Deliverable D5.3

Report on semi-structured interviews and focus groups

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1. Introduction

The general objective of the MUST-a-Lab project is to understand how multistakeholder Policy Labs (henceforward PL) can involve engaged first and second generation migrant citizens, local civil society, grassroot and private sector stakeholders and official well-established representatives of various kind such as administrators, policy makers, educational institutions, international NGO's and unions in local policy design and decision-making processes about integration. In order to reach a full understanding of the prerequisites of such endeavour and the effectiveness of the multistakeholder PL-method, a comprehensive mixed-method evaluative dimension was considered pivotal. The evaluative research in MUST-a-lab indeed includes different steps and tools that are not dealt with in in this report. **This report will focus on the ways the different categories of participants in the policy labs understand and assess participatory possibilities and the interactional dimensions of the PL-sessions and scrutinize how organisational and facilitative dimensions influenced their perceptions**. For each of the six cities that took part in the project (henceforward C1-C6) a representative sample of participants was questioned during semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. **The report will distinguish between the perceptions of different categories of participants and consider how these perceptions tie in with findings of other deliverables**. First, we will briefly outline the research design and the procedure of the thematic analysis that was carried out. Second, we will give some contextual information and produce an overview of the respondents that were involved in this part of the evaluation from a transnational, cross-city perspective. Third, we will present the results and discuss these results across categories and cities. Fourth we will provide a conclusion. For a theoretical background about multistakeholder policy labs and theories of deliberative democracy we refer to the introductory sections of deliverables 5.1 and 5.2.

2. Research design

To uncover participants' perceptions of participatory possibilities we made use of **a hybrid approach to thematic analysis** (e.g. Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). We largely followed inductive reasoning, but preceded the analysis with a brief literature review to come up with sensitizing concepts that informed our background ideas in the preparatory phase of the analysis (Bowen et al, 2006 & Mortelmans, 2017) and mixed pre-defined coding with emergent posteriori coding protocols later on. We made use of NVIVO to identify and subsequently analyse patterns and themes in the qualitative data. Based on amongst other (Asenbaum, & Hanush, 2O23; Bächtiger, A. & Goldberg; Chambers, 2003; Elstub, 2008 & Hannon, 2020), our interview protocol and the evaluative focus on the interactional dimension in a PL, we used the following pre-defined codes in our initial codebook: *participation, agency, equity, sharing experiences, decision-making, language, conversational space, atmosphere, motivation, method, organisation, role, outcomes, satisfaction.* During the analysis we elaborated on these codes, identified emergent posteriori (sub)codes and refined our codebook to analyse the data in more detail. In this report we organised the data into the themes *organisation, participation, facilitation, outcomes, production of narratives and decision-making possibilities*.

To gain insight in the participants' perception of the PL-method the research protocol foresaw in four semi-structured interviews (with an administrator or policy maker, a facilitator and two stakeholders of various) and one focus group discussion per city. Within those categories special attention was given to gender distribution and participants with a migrant background. Similar to the methodological approach of the participant observation that was reported on in deliverable 5.2, the methodology of both types of discussions was tailored to the specific characteristics of the partnership. In two cities (C 1 and C 2) the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were conducted by experienced researchers and all interviews with the PL-facilitators were conducted by the research team. Where professional researchers could not be employed (in four cities: C3-C6), data were collected by facilitators working as researchers. Guidelines and instructions for the research discussions were provided by the KDG research team.

The **guidelines for the semi-structured interviews** complied with four characteristics that are inherent to the method (Mortelmans, 2013). Firstly, the guidelines provided a preliminary structure with interchangeable questions to guarantee a flexible interview scheme. Secondly, interviewers were instructed to monitor the content and the topic of the interview in a highly interactive form. Thirdly, the interviewers were asked to adopt a non-directive interview approach: the narratives and the stories of the respondents were of bigger importance than strictly controlling the flow of the interview. The protocol suggested they could delve deeper into certain topics by asking more open-ended, follow-up questions. Fourthly, the guidelines made clear that live, direct responsive interaction between interviewer and respondents was necessary. In summary, the main goal of the semi-structured interviews was to gain depth in the interviewees' stories or narratives. Following the principle of 'internal flexibility', the interviewers were instructed to adapt to the respondents' narratives. The guidelines for the semi-structured interview, then, were neither strictly structured with standard questions, nor were they entirely non-directive. Through open questions the interviewers were asked to focus on topics in the core of the interview (Evers, 2007; Kvale, 2007).

The **guidelines for the focus groups** similarly instructed moderators to try and surface respondents' perspectives in a flexible, interactive way. The guidelines 1) recommended selecting a balanced group of participants representing the target demographics, 2) contained tips about preparatory procedures and 3) formulated a set of active and/or projective facilitation and brainstorm techniques, such as conceptual word and image mapping.

The goal of the semi-structured interviews and focus groups discussions was to gain insight in the way four broad categories of **participants perceived the participatory possibilities and the interactional dimensions of the PL-sessions they attended**. These **categories** consisted of **1) participants with a migrant background** that took part in the PL as **end-users** of the integration policies, **2) stakeholders** from various civil society, grassroot, private and non-governmental organisations **3) local policy makers** with or without executive powers and official representatives of well-established organisations such as unions and international organisations **4) facilitators** of the PL-sessions. As was mentioned in deliverables 3.1-3.3, 5.1 and 5.2, regarding the MUST-a-lab participants as a whole; however, a clear-cut distinction between the selected categories could not always be maintained.

Firstly, the **migrant condition and institutional and societal roles of participants were mixed and not always easy to discern.** This is partly due to differences in the demographic reality of said cities. Some cities partaking in MUST-a-lab have a more diverse, even superdiverse (Vertovec, 2007) population than other cities where cultural diversity is not as pronounced. The cities of the MUST-a-Lab consortium, indeed, have varying degrees of multiculturality and this is reflected in their workforce, their political landscape, their civil society networks and their general population. This blurring of categories was also true for the respondents that took part in the interviews and focus group discussions. Moreover, in most cities, the researcher or the facilitator-researcher needed to select the respondents differently than originally planned to make sure all types of categories were interviewed to some extent. In some cases, due to logistic reasons and availability issues, cities could hardly interview participants with a migrant background that took part of the policy labs as end-users of the policies under deliberation. Secondly, the group of participants with a migrant background that are end-users of the policies consisted of **citizens with migrant roots, Third Country Nationals (henceforward TCN), applicants for and beneficiaries of international protection and stateless people**. When discussing the perspectives of the migrant community, we will therefore mainly focus on their voices and less on the voices of stakeholders or policy makers with a migrant background. Irrespective of the status of the migrant representatives we do distinguish between first generation (im)migrant participants, who

mostly did not speak the local language well and second generation participants with a migrant background who were mostly bilingual.

