



# 2023 TOP 100 GOOD PRACTICE STORY

**Title:** How a drying stream contributes to awareness and livability Preserving the village's eponym in a sustainable manner, involving the community in the decision-making process

**Destination, Country:** Groesbeek, Municipality of Berg en Dal, Netherlands

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**In the category:**  Destination Management  Nature & Scenery  Environment & Climate  Culture & Tradition  Thriving Communities  Business & Marketing

**The Story in a picture:**

The former stream the Groesbeek, eponym of the village.



**Summary:**

The source of the Groesbeek (beek means creek) has run dry. Currently, groundwater is being pumped, but this is not sustainable. As the creek is the namesake of the village, it calls for a valuable redesign. In response to climate change, we're making thoughtful choices for water management, ensuring a harmonious relationship with the environment.

Through collaboration with dedicated entrepreneurs and residents, and a focus on climate considerations, we are working towards an optimal solution that seamlessly blends beauty, participation and functionality. This project is fostering a sense of sustainability and climate adaptation within our community, driving us towards a vibrant future where the renewed Groesbeek thrives as a symbol of harmony and resilience, and residents feel involved in decision making process.



## Good Practice Story:

### Destination description

#### **Berg en Dal**

Hundreds of thousands of people from all over the world come to visit the municipality of Berg en Dal ('mountain and valley') every year. The region boasts a captivating landscape characterized by its unique blend of polders, moraines sculpted during the Ice Age. Alongside, visitors can also indulge in the delights of local wineries, charming villages, and a multitude of local food producers. This offers a wide range of activities, like hiking and cycling. The world-famous 'Nijmeegse Vierdaagse' (Four days march of Nijmegen), Zevenheuvelenloop ('seven hills' running competition) and many other events that intertwine nature and culture take place here. Our beautiful surroundings are inviting to all who come here, whether seeking a relaxing holiday or an enjoyable day trip. To illustrate: the overview below shows the number of overnight stays in the years 2019-2021.

Category	2019	2020	2021
Overnight stay camping	158.500	122.000	215.000
Various	280.800	271.800	281.400
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>439.300</b>	<b>393.800</b>	<b>496.400</b>

#### **Groesbeek**

The village of Groesbeek is often visited for day recreation. Many people come here for walking, cycling or to visit the Freedom Museum, the Viticulture Center, the 'Draisine' (bicycles on an old train track). Groesbeek also provides a broad scale of restaurants, that's why an attractive village centre is important. The source of the village's eponym lies near the church of the village and flows through the heart of the centre, surrounded by shops, restaurants and their terraces, apartments and a school.

### Issues faced

As a result of the declining groundwater levels, the source of the creek no longer provides water for the Groesbeek. This is a global issue that has been going on for many years. Consequently, one of the area's most iconic landmarks is gradually vanishing. A forty-meter deep pipe was installed to replenish the creek using natural upward pressure from deep groundwater. Initially successful, it proved unsustainable over time, failing to meet the creek's water needs. As a temporary alternative, water is now being pumped up in the city center to sustain the village's namesake. The municipality acknowledges the unsustainability of this method for maintaining the creek's water levels, and considers the involvement of residents from the municipality crucial in the decision-making process.

### Methods, steps, and tools applied

We believe in active community participation, which is why we have initiated discussions with residents to shape the future of Groesbeek and set up a website called Samen Berg en Dal ('Together Berg en Dal') where everyone is invited to share their opinions and input. To ensure inclusive decision-making, we held a well-attended open evening where interested individuals and stakeholders were invited to share their valuable insights and ideas.

The involved parties are:

- Local residents
- 'Buurtje rondom de beek' (group set up especially for this plan)
- 'Werkgroep Milieubeheer Groesbeek' (Environmental Management Working Group Groesbeek by residents)
- Staatsbosbeheer (Manager of forest and nature of the Netherlands)
- Waterschap Rivierenland (regional water board)
- Stichting Behoud en Bescherming Dorpsgezichten (Foundation Preservation and Protection of Village Views)
- Stichting Toerisme en Recreatie Berg en Dal
- The municipality of Berg en Dal
- Entrepreneurs of shopping center Bellevue
- Bedrijfsinvesteringszone Groesbeek (BIZ)
- Everyone else that feel engaged to the matter

The potential solutions that were discussed and their feasibility:

Solution	How	Feasibility after assessment
Reusing rainwater from rooftops and roads.	Installing underground and above-ground pipelines from roofs and roads towards the creek.	This option presents challenges as the water is often polluted and requires treatment. Furthermore, the creek will only have water during rainy periods, leaving it dry during prolonged droughts.
Restoring the nearby pond, the source, with a loam (clay) layer.	Lining the source with clay to retain water, pumping groundwater to maintain its level, and allowing the pond to provide water for the creek. This promotes natural restoration and benefits vegetation. The pond can then supply water to the creek <i>once again</i> .	This is a possible solution, however water will only remain at the church, without any water flow. It is important that the clay-lined section remains submerged in water. If it becomes exposed, the clay will dry out and cracks may form. Once the layer loses its water-tightness, water will no longer be retained.
Mechanically circulation of water.	Both for the source area and the surroundings of the market square, is the idea to circulate water. This water is then pumped back upstream, allowing it to flow downstream. Water replenishment is also achieved through the pumping of groundwater.	This is a possible solution
Leaving things as they are.	Do nothing with the issue.	This is a possible solution, however feedback from residents indicates that the majority prefer having water in the creek.

