

HELP – Results

The central theme of HELP is the residential location choice of highly educated creative knowledge workers. This is about revealed preference and about ‘stated preference’. The combination of both provides relevant input for spatial policy and housing policy of cities and urban regions. How well is the fit between demand and supply; what should be developed where? These sort of questions were leading in the project.

The project focus was on the development of models, based on own data collection via surveys and on existing statistical databases, to estimate spatial and housing behaviour of high-skilled creative knowledge workers relative to other categories in order to understand the most needed spatial distribution of housing. The models are designed to be applied in policy scenarios for spatial development on new or existing land.

Case studies have been performed for the metropolitan areas of Amsterdam and Eindhoven, but some analyses also covered the Netherlands as a whole. In order to investigate whether the findings were just applicable to the Dutch case (or not) we also carried out an international comparison with the metropolitan areas of Helsinki and Copenhagen.

The HELP project is carried out within the URD programme and is aimed at supporting the so-called ‘Gebiedsontwikkeling 2.0’ (Spatial Development 2.0), focusing on spatial quality and liveability issues. We also contributed to the cross URD-modules GIDS and governance. The HELP-project aims at the social and economic dimension of regional development.

Some of the results:

- There are clear differences between the location preferences between employees in the creative and in the technical sectors: creative workers have a stronger preference for urban living, while technical workers more often prefer suburban locations.
- There are clear differences between the location preferences between international workers in creative knowledge sectors and ‘native’ employees. International workers have a stronger preference for urban locations than ‘natives’.
- So-called ‘hard’ factors (employment opportunities, costs of housing and transport, accessibility) are still highly relevant when creative knowledge workers take spatial and housing decisions.
- Personal trajectories and personal networks (where did people grow up, where is family living, where did one study) are playing a major role for spatial and residential behaviour of creative knowledge workers.
- The importance of so-called ‘soft’ factors is much more limited compared to what some of the international literature suggests. They hardly play a role in the attracting of creative knowledge workers; but they do seem to play a role in keeping them attached to the urban region.

In methodological terms the project has resulted in some new contributions to the knowledge: In Residential preference studies so far attention has been directed mostly on ‘revealed preferences’. If people studied ‘stated preferences’ this seldom happened in connection with ‘revealed preferences’. We did combine the two and while doing that we believe to have provided a new contribution to the international debate on housing preference.

The development of a model tool for policy scenario analysis for the most wanted spatial and housing development, which is aimed at optimising housing preference realisation. Here we collaborated with the URD-projects AESUS en SDI4URD.

Project leader: Prof. S. Musterd, University of Amsterdam
E-mail: S.Musterd@uva.nl