The table below lists all participants in the semi-structured interviews per city by their role in the policy lab and their function.

City	Role in the PL	Function	Gender	Migration background
C1	Stakeholder	Civil Society Organisation	F	non-migrant
C1	Administrator	Civil servant	F	non-migrant
C1	Representative migrant community	Citizen	M	migrant, 1st gen
C1	Facilitator	Independent organisation	F	non-migrant
C2	Representative migrant community	Citizen	F	migrant, 2nd gen
C2	Administrator	Civil servant	F	non-migrant
C2	Representative migrant community	Citizen	F	migrant, 2nd gen
C2	Facilitator	Administrator	F	non-migrant
C3	Policy maker	Councelor	F	non-migrant
C3	Stakeholder	Civil Society Organisation	M	non-migrant
C3	Representative migrant community	Grassroot Organisation	F	migrant, 2nd gen
C3	Facilitator	Civil Society Organisation	F	migrant, 2nd gen
C4	Stakeholder	Civil Society Organisation	F	non-migrant
C4	Policy maker	Civil servant	F	non-migrant
C4	Stakeholder	Civil Society Organisation	F	non-migrant
C4	Facilitator	Administrator	F	non-migrant
C5	Administrator	Civil servant	F	non-migrant
C5	Administrator	Civil Servant	F	non-migrant
C5	Stakeholder	International organisation	F	non-migrant
C5	Facilitator	Civil Servant	F	non-migrant
C6	Stakeholder	Civil Society Organisation	F	non-migrant
C6	Policy maker	Counselor	F	migrant, 1st gen
C6	Stakeholder	Civil Society Organisation	M	non-migrant
C6	Facilitator	Civil servant	F	non-migrant

The next table lists all participants in the focus groups per city by their role in the policy lab and their function.

City	Role in the PL	Function	Gender	Migration background
C1	Stakeholder	Civil Society Organisation	F	non-migrant
C1	Stakeholder	Civil Society Organisation	F	non-migrant
C1	Representative migrant community	Interested citizen	M	migrant, 1st gen
C1	Representative migrant community	Interested citizen - Also member of a Civil Society Org	M	migrant, 1st gen
C1	Representative migrant community	Citizen - Also member of a Civil Society Org	F	migrant, 1st gen
C1	Representative migrant community	Interested citizen	M	migrant, 1st gen
C1	Representative migrant community	Interested citizen	F	migrant

C2	Stakeholder	Civil Society Organisation	F	migrant, 2nd gen
C2	Stakeholder	Educational professional	F	non-migrant
C2	Stakeholder	Educational professional	F	non-migrant
C2	Stakeholder	Educational professional	F	non-migrant
C2	Stakeholder	Educational professional	F	non-migrant
C2	Stakeholder	Educational professional	M	non-migrant
C2	Stakeholder	Educational professional	F	non-migrant
C2	Representative migrant community	Interested citizen, parent	F	migrant, 1st gen
C2	Representative migrant community	Interested citizen, parent	F	migrant, 1st gen
C3	Representative migrant community	Young person, also member of a Civil Society Org	F	migrant, 2nd gen
C3	Stakeholder	Young person, also member of a Civil Society Org	F	non-migrant
C3	Representative migrant community	Young person, also member of a Civil Society Org	M	migrant, 2nd gen
C3	Representative migrant community	Young person, also member of a Civil Society Org	F	migrant, 2nd gen
C3	Representative migrant community	Young person, also member of a Civil Society Org	F	migrant, 2nd gen
C3	Representative migrant community	Young person, also member of a Civil Society Org	F	migrant, 2nd gen
C3	Representative migrant community	Young person, also member of a Civil Society Org	F	migrant, 2nd gen
C4	Stakeholder	Civil society Organisation	M	migrant, 1st gen
C4	Stakeholder	Civil society Organisation	M	migrant, 1st gen
C4	Stakeholder	Civil Society Organisation	F	non-migrant
C4	Stakeholder	Civil Society Organisation	F	non-migrant
C4	Administrator	Civil servant	M	non-migrant
C5	Administrator	Civil servant	F	non-migrant
C5	Stakeholder	Civil Society Organisation	F	non-migrant
C5	Stakeholder	Civil servant	M	non-migrant
C5	Representative migrant community	Interested citizen, also member of a Civil Society Organisation	F	migrant, 1st gen
C5	Administrator	Civil servant	F	non-migrant
C5	Representative migrant community	Interested citizen	F	migrant, 1st gen
C6	Stakeholder	Civil Society Organisation	F	non-migrant

C6	Stakeholder	Educational professional	F	non-migrant
C6	Administrator	Civil servant	M	non-migrant
C6	Administrator	Civil servant	F	non-migrant
C6	Stakeholder	Civil Society Organisation	F	non-migrant
C6	Administrator	Civil servant	F	non-migrant
C6	Stakeholder	Civil Society Organisation	F	non-migrant

Organisationally, half of the interviews and the focus group discussions took part after the second PL-session in the period June-August 2023 and were transcribed verbatim, half of the interviews took part after the third PL-session between January and February 2024. Half of those second interviews were documented in summative individual reports. Participants in all interviews and focus groups were asked about participatory possibilities, the composition, the setting of the PL, the methods chosen, the outcomes, the types of language and the facilitation styles that were employed during the PL-sessions and the possibility to exercise agency, share narratives and make decisions. Respondents that took part in the second round of interviews were also asked about their satisfaction with the outcomes of the local PL. As was mentioned above, gathering of data was tailored to the specific characteristics of the partnership. All semi-structured interviews with the stakeholders and policy makers and all focus group discussions were conducted locally in the native language of the participants and then translated into English for the KDG-research team. All interviews with the facilitators were conducted by the research team.

3. Results and discussion

In this section we will present the results of the analysis. First, we will consider how respondents viewed the organisation of the PL-sessions, i.e. their composition, setting and structure. Second we will give an overview of how respondents defined the concepts of participation, agency and facilitation within the context of a policy lab. Third, we will discuss what they said about the outcomes of the labs and finally we will crosslink these findings with the results of the analysis in deliverable 5.2 and consider what this entailed for the possibility to produce and (co-) construct narratives and make decisions.

3.1 Organisation of the PL-cycle

3.1.1 Composition

A multistakeholder policy lab, inherently, is comprised of different types of participants. With its focus on integration and inclusion policies, the partnerships of the MUST-a-lab project aimed to attract three categories of participants, the same categories that were mentioned in the introduction, i.e. **1) participants with a migrant background** that took part in the PL as **end-users** of the integration policies, **2) stakeholders** from various civil society, grassroot, private and non-governmental organisations **3) local policy makers** with or without executive powers and official representatives of well-established organisations such as unions and international organisations.

