**The 8 obstacles to overcome**

1. **Rethinking garbage**

The ambition to live sustainably on a daily basis can be quite difficult to realize. People want to live plastic free, but everything they buy comes in plastic. People want sustainable clothing, but find plastic fast fashion a lot easier to purchase. Moreover, they are confronted with many advertisements on tv, in vlogs, on Instagram, etc for fast fashion. Many people experience frustration with regard to recycling; they are willing to separate their waste and compost, but for those who live in a small upstairs apartment there are little possibilities to do this.

Quote: “Thrift shops are not as abundant, clean and open here as in other countries.”

Quote: “the cleaners in my hotel end up throwing together all waste separated by me , this is demotivating.”

1. **Travel and mobility**

Traveling in Amsterdam is challenging. The city is crowded: the abundance of traffic leads to the roads and parking spaces being dangerous and chaotic. Vehicles used in Amsterdam (including the public ferries to and from Amsterdam-North) are polluting. Shared bicycles must be returned at the same place, making it harder to use them as real means of transport. Moreover, many of the ‘shared services’ still provide vehicles that run on petrol. Especially disabled residents of Amsterdam experience mobility issues. Streets are bumpy, public and cultural facilities are inaccessible for people because of impractical architecture and parking spaces disappear.

At the same time, traveling from and to Amsterdam comes with problems as well. Both citizens and companies feel reluctant to stop flying or adopt more sustainable traveling policies, because there are not enough fast and affordable alternatives for traveling by plane.

Quote: “As a disabled person due to chronic pains, I experience Amsterdam as increasingly inaccessible”

Quote: “I know that flying is one of the biggest polluters, but yet I continue to book vacations that require flying, because this is still pretty much the norm around me.”

1. **Making big system change tangible & measurable**

Meeting the needs of all within the means of the planet requires big system change and many people feel that these problems are too big for them to have an influence. They feel powerless and do not know where to start. The doughnut acts as a compass for human progress this century, however, it does not yet function as a useful tool based on which individuals and companies can measure their performance. How can we make the doughnut measurable so as to provide a very concrete and real compass to guide action?

Quote: “Many people are very pessimistic about the future. Almost all young people I speak to have serious concerns about the planet and climate. People no longer believe in big system change. Because the problems are soo big, they think, I have no influence on that anymore.”

Quote: “The one thing I'm missing most, is a suitable set of parameters that allows us to to *i)* define, *ii)* measure and, finally, *iii)* monitor over time.”

1. **Making sustainable the best option**

Products that are organic or fair trade often come with price. This makes a sustainable lifestyle into something for elites, or as something perceived as something for elites. Therefore, not everyone who sells organic products advertises them as such, afraid of losing a circle of possibly interested customers. In order to make a sustainable lifestyle the default for all social circles, it is arguably necessary to work on the price of sustainable consumer products as well as on its image.

Quote: “I could sell my ice cream for more because it is actually organic, but I don’t and I do not advertise it as such. It should be affordable to everyone, even for people with smaller budget. Otherwise, sustainability is only for high-income and highly-educated people.”

1. **A bottom-up city**

The government and municipality get in the way of what makes life worthwhile for people. People want to help others, contribute to their community and collectively channel their efforts into their ideas that can make their environment a better place. Civil service tends to kill that enthusiasm, pulls it all towards itself or complicates it to such an extent that all energy drains out of the once so motivated groups and individuals. How do we design the governance of Amsterdam in such a way that the city stimulates and supports the wonderful bottom-up initiatives of its inhabitants?

Quote: “No energy is invested in people who take the initiative themselves and want to change something, the system is not designed for that.”

Quote: “Health and happiness must be the starting point for the design and realization of the new Amsterdam. Step-by-step. We need footpaths, greenery, bike lanes, exercise lanes for health as a basis. Meeting places around the corner, making an effort to break bubbles: mix it up, however difficult that may be.”

1. **My neighbourhood, my home**

It is hard to find a place to live in Amsterdam: homes are scarce. Most students, foreigners, and born and raised ‘Amsterdammers’ cannot afford to buy or rent a house in the city. While investors have free rein to buy up houses to rent them out for high prices, social rent services have waitlists of more than a decade.

The individualistic set-up of the city is identified as a problem. People would be interested in living in different types of houses or neighbourhoods with alternative ownership structures than are available now, such as community housing and meeting points, or just buildings with shared facilities. This would increase their chances of getting to live in Amsterdam and could give them a greater sense of belonging and connectedness to their community. These initiatives do exist, but most of them have not been in existence for a long time and there are not many of them yet.

At the same time, it is hard for homeowners to renovate their houses in order to make them more sustainable. Especially if a house is a monument or protected cityscape, bureaucratic rules make it hard and cumbersome to make sustainability improvements.

Quote: “I plead for more ways to make living in Amsterdam possible, for my generation and those to follow.”

Quote: “I try to build a lasting social bond with my neighbours/neighbourhood, but I often encounter less enthusiasm from my neighbours (I think because of a certain individualism).”

1. **Rights of the non-human living world / urban nature**

Humans share the city with much non-human life: with trees, plants, doves, seagulls, parakeets, other birds, with rats, mice, worms, insects and many more. There are about one million trees in Amsterdam – meaning there are actually more trees than people. The era of the Anthropocene requires us to rethink our relationship with non-humans. How can the intrinsic value of a tree be recognized? How can the infrastructure of the city be made in such a way that it is inclusive towards doves and other birds? The social dimension of the doughnut should arguably not only include humans, but also non-human beings.

Quote: “Hello, we are Amsterdam’s pigeons! Many people see us as pests, but we do not find that very social.”

1. **Access to public services**

Basic human needs, such as a home in a nice neighbourhood, good education and good care have become luxury goods. The financially well-off have the luxury to buy nice houses in Amsterdam, while the less-well off are on the waiting list of Woningnet for years and years without prospects of having a home any time soon. Getting your kids into a good school is like a lottery that makes parents feel powerless. While climate change is high on the agenda, structural inequality and poverty have become too common even in Amsterdam. We need better and potentially more radical ideas for a truly inclusive city.

Quote: “When it comes to accessibility of public services such as care, education and housing, the increasing privatization, the growing share of it that you have to pay yourself and the growing private supply result in a growing dichotomy in the quality of public services. .”

Quote: “I was born in Amsterdam, I have been registered for a house with Woningnet from the age of 18 onward, now it is 15 years later. (…) There is still hardly any chance for a home.”