhood Worker and Social Worker at Punt Welzijn, I am responsible for improving liveability in the Boshoven neighbourhood, one of the 17 neighbourhoods in Weert. Our organisation is broadly structured into three teams: 'Growing Up', 'Living Together', and 'Healthy Lifestyle.' Neighbourhood work falls under 'Living Together.' Daily, we are engaged in making society better, and we believe

that bringing people together makes everything more enjoyable and meaningful."

"About four years ago, we got in touch with Hoplr through the municipality. They gave us a presentation, and we immediately became enthusiastic. We then started working with the Hoplr Neighbourhood Network with the 'Living Together' team."

100% Score for matching help requests.

We asked Bouke about the challenges Punt Welzijn faced before using the online platform. "One of our biggest challenges was the increasing number of help requests after the COVID-19 pandemic. More and more residents needed a helping hand, whether it be for groceries, walking the dog, or tidying up the garden."

"These were small help requests, yet it was difficult to find people in the neighbourhood who could assist.

People are asking each other for help less and less, because they're afraid, but also because they don't know where to find each other. The Neighbourhood Network tool from Hoplr proved to be a useful tool for matching these requests with volunteers from the neighbourhood. It is very special because, so far, we have a 100% score for matching supply and demand."

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Neighbours now say hello to each other at the Jumbo or Albert Heijn. Online contact makes offline meetings easier.



Insight into neighbourhood needs.

Bouke also mentions another challenge that the online platform addresses. "So Hoplr helps greatly in matching help requests. This way, we can offer people in the neighbourhood the help they need. Another major advantage of the Neighbourhood Network is that we now have much better insight into the neighbourhood's needs."

"Where we previously struggled to clearly map out supply and demand, we now know exactly what's going on. For example, there was a lady who wanted to give a dance course to the neighbourhood, but she didn't know where to start. She then made contact through Hoplr. We now know, at a glance, which services can be provided and what is being asked for. It's really great."

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Hoplr saves us time. We now have 5500 active accounts.

Less time spent matching help requests.

When asked about the implementation process, Bouke is clear: “Of course, starting up and rolling out takes time. You need to inform people in the neighbourhood well about the platform. What it does, how it works, and how they can benefit from it themselves. This takes a while. But ultimately, it has saved us a lot of time as a welfare organisation.”

“Where I used to spend time matching help requests, many residents now do this entirely themselves. I don’t see Hoplr as a tool for us as an organisation. But rather as a tool for the neighbourhood, because neighbours can take it upon themselves to use it.”

In the future, Punt Welzijn will continue to collaborate with Hoplr to strengthen neighbourhood connections and encourage neighbourly assistance in Weert. The collaboration between welfare organisations, the municipality, and digital platforms proves to be a strong foundation for an involved and supportive society.

Want to know more about what Hoplr can mean for your neighbourhood? Then get in touch. We’re happy to explore the possibilities together.



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