The exact distribution of these categories per city was dealt with in deliverables 3.1-3.3 and was mentioned in deliverables 5.1 and 5.2 as well. These reports made clear that **nor a strict delineation of the three main participant categories, nor a continuous representation of all target groups was always a reality.** Mainly in cities C2, C3 and C6 the migrant condition was visibly more pronounced within the local stakeholders networks and administration, creating a blurring of categories. In cities C1, C4 and C5 the separation between citizens representing the migrant community was clearer, although proportionally diversified. There were more representatives of the migrant community in C1, than in C4 and C5. Hence the numbers and categories of participants with a migrant background in the PL-meetings were different across the partnership and in most cities the **turnover of especially the migrant group was relatively large**. In the following sections we will zoom in on all the main categories, discern subgroups within those categories and discuss what respondents shared about their own and other's roles within the PL-method.

3.1.1.1 Representatives of the migrant community

All respondents in all cities attached a lot of importance to the presence of migrant representatives, including the migrant representatives themselves. The latter group explicitly stated that their presence was needed for a PL-deliberation on integration to succeed, as is evidenced from the following citation of an interested citizen with a migrant background from C2, a city that also involved children and migrant parents:

> *"Yes, I think the most important thing was that there were sort of representatives of everyone involved. So I did like the fact that I, for instance, was also there. […] and it was also very important that parents were there. I would actually have preferred even more parents […] especially parents with a migrant background […]. I think if you're talking about people with a migrant background, they should be very much present themselves. And apart from the two pupils, we had nobody from secondary school consistently there. Or a student from a college, would have been interesting as well. Yes, they did try to represent everyone, but it would even be better to include these kind of participants as well"* (interested citizen, C2, migrant background, 2nd generation).

Within the group of migrant representatives, in C1, C4 and C5 a lot of **first generation (im)migrant participants** were involved, which reportedly caused more language barriers that may possibly have contributed to a higher turnover. All categories of respondents found the personal and also the work-related reasons for the migrant representatives who skipped a session or dropped out very understandable. They were, however, concerned about situations where migrant representatives did not get to contribute much or where other participants produced **narratives of vicarious experience**, speaking for the migrant community instead of them (see citation 1a-1d in the annex for examples).

In C2 stakeholders and public officials were enthusiastic about the presence of **children and parents who were participant subgroups within the category of representatives of the migrant community** in their city. However, respondents, noticed an underrepresentation and a fluctuating attendance of these specific subgroups. In C2 two children took part and in one PL-meeting a youngster replaced one of the children that had turned ill. Other respondents generally perceived these young participants as very competent to contribute and the children themselves were enthusiastic about their participation and their collaboration with the adults and the facilitator that worked with them, but similarly to the above cities they reported instances where these migrant representatives did not take the floor and noticed vicarious narratives. We will come back to precise interactional patterns in more detail below. For now it suffices to note that, in spite of the appreciation for their presence and competence, most respondents in C1 agreed that the children and parents constituted too small of a subgroup for their voice to fully be heard and that this created unbalanced interactional dynamics (see citations 2a-2e in annex for examples of respondents' observations).

In C1 and C3 **young people with a migrant background aged 17-25** constituted another subgroup of the migrant representatives. In both cities these young participants initially were more unexperienced and appeared to be more silent. In reflecting on the group composition of the PL in C1 a stakeholder of a civil society organisation shared several reflections on this matter, including some suggestions for future PL-cycles to accommodate for such situations. Firstly, she proposed there could have been an extra introductory PL-meeting specifically consulting young descendants to really get their needs clarified. Secondly, she claimed that not only the institutional or cultural background was important to take into consideration when selecting participants for a PL-cycle, but also the age group they belonged to and the different communicative methods different generations use. Her main concern was that since these things were initially not taken into account, the voices of **young people from migrant descent were overshadowed by the voices of the more formal and older stakeholders** (see citation 3a and 3b in annex).Young respondents with a migrant background did indeed report difficulties of collaboration in the first PL-meetings as we will see below. But they also showed enhancement of trust and agency towards the end of the PL-cycle. Importantly, at least one third of the participants in C1 were young (university) students from migrant descent and these proportions probably contributed greatly to their possibility to increasingly exercise agency. In C3, where the main focus was on youth participation, half of the PL places were deliberately reserved for **young people** between 17 and 25 years old and within that group of youngsters more than half (about 60%) had a migrant background. Although it was certainly not evident for them and the other participants to immediately find a common goal and focus, this balancing act and the fact that the main facilitator herself was also young and had a migrant background reportedly contributed to their perception of having what they called 'a safe space of co-existence'. This did not only create their proper perception of progressively trusting the adult and 'formal' participants more, it also prompted the stakeholders and policymakers to reflect on their own position and created a context in which the focus was on the needs of the young migrants, as is evidenced from the following citation of a policy maker and citation 3c of a stakeholder from a civil society organisation in the annex.

> *"The young peoples' realities and their needs are a bit distant from ours and what we have done is to adapt to their needs so that their participation was facilitated. It is important that participation projects should be adapted to those for whom they are intended"* (policy maker, C3, non-migrant background).

3.1.1.2 Policy makers and administrators

All respondents across cities also recognised the importance of policy makers and made a distinction between public officials or civil servants that were part of the administration and policy makers with executive powers, like council members or aldermen. Administrators seemed to have been rather constant in their attendance of the PL-meetings, but some policy makers with executive powers showed more fluctuating participation. With respect to the presence of aldermen that participated in C2, for instance, respondents were very positive at first, stating it was nice that politicians recognised the relevance of the project and contributed from their own personal perspectives. But respondents of C2 also noticed that these aldermen only attended the first part of the first PL and that only one could return for a part of PL3. Respondents feared that **without the (continuous) presence and collaboration of policy makers with executive responsibilities in the debates no real political change would ever be possible.** (See citation 4a and 4b in annex for examples about the presence of aldermen from C2).

The policy makers themselves also voiced opinions about their roles. These were different for policy makers with and policy makers without a migrant background. The district councillor, who took part as a policy maker in C6 and had a migrant background herself, described how she had made a personal effort to take part in the project:

> *"I really pushed through to take part because I thought I could really explain the rights movement in society […] as a Muslim myself. […] All the organisations, all the parties, all the people [working] together: if we can converse and communicate about human rights with each other to understand them better, then we can propagate human rights better"* (policy maker, C6, migrant background, 1st generation).

In this example and in the remainder of the interview the councillor stressed that her **migrant experience was important to understand nuances about integration** and bring about change in human rights' policies. The elected official of C3, who did not have a migrant background claimed that elected politicians should **listen more to the (migrant) citizens** they represent and make policy decisions for. She stressed that listening to the young people with a migrant background in C3 had made her political vision grow but that more change (and participatory deliberation) is still needed in integration policies (see citation 5 in annex).

