

## **Strengthening Social Safety in Enschede**

*How a group of UT students made an impact on social safety in Enschede in a creative way*

### **A Complex Societal Issue**

During the course "Civil Engineering Challenges" (CEC), our group was tasked with conducting extensive research into a complex societal problem. We decided to focus on social safety, as this has become a very important social issue in the Netherlands since the murder of the 17-year-old Lisa in August. Our goal during this course, therefore, became:

**“We want to strengthen social safety in a community in the Netherlands.”**

### **Interviews Result in a Creative Idea**

To learn more about social safety in the Netherlands, we interviewed several representatives from the Municipality of Enschede, the Province of Overijssel, and the Council for the Environment and Infrastructure (Rli). During one of these interviews, it was suggested that an award could be given to the most unsafe place in an area, as a fun and creative way to draw attention to social safety and to show the municipality which location deserves priority. We thought this was a great idea, so we made the Most Unsafe Place Trophy 2025 (Edition: Enschede) a reality.

### **The Most Unsafe Place Trophy 2025 (Edition: Enschede)**

To award the Most Unsafe Place Trophy, a survey was distributed among the students at the University of Twente. Ultimately, 205 students completed the questionnaire. Based on all the answers, it was concluded that students perceive the Stationsplein and the F35, among other places, as unsafe. However, the clear winner, with more than 35% of the votes, was the intersection between the Van Lochemstraat and Noorderhagen (near the Jumbo supermarket).



## From Trophy to Impact

The results were shared with members of the Enschede city council and presented to the Safety Coordinator for the Municipality of Enschede. The coordinator indicated that he would use the report to raise awareness among people (such as the aldermen and the mayor) of the importance of continuing to increase social safety at certain locations in Enschede.

## In Conclusion

In short, after completing this challenge, we learned that even small actions can have a significant impact. By combining research, participation, and creativity, we have demonstrated that civil engineers can play a role not only in creating the built environment but also in establishing trust and a sense of security. We therefore recommend that the municipality or other students continue to award the Most Unsafe Place Trophy each year to draw attention to the serious problem of social safety in a light-hearted way.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to thank the more than 200 students who completed the survey. Without you, we could never have made such a big impact!

## Project members

- Joost de Kater
- Thomas Knorren
- Ruben Lammerink
- Niels Vroegrijk

**Teacher and contact person**

dr. ir. R.S. (Robin) de Graaf

University of Twente

Faculty of Engineering Technology

Department of Civil Engineering

[r.s.degraaf@utwente.nl](mailto:r.s.degraaf@utwente.nl)

053-4894883