These options are still under consideration and have not been definitively rejected. Due to the complexity of making a decision and our commitment to resident opinions, the municipal council will play a crucial role. This modern and inclusive approach ensures that residents are advocated for by their elected representatives. Once a direction is chosen, further discussions will take place with the residents.

### Key success factors

The drying up of the Groesbeek is an important and sensitive issue where the decision to involve residents and their representatives is of great importance. The high turnout at the meetings highlights the significance of participation. The many parties and residents involved feel a sense of belonging and reassurance as their voices are heard and their appreciation for the Groesbeek is recognized. By involving a diverse group of stakeholders, we gain a wide range of perspectives, building a strong and united support for the cause. A vibrant village center benefits residents, businesses, and visitors alike. The large turnout demonstrates that residents consider this issue important and are eager to contribute their ideas.

The website Together Berg en Dal is a very helpful and key tool to inform and involve local residents in these matters of livability.

Make sure to make a connection between different challenges and assignments. In this case we noticed that it reinforces each other:

- climate change and arising awareness among residents and entrepreneurs;
- local participation by residents and entrepreneurs;
- an attractive and livable village center for residents, entrepreneurs and visitors.

Make sure to involve people who understand participation processes. The municipality of Berg en Dal employs 2 people who are working full-time on this. They advise colleagues on participation processes.

Be aware that residents and entrepreneurs are local ambassadors for your municipality. They spread hospitality. Ensure support among them by involving them in the right way and on time.

Tourism can contribute to a liveable and attractive destination, but that certainly also applies the other way around.

### Lessons learned

By engaging in conversation and avoiding a one-sided perspective, residents are given the opportunity to truly contribute their thoughts. Attention is given to every idea. The involved parties and residents feel heard, which can be a challenge for municipalities. Participation will be further implemented in our way of working as a result. Additionally, reflecting on and updating the work process has been crucial in successfully addressing the issue.

### Achievements and Results

Previously, the municipality would make decisions on issues like these without active involvement of residents. The large turnout of the open evening, around 125 stakeholders, indicates that there is a lot of involvement in the subject, and is a sign of the relevance and urgency of the topic, and of the impact it has on the lives of those involved. Residents are actively engaged in the decision-making process, which makes them feel heard, respected, and valued.

The drying up of the Groesbeek affects us all. This has a positive impact on how residents view the municipality and they will more likely participate in other issues. By addressing an issue due to climate change this close to home an visible, awareness of sustainability and



climate adaptation is being promoted. The solution can be a wonderful demonstration of climate adaptation. In this way, the government also fulfills the role of identifying problems, creating urgency, and setting a good example.

### *Tips for other destinations*

Actively involve residents in decision-making regarding sustainable issues to promote greater awareness. Aim to reach multiple target audiences and address various concerns when identifying problems and solutions. In this case, the climate, residents/entrepreneurs, and visitors all benefit from the solution/approach. Explore interesting possibilities in climate adaptation that may not have been considered yet!



## *Recognitions and Additional references*

[Project: \(Her\)inrichting de Groesbeek \(samenbergendal.nl\)](https://www.samenbergendal.nl)

Link to the web page where residents can place their ideas and possible solutions.

[Testen met oppompen water de Groesbeek | Berg en Dal](#)

Link to web page of the municipality, with the notification of the termination of pumping of water.

[Klimaatverandering nekt naamgever dorp De Groesbeek: gemeente stopt met oppompen water | Berg en Dal | gelderlander.nl](#)

News article about shutting down the pump.

[Groesbeek moet geen Groesgreppel blijven: 'Ik ben er niet trots op' - Omroep Gelderland \(gld.nl\)](#)

Link to a newspaper article about the publics (and aldermans') opinion about the stream.

[Werkgroep Milieubeheer Berg en Dal, Verdroging \(wmg-groesbeek.nl\)](#)

Link to web page of 'Werkgroep Milieubeheer Berg en Dal' (Environmental Management Working Group Berg en Dal), about the drying moraine.

[Groesbeek kan beter Groesgreppel heten: waar is het water? - Omroep Berg en Dal](#)

Link to web page of a regional news agency with a movie about the drying creek.

[Link](#) to the invite for the open meeting.

[Facebook post](#) about the open meeting.