Regarding the presence of **administrators** in the PL-meetings, the perceptions of other categories of respondents was not that pronounced. It seems representatives of the migrant community did not seem to make a big difference at first between the group of other stakeholders and the public servants. Mainly the younger people seemed to be a bit more distant towards administrators at first (see citations 6a and 6b in annex). In C3 the young people, indeed, first expressed being weary of civil servants' official attitude and attire, but also claimed that this distrust evaporated as the PL-cycle further enrolled.

Stakeholders did not offer many details about the presence of administrators. Exceptions were the opinions of the policy maker in C6 and the facilitator in C1 who both claimed some civil servants were too present in some of the exchanges (see citations 7 and 8).

One administrator from C5 corroborated that view and highlighted the risks of having too many administrators present during PL-meetings: the risk that their experience with the themes would result in taking up too much conversational space (see citation 9). However, most public officials in all cities, self-reported that they were aware of their own roles and of the risk that the implicit hierarchic interpretations of those roles would affect the equity of the participatory process. The public official in C2, for instance, expressed this quite literally (see citation 10a in annex). In all cities most public officers that were interviewed reported instances where they restrained themselves, even if they felt compelled to take up the role of the mediator (see citations 10b and 10c). However, public officers also self-reported that **their presence was essential for the method to work and the ideas to be implemented**. A public official in C1, additionally claimed that if administrators attend deliberative democratic exchanges, it is of paramount importance to pay attention to the departments and bodies they represent. In her view this **representation should be wide enough and involve several proxies** to create participation across the board.

"If there is no political representative, it becomes or it risks becoming a group that talks to each other, expresses problems, even solutions, not just problems, but between them and therefore has no, no consequence. And therefore the presence of the administration within …was important" (public official, C1, non-migrant background).

3.1.1.3 Stakeholders

Regarding the **role of stakeholders** different (self-assessing) opinions were equally shared in the interviews across cities. On the one hand, many stakeholders deemed their presence necessary. On the other hand, stakeholders of mainly grassroot organisations were sometimes critical about the presence of other more formal stakeholders claiming they took up too much space, much like they had claimed about the civil servants.

Across the partaking cities some more established stakeholders and members from the administration that professionally worked on integration policies, observed that within a city's administration and its institutional and civil society network a lot of variety exists. According to these respondents involvement and interesting exchanges occurred mainly when these different representatives created collaborations and united around the same goal during the PL-meetings. **From this more professional lens** the importance of **finding common ground and working on concrete ideas** was deemed necessary. Respondents from different cities transversely emphasised that participation was brought about by **these groups' commitment to collaborate and find solutions**. In the words of such stakeholders from C4 and C5, it was easier for participants to interact meaningfully if they already were acquainted, worked together or simply were more experienced than others.

"I find very important the combination on the one hand between exchange (expertise that comes together there), but at the same time also the joint goal to implement something […]There were some who had more direct professional contact with the group and others less. Accordingly, some were more involved [in the group discussions] and others less. But that also simply had to do with experience" (C6, non-migrant background).

Other respondents, mainly civil society organisation representatives, highlighted this that within the stakeholders group **some important sectors**, such as the education, employment and/or health sectors **were missing** in (some of the) the policy lab(s)

(sessions) in their cities. When included during the end of the PL-cycle, these sectors reportedly helped certain project organisers to outreach to members of the migrant community (see citation 11a). They also observed that too much of a 'professional' focus sometimes created vicarious narratives (see citation 11b and 11c for evidence about these observations).

3.1.1.4 Facilitators

Although, strictly speaking, the **facilitators** do not belong to the deliberative participant categories, their presence is essential in the composition of a policy lab. According to deliverable 3.3 the total number of facilitators per city varied within the partnership. This makes it difficult to assess the perceived effect of facilitation across cities in a consistent manner. However, as we will see in the following sections, all categories of respondents in all cities claimed that facilitation greatly helped them to get their voiced heard and collaborate equally. Most respondents claimed that a lack of facilitation hindered the flow of the exchanges and decision-making possibilities.

Regarding the composition of the lab sessions, it is important to note here, that according to the respondents and the facilitators themselves a minimum of two facilitators (on an average number of 20-25 participants) seemed a minimum requirement. Within the project itself, budget and time constraints created a situation in which several small-group discussions were not facilitated by designated facilitators, leading to vacuums that other respondents, mainly administrators (felt solicited to) step(ped) into. We will come back to this later on as well. For now it suffices to mention that most respondents of all categories claimed that preferably and most definitely at the beginning of a policy cycle, each small-group workshops is facilitated. So depending on the lay-out, the design and the structure of a PL-lab cycle this recommended minimum number of two facilitators can vary.

Facilitators' self-perceptions of skills and knowledge

Most facilitators that took part in the MUST-a-lab project were not officially trained facilitators of multicultural deliberations, prior to their engagement with the local PL's. The only city that outsourced facilitation to trained facilitators was C1. The facilitator from C1 that took part in the semi-structured interview already worked as a trained mediator and a psychologist before she participated in the PL's. She reported that her work skills were useful to create a relationship with the group in an empathic way, thus introducing a first successful element of facilitation in the PL's.

> *"I think my role as a mediator helped me and allowed me to pick up on aspects during the groups, during the meetings, just to facilitate ... I mean, if I probably hadn't... if I wasn't a mediator now or, anyway, hadn't done these studies, it would have been a bit complicated for me to be able to understand, and to understand the questions or ask questions, so I think it was fundamental"* (facilitator, C1, non-migrant background).

On the other hand, the precise prerequisites for PL's were also new to her, which contributed to the fact that she initially struggled with fatigue and uncertainties. She claimed that it was very important to have received further training in the context of the MUST-a-Lab project. In particular, she mentioned the transnational training session in the first year of the project in which the large majority of MUST-a-lab facilitators, including two facilitators of C1, participated. On the one hand, this experience reportedly allowed her to put herself on the side of the participants and better understand their perspective, on the other hand it allowed her to meet facilitators from other cities. One of the success factors of the MUST-a-lab approach, she mentioned, was indeed working in facilitation teams that consisted of at least two facilitators. The gain, she claimed, was in the ability to exchange with each other, coordinate large groups together and work in synergy. Another aspect that made her feel supported was being part of a larger local and transnational network

incorporating facilitators of the other cities and the knowledge partners which gathered in online meetings. These meetings were also mentioned by the facilitators of C2-C6

Prior to the MUST-a-lab project the facilitators of C2-C6 were not officially trained in multicultural deliberations. In the interviews they all clearly stated that according to them, facilitation was of paramount importance to engender equitable communicative interactions. However, most of them also expressed uncertainty about their own facilitation skills. Despite the transnational training in the first year of the project, they reported a need for more clarity about the roles and functions, even more training and more practice. The facilitator in C2, for instance, explained that after the transnational training the facilitation team in C2 engaged in additional talks with a co-worker in their city department who was an expert in the field of process guidance and methods. That co-worker also participated in the first PL-session as an observer and gave tips. Having an experienced facilitator at her side thus greatly helped her to feel confident and to facilitate in a way she felt qualitative PL-sessions required. Similar sentiments were shared by the facilitators of C3, C4 and C6.

