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## **Netherlands Consultants Believe Time is Ripe for Axiom News in their Country**

News agency to fuel, build on citizens' engagement in economic and social transition

Whether it's technical expertise or small- to medium-sized businesses, the Netherlands holds an abundance of assets that have been in large part unrecognized and unappreciated. Yet it is exactly these "un-glorified" gifts that could ring in the country's future thriving.

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*Dries van Gemert*

That's part of what the co-founders of Axiom News Netherlands are seeing and why they consider this an opportune time to launch a news agency that discovers and cultivates these possibilities.

Discovering these strengths is especially critical as a broader economic and social transition bubbles across the country. The transition is manifesting in phenomena that range from the City of Leeuwarden's aspiration to be fossil-fuel free by 2018 to the downloading of social services from central government to municipalities by the end of 2014.

The Netherlands also faces growing urbanization — 80 per cent of the country's population is expected to live in an urban area within a decade.

"The need for change is really present and is recognized by more and more people... . But the question is always, 'How do we do it?' " says Dries van Gemert, a consultant who is co-founding Axiom News Netherlands along with consultants

Russell Kerkhoven and Gabriela van Gemert.

“What we often forget is that we are acting in a complex environment,” he adds. “The coherence between systems is often not recognized or we do not know how to deal with this observation. Because of this, we run the risk of developing sub-optimal interventions ... that present the image of doing the right things, but the interventions generally lack sufficient depth.”

To achieve effective change, people require both different perspectives and a clear way to engage in and create change.

“We believe that each community has enough power to create their own future,” says Dries.

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*Russell Kerkhoven*

“So the power is already there and we see it as our mission to empower the community.”

Generative Journalism, the approach to news pioneered by Axiom News founder and CEO Peter Pula, offers a powerful and accessible way to do this empowering, Dries adds.

Dries envisions the approach at the centre of geographic regions that cross political boundaries — discovering, connecting and refracting the strengths within those regions.

He also sees tremendous possibility in the Axiom News way acting as a link between technical and social innovation. “A lot of organizations, NGOs and government (departments) spend a lot of money in learning knowledge that is related to technical innovation, but I think it’s very important to make a transfer between technical and social innovation. So I think generative communication can build a bridge between the two of them.”

Dries envisions weaving Generative Journalism into existing ties he has to Athens, Greece as well. Given its current economic and social challenges, that country holds the potential to lead the way in this economic and social transition — just as it led the way when it was a central European power hundreds of years ago, Dries says. “The Greeks have to find themselves again, they have to build up a new economy ... so we are very interested in countries like this.”

Discussions are also underway around supporting the Earth Charter Cities effort through a Generative Journalism approach.

Looking ahead, Axiom News Netherlands is planning a two-pronged approach to its delivery of Generative Journalism, similar to Axiom News in Canada.

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*Gabriela van Gemert*

As it acquires customer organizations, Generative Journalism will support meaningful change that empowers people within those organizations.

Axiom News Netherlands is also committed to creating separate projects such as those mentioned above centred on the social and economic transition, says Dries. The intent is to draw in others who share enthusiasm for the potential in Generative Journalism to co-create the transition.

Dries works from a principle that economy is a social science (see [Tomáš Sedláček](#)), suggesting that there is more than just thinking about life in financial or monetary terms. In past efforts as well, Dries first explores ideas and finds people who are interested and willing to commit to manifesting them with him. It's typically only then that the resourcing questions answer themselves.

Over the next few months, the Axiom News Netherlands team will be recruiting writers and developing projects. The goal is to have three concrete projects underway by fall, increasing to eight in 2015.

Dries would also like to strengthen the working and learning relationship between

Axiom News Netherlands and Axiom News in Canada.

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