We will come back to the roles facilitators took up during the PL-meetings throughout the report, also regarding facilitation of children and youngsters. A last reflection at this organisational point concerns a special type of category that was inherent to the set-up of the MUST-a-lab project and occurred in C2-C6: the (sub)category of **facilitators that were also public officials and part of the organising teams.** The facilitators-organisers themselves and the other respondents provided mixed reflections about these multifaceted roles. On the one hand, respondents of C2-C6 seemed to like the fact that facilitators were also personifying the project management team within the cities' administration and were individuals they already had built a certain relation with before the PL-sessions commenced. This seemed particularly true for respondents representing the migrant community. On the other hand, the facilitators themselves claimed maintaining all these roles was a very difficult joggling act, as is evidenced from a citation of the facilitators of C6 below and citation 12 in annex.

> *"I have been working as a facilitator before when I was not involved in the project and this time I was involved as a project manager in the project and this also affected my role as a facilitator, because all of the participants knew me personally and I think that helped me a lot as a facilitator. When I think of the first policy lab, I think that was the most challenging policy lab for me? […]There were a lot of question marks, also regarding the project: 'How will this work? How will the micro experiments work? What do you expect from me? How many resources do we need to put in the project and so on and so forth?' So there were a lot of questions also addressing me as a project manager and not as a facilitator. This is why I had to switch roles constantly. It made me feel I had to bear a lot of responsibility"* (facilitator, C6, non-migrant background).

It is apparent from these observations that the combination of roles made facilitation very challenging at times. The above and the other facilitators agreed that roles and responsibilities need to be defined and clarified at the start of the PL-process. When roles and positions are more clear, this can also enhance trust among participants. When a facilitator needed to answer questions in the capacity of project manager and/or a civil servant, the roles sometimes got blurry. According to the respondents of this mixed category it is especially important to be able to focus on one role when one is not experienced with these type of exchanges.

Before we move to the next section and look at the structural components of the MUST-a-lab project, we conclude this section with an overview of participants' reported motivation to take part in the PL-cycle of their cities.

3.1.1.5 Motivation of participants to take part

In the qualitative data that were collected in the interviews and focus group discussions, all respondents claimed they were highly motivated to join the MUST-a-lab project and attend the PL-meetings. For most respondents the local **topic of the policy lab** was the highest incentive to enrol. Many indeed claimed that these topics had, in their experience, not been approached in such a co-constructive manner and with such plurality of participants (see citation 13).

Other motivations were different for the individual participants and ranged from personal **life experiences** (mainly expressed by representatives of the migrant community), over a **professional sense of responsibility and networking possibilities** regarding solutions for integration policies (mainly expressed by stakeholders and policy makers and to a lesser extent by facilitators), to becoming **familiarised with the perspective of others, learning opportunities** and **having impact on local policy** (expressed by all categories of respondents). Sometimes more types of incentives were applicable to one individual.

Although the participation rate in the PL-meetings of all cities went up and down and in some cities (momentarily) diminished in terms of diversity and representation of participants with a migrant background, the large majority of respondents that took part in the interviews and focus group discussions mentioned they had **initially planned to personally attend each meeting.** Some of the respondents, mainly TCN's, interested citizens, children and young people with a migrant background, made clear that their (momentary) absence was due to personal and practical reasons, such as **going to school or fetch their children from school or inconvenient working hours**. Some mentioned other **personal reasons,** such as a family health emergency. Some policy makers and to a lesser extent also stakeholders from civil society, private or grassroot organisations, associations and educational professionals, claimed they could not combine engagement in each PL-meeting with **other professional engagements** and had sent different people to at least one of the PL-meetings.

Most respondents found the **fluctuating presence and turnover of certain participants problematic** and claimed it slowed down the process considerably, also with respect to the relational bonds that were forged between different types of participants and ensuing interactive dynamics. This sentiment was shared by all categories of respondents in all cities (see citation 14 for an example). Some respondents mentioned frustrations about the **difficulty of attending some meetings**, while they initially had planned to attend the whole cycle and claimed it would be useful to make up a clearer planning in advance (see citation 15). Interestingly, some respondents, mainly some stakeholders in C6 and young participants with a migrant background in C3, recognised the practical attendance issues, but claimed this **fluctuating presence cannot be avoided in long term projects** and added that it felt reassuring that other participants from the same category would take their place.

> *"I agree with the issue of availability, but as a point in favour I have to say that it leaves me more relaxed... I think that if someone cannot be there at some point... there are always others to back him up... if one cannot make it, another will try to come" (young focus group respondent, C3, migrant background, 2nd generation).*

We will come back to reflections about group dynamics and how they influenced interactional possibilities in more detail below. For now it suffices to repeat that fluctuating

presence of especially the migrant representatives did indeed create **narratives of vicarious experience.** Since not all cities were able to recruit (many) migrants that took part in MUST-a-lab as end-users of the policies in the interviews and focus group discussions, these narratives of vicarious experience did paradoxically also occur within the qualitative data.

When other respondents talked about the turnover or disengagement of migrant participants in the MUST-a-lab project, they listed **unfamiliarity with the country or city administration** and sometimes supposed **negative experiences** with the **city services** (mainly about TCN participants), **language barriers**, **uneven representation** of PL-categories and an ensuing sense of alienation, other **personal priorities**, **loss of interest** and the lack of solicited or feasible **involvement in the micro-experiments** as possible reasons.

3.1.2 Structure

As was mentioned in previous deliverables of WP2 and WP3, the whole MUST-a-lab project consisted of three years, each with a specific purpose: the first year entailed a preparation phase, that was designed to make sure the project activities tied in with and got inspired by existing local integration and inclusion strategies, the second evolved around the execution of the policy lab cycle and a third year is reserved for follow-up of actions and recommendations that were created in the second year and are still being carried out while this report is being written.

Since the interviews and focus group discussions for the evaluative research were carried out within or immediately following the second year and focused on the policy lab cycle, this report mainly addresses participants' perceptions of that phase. Moreover two thirds of the qualitative data from the interviews and the focus groups were collected after PL2 and two third (the second round of interviews with stakeholders and the interviews with all facilitators) were collected after PL3. This entails that we have more diversified data about the first two PL-meetings and will generally focus on the second year of the project during which the PL-cycle took shape. However, some respondents also offered reflections about the preparatory year and their need for follow-up activities, especially in relation to interactive and participatory possibilities. When relevant we will incorporate those as well. When reading these perceptions it is important to keep in mind, however, that the bulk of the reflections stem from a period during which participants were still very much discovering the possibilities of policy labs and were mostly still busy implementing the micro-experiments that resulted from PL2.

In this section we will first discuss what respondents shared about the preparatory activities, then scrutinize what they said about the influence of meta level structural elements and then look at the organisation of the PL-meetings themselves.

3.1.2.1 Preparation phase

The preparation phase foresaw in interactive peer **learning workshops for policy makers and the training sessions for facilitators** in the first year of the project. The policy makers that were interviewed did not comment on these workshops that much. Those who did, were mostly interested in the **transnational learning opportunities** and mentioned they enjoyed the perspective of other cities on integration and inclusion. As was mentioned before, according to most of the facilitators, the **transnational training about facilitation they received was not sufficient,** as most of them had no prior facilitation experience and others felt they needed more specialised knowledge and skills to facilitate deliberative processes involving so many different target groups and dynamics (see section 3.1.1.4).

The preparation phase also foresaw in outreaching, informative activities in the first year of the project and preparatory workshops for less experienced stakeholders and migrant representatives in the second year. During these workshops migrant representatives and

grassroot stakeholders were supposed to be prepared for the PL process and acquired basic knowledge of local policy making. When respondents of the interviews and focus groups were asked in more detail what made them enrol exactly apart from an interest in the topic, many respondents from the migrant community and many stakeholders across cities listed the **enthusiastic talks** that were given by the local project organisers during informative sessions.

According to respondents that were on the local organising teams, mainly public officials that also engaged in the PL-sessions as administrators, it was **not always easy to decide who to address during the capacity building activities** in the light of having a diverse, representative group. In most cities many of these respondents claimed that in hindsight, they reached out to organisations they already knew and would be curious to see what happened if they had invited previously unknown stakeholders (see citation 16 for an example).

According to the migrants and the stakeholders across cities, however, these preparatory talks contributed greatly to the **sense of urgency** they felt to be involved in the exchanges and clarified why these exchanges were relevant for them. The talks guaranteed that they enrolled for the preparatory workshops. Some respondents mentioned that the preparation phase in general and the preparatory workshops in particular made clear what was expected from them during the PL-sessions. Some respondents claimed exact expectations about **their roles in the project were not clear at first and only crystallised later on.** In some cases this explains the initial insecurity of predominantly the representatives of the migrant community.

This concern about predictable and understandable goals and expected attitudes was voiced repeatedly in C3. For the young people that took part in MUST-a-lab the workshops in the preparation phase were reportedly not sufficient. Creating a safe space for them meant that everyone needed to be aware of what was expected from the get-go. For participants with previous experience in deliberative projects it was easier to interact and intervene because they knew what to expect. For the young participants who had no prior experience it took some more time to adjust to the PL-requirements. They initially received information about what a policy lab was and what was expected from all the different categories of participants, but it was still challenging to put these skills into practice. In order to overcome the divide between the groups, the **young people that took part in the focus group discussion suggested to provide more preliminary sessions to get acquainted with interactions and dialogic practices more**, a suggestion that was already made by the stakeholder from a civil society organisation about the young migrant participants in C1 (see section 3.1.1.1). A citizen with a migrant background and a public official in C2 had another view and highlighted the fact that it was important that the informative sessions were not too numerous. They perceived the **relative anonymity of the other participants**, i.e. the fact that they did not know each other well before the labs took place, beneficial to the depth and the focus of the interactions (see citations 17 and 18).

3.1.2.2 Overall structure

As was mentioned in deliverables 3.3 and 5.2 in all cities, the **sequence of the PL-cycle** in the second year was the same for all cities. The project foresaw in the preparatory workshops for less experienced stakeholders and migrant representatives in PL0 and three PL-meetings. During the first PL the intention was to collect ideas and challenges about integration, particularly from the migrant representatives. During the second PL-meeting the intention was to define and design a selection of local micro-experiments to address these challenges. These experiments were subsequently supposed to be carried out by groups of PL-participants. During PL3 these pilot activities were supposed to be evaluated with all the lab participants and recommendations for future policies were to be discussed and formulated.

First and foremost, when asked about the overall structure, some respondents, mainly stakeholders and vicariously also migrant representatives repeated the need for more preparatory activities in the second year of the project (see citation 19). Secondly, other **practical issues concerning the timing, the number of PL-meetings and the interval in between PL-meetings** were raised by all categories of respondents across cities. The common thread between these observations seems to be a need for **more PL-meetings** and a **shorter interval between PL2 and PL3.** We will address the first issue first.

3.1.2.3 Interval

In the set-up of MUST-a-lab a period of 6-8 months was foreseen between PL2 and PL3 to carry out micro-experiments. Yet, many respondents agreed that this **interval was too long.** Several reasons for this opinion can be discerned in the qualitative data. Firstly, **not all participants were involved in the micro-experiments**, which created a situation during which they did not hear anything or very little about the progress that was made. Some respondents also claimed they were not made aware of the fact that they were to carry out the micro experiments themselves.

From an organisational perspective, the long interval between meetings made several respondents claim that they lost clarity about the goals, connection with the other participants and a sense of urgency (see citations 20 and 21 for examples). These claims were mostly made by stakeholders and policy-makers that were interviewed in the final phase of the project, not so much by the representatives of the migrant community and not so much by respondents that were involved in the micro-experiments.

Interestingly, concerning the interval between the labs, even the stakeholders and administrators that were interviewed in C4, made claims suggesting they would prefer more tightly interlinked PL-meetings. In C4, however, PL3 was organised two months after PL2, because the city joined the MUST-a-lab partnership at a later stage due to the fact one partner of the consortium dropped out at the end of the first project year.

"I would organise policy lab meetings shorter after each other. There were two months in between and maybe you can make this only one month. There could be an improvement regarding the continuity" (local stakeholder NGO, C4, non-migrant background).

"What I would rather change is the long time between the individual PLs, because in the meantime you already forget the faces and work areas of the participants. On the other hand, if you do three events in one week, there is also the question of who will and can participate" (local administrator, C4, non-migration background).

This raises the question whether the policy lab method would not generally benefit from a **higher number of meetings**, a suggestion that was made by several respondents as well.

3.1.2.4 Number of meetings

Stakeholders from C5 and C3, for instance, explicitly stressed the importance of continuity when addressing integration issues within a local community (see citations 22 and 23). They also claimed more meetings would allow them to delve deeper into certain topics and increase the number of participants in the long run. A citizen with a migrant background in C1 expressed a similar view and claimed that more PL-meetings would be advisable (see citations 24 and 25).

In sum, respondents clearly were enthusiastic about the project as a whole and many would even have preferred a continuation beyond the scope and the timeline of the MUST-a-lab project. Obviously this is related to the experiences respondent had during the meetings themselves. In the next sections we will look at the way they perceived those from an organisational perspective to then move onto the ways they perceived participatory possibilities later on.

3.2. Organisational structure of PL-meetings

Respondents had many reflections about the structure of the individual PL-meetings. In this section we will focus on what they said about the organisation. In the next section we will elaborate on the ways the different structures influenced participation in more depth.

Firstly, respondents were **appreciative of the flexibility** with which the organising teams planned the days and moments those meetings occurred. In spite of drop-outs, turn-overs and concerns for a clearer schedule ahead of time, respondents noted these efforts and were positive about the way the teams repeatedly tried to accommodate the challenges of their life and work realities. All cities indeed seemed to have undertaken efforts to take into account participants' availability. C1 split the last PL in two days, for example, C2 split the first PL in two days, C3, split PL2 in two, C4 organised meetings on a Saturday, the project managers of C5 adapted their planning to the TCN's and organised meetings in the evenings and C6 continuously attracted specific new participants. These adaptations are recommendable and certainly contributed to the motivation of the PL-participants to take part, but they also created situations where certain sessions were shorter than others; within the same city (the last PL-meetings in C1 for example) and across cities (the second PL-meetings compared between C3 and C5 for example, or the last PL-meetings compared between C2 and C6). These differences are not problematic per se, but they make comparisons about transnational perceptions of participants a bit more difficult.

Secondly, respondents had many opinions about the detailed **day schedules** of the individual PL-meetings. In all cities the time spent during the PL-meetings was divided by the time participants spent in the plenaries and the time they spent in workshops. **Generally, all meetings were organised following a similar scheme: there was some sort of informal reception moment on arrival, sometimes involving a collective check-in, plenary moments during which all participants deliberated together and small-group exchanges with different techniques to enhance interactions and mostly also a collective check-out.** However, as was explained in deliverables 3.3 and 5.2, the exact planning was different per city, complicating once again a detailed cross-city analysis. Since the challenges this posed regarding participation and facilitation is the object of the first part of deliverable 5.2 and since the interviews were carried out by a mixed group of researchers and facilitators-as-researchers, we cannot always be sure which exact PL-meetings or sessions respondents were referring to in the interviews and focus group discussions. In this section we will therefore zoom in on respondents' perceptions of plenaries and workshops more generally. If we do know which PL-meeting they were referring to, we will seek coherence with the analysis in 5.2 and compare the findings of the observations with the perceptions of the respondents.

3.2.1 General set-up

Generally, most respondents that took part in the interviews and focus group discussions reported that the **combination of icebreakers, plenary sessions, small-group discussions and informal moments, gradually helped them and other participants to reach elevated levels of participation**. The small-group discussions were reportedly mostly used to share ideas, brainstorm and get to know what the perspectives of different participants were. In some cities some of the plenaries fulfilled a similar function. In other cities the plenaries were mostly used for icebreaking activities, summarising the results of the workshops, collective sharing of stories and experiences, debating, decision-making and collective check-out moments to conclude the day and look forward to what was ahead.

The combination of collective and more focused interactions was deemed an important asset to the group dynamic and an equal distribution of participation, deliberation and decision-making opportunities. The predictability of following such a repeated, recognisable scheme reportedly gave respondents, especially the less experienced ones, the peace of mind to feel safe and contribute with more ease (citation 26 for an example).

3.2.2 Respondents' perceptions of plenary sessions' organisation

Plenaries as ice-breaking

In most cities the beginning of each PL-meeting was organised as a plenary type of ice-breaking activity in which (new) participants got acquainted with each other and with the goals of the local policy labs. **Most respondents that took part in the interviews were enthusiastic about these ice-breaking activities**.

When planning the interactions, the facilitators selected techniques they could use. In the interviews, the facilitators mentioned that planned **techniques did not always pan out as foreseen**, however, as successful use of techniques and tools is also dependent on the group that you use these tools with. In the opinion of the facilitator from C6, for instance, too much emphasis on creative activities in the initial phases of the MUST-a-lab project sometimes stood in the way of really getting to know each other. Yet, the same facilitator also noted that, especially because of the fact that new participants were introduced up to the last PL, a certain systematic introduction technique would have been helpful at the beginning of each PL-meeting (see citation 27 and 28). Generally, **many respondents claimed they wanted more time to get acquainted with other respondents**, irrespective of the tools and techniques that were used to initiate exchanges (see citation 29 for an example).

We will come back to this when we delve deeper into the participatory dimensions later on. From an organisational perspective we can conclude that ice-breaking activities were perceived by the respondents as useful, mainly to get to know each other more and share personal stories, but the relational aspects were prioritised over concrete techniques that solicited the responses.

Check-out plenaries

Similarly, respondents shared positive comment about of check-out activities, but also raised some questions about their long-term effects. **Some respondents claimed these moments felt a bit forced, some saw the potential of them reinforcing equitable relational bonds, others were not sure what to make of them.** A migrant representative of C2, for instance, claimed that the circling method that was used at the end of PL1 and PL2 in C2 did create a space for structured turn-taking at that moment, but also claimed she was not entirely sure if it had an impact on inclusive participation in later meetings (see citation 30 in annex).

Introductory, deliberative and summative plenaries

Although the majority of the cities used introductory, sometimes deliberative and mostly summative plenary sessions, these functions hardly came up explicitly in the interviews and focus group discussions. Therefore, in this section we will not make a distinction between these different forms of plenaries.

In general, all categories of respondents in all cities seemed to like the **collective nature of the plenary moments and reported that the atmosphere was respectful, inviting and constructive.** Most stakeholders and public officials perceived plenaries as spaces for varied discussion, where all participants, also migrant representatives, could freely speak their minds (see citation 31 for an example). Nevertheless **some participatory challenges** pertaining to large group discussions emerged during the plenaries. We will deal with those in the next section about participation.

3.2.3. Respondents' perceptions of small-group workshops' organisation

The small-group workshops were mainly used for brainstorming about the integration challenges and the needs, for discussing and developing micro-experiments and in most cities for drafting policy recommendations that were grafted on or a consequence of the piloting activities that were carried out in the period following PL2. Most respondents, from all categories in all cities stated that working in small groups was one of the success factors of the PL-meetings. Some described the small-group workshops as the **'core' of the PL-meetings.**

> *"So, I thought it was the group work that was the actual core and the group work situation: the tables, the groups, a flipchart. These were the heart of the policy labs"* (local administrator, C6, non-migrant background).

Small-groups across the cities and across time were organised differently, some including facilitators at each table, some not having facilitators at all, some hinging on a semi-facilitated structure.

Non-facilitated small-group workshops
When **small groups were not facilitated roles and positions between members were more unclear** which made it challenging for some participants, especially from the migrant community, to navigate the conversations. It seems that without a clear moderator present, administrators and formal stakeholders generally took up more space (see citation 32 in the annex). In small groups that were not facilitated **the composition also seemed to play a bigger role**, reportedly leading to almost technical exchanges when groups contained more institutional participants on the one hand and more balanced proposals when groups had a more diversified composition on the other hand (see citation 33 and 34 in the annex). Over time some self-organised groups had benefits for the participatory possibilities as well. We will look at this in more detail below.

Facilitated small-group workshops
In most cases in all cities at least part of the small-group workshops were facilitated by a facilitator or someone who was assigned to take up that role. For an overview of the sessions that were and were not facilitated we refer to deliverable 5.2. From the perspective of the respondents **these facilitative interventions were beneficial to the depth and the ease of the conversation**, as we will see in more detail in the remainder of the report.

3.2.4 Informal moments

When analysing the organisational aspects that were brought up in the data, an interesting theme emerged: the importance of informal moments. According to all categories of respondents in all cities these moments laid the foundations for trust, a sense of safety and equal participatory exchanges. For instance, many respondents attached importance to the **venue the PL took place in** claiming it was important that the space was accessible and multifunctional, and accommodated for informal encounters during the breaks. In C2, both a citizen with a migrant background and a stakeholder explained that the informal, yet neutral venue and the outlay of that venue contributed to their sense of feeling welcomed into the first PL-meeting. Also the facilitator and project manager of C4 recognised the importance of a literal space to conduct PL-sessions in and explained how much thought she had put into **finding the right space for interactions** (see citation 35 and 36 respectively in the annex).

The facilitator in C3 mentioned a little coffee place where the young participants got together. Getting acquainted on a personal level in this kind of informal setting reportedly contributed to higher levels of participation and a general feeling of safety within the group

in the policy lab sessions itself (see citation 37 in the annex). A similar observation was made by several stakeholders across cities who claimed that informal moments created opportunities for the spontaneous recitation of personal daily-life experiences (see citation 38 in the annex for an example). A stakeholder from a grassroot organisation in C1, mentioned that such narratives contributed to the formation of a different, more layered group cohesion, as is evidenced from the following statement:

> *"I found that during lunch … there were moments in which there was maybe, I won't say almost more of a group dimension ... but there were moments that in my opinion were also important ones; in the sense that the more personal characteristics then also emerged ... but also precisely the expectations, the desires, I remember someone, including me, talking about ... I'm going to buy a house, I'm going to rent, I mean things, in short, chit-chat that you also do outside, but in my opinion, they did help a bit to grasp the whole of thing"* (stakeholder civil society organisation, C1, non-migrant background).

This respondent also claimed that other informal moments, like the coffee breaks were more dispersive and perhaps not sufficiently structured. Such perceived lack of informal moments also came up during the focus group discussion in C1 (see citation 39 in the annex). Respondents in C2 transversely appreciated the structured informal coffees and lunches a lot and confirmed it served a function of fostering bonds between participants and producing different narratives. One element of critique in C2 concerned the fact that it was Ramadan during the first PL-meeting and this entailed that part of the participants did not participate in the lunch and went for a walk amongst themselves. This impeded them from sharing personal narratives and experiences informally in PL1 (see citation 40 in the annex). In C4, respondents were appreciative of the fact that the lunches were catered by an association that tied in with the MUST-a-lab theme, hiring refugees and providing jobs for them.

Aside from coffee breaks and lunches, stakeholders in C6 confirmed the importance of informal moments and added that the project manager of C6 had foreseen a technique to promote informal encounters by creating a pin board. One stakeholder from the educational sector explained this technique fed into **the need to get acquainted** with one another more, especially because the composition of participants in C6 changed throughout the PL-process.

> *"They had a pin board where everyone had the opportunity to introduce themselves with a short profile. […] that was really exciting because this pin board was there several times during the PL-process and in every break you could go there and say: 'Ah, you were there, do you know him? Wat do you do exactly?' A bit like that. I found it really exciting"* (focus group respondent, C6, local stakeholder, employee educational institute, non-migrant background).

Respondents from the focus group in C1 also saw other means of fostering informal bonds between participants, by connecting through a Whatsapp group for instance. Interestingly, the respondents also included the importance of asking for consent when organising such communication strategies.

In sum, from a cross-cities' and cross-respondents' perspective an accessible venue and space and communication methods and moments that contributed to informal exchange

and spontaneous and creative discussions, seem to have contributed to the relational dynamics and the sharing of personal narratives. We will come back to this in the next section when we look at the ways respondents discussed participation, agency and facilitation.

3.3 Participation and facilitation

When coding the interviews and focus group discussions 'participation' was one of the pre-defined codes we selected for the analysis. We conceptualised it broadly to allow for a more nuanced inductive interpretation later on. Within the broad concept of participation some participants, also some who partook in the full PL-cycle, described participation mainly as attending (the) meetings. Others mentioned a gradual process of commitment and involvement leading to the possibility of exercising agency and making impactful decisions as equal members of the policy labs in question. In the following sections we will discuss the prerequisites of participation and the social conditions that made exercising agency possible and link these notions to the organisational dimensions above.

3.3.1 Participation

Concerning participation, respondents generally had different things to say. As was mentioned previously, all categories transversely were initially very motivated to join the PL's and listed the local topic and the co-constructive method as main incentives. Other reasons were sharing personal life experiences, a sense of responsibility, understanding the perspective of others, learning new things and having impact on local policy. Sometimes more incentives were applicable to one individual.

> *"I've always said to myself that we must never be one-dimensional people but ... try for a moment to vary, understand everything that surrounds us, so ... going to the policy labs, I was not only representing my football club […] I was obviously also representing minorities or, in any case, first, second or third generation kids […] so I came here not as a coach, not as a representative of sports, but as a person who has to deal with all these situations" (interested citizen, C1, migrant background, 1st generation).*

Most respondents' opinions and reflections that transcend the idea of participation as merely being present and attending sessions, viewed participation as longer term involvement, committing to the goals of the PL's in more dynamic and relational terms. These reflections about participation often referred to the gradual creation of a metaphorical 'safe space', i.e. a **process of building trust and creating equitable bonds** between all PL-members. Respondents from all cities referred to having gone through a **learning process** regarding such type of long-term participation in groups.

In C1, for instance, the initial participation of participants was described as slightly less equal in several interviews by all types of respondents, i.e. stakeholders, policy makers, migrant representatives and the facilitator. During the first PL-sessions, participants did not know each other yet and were not familiar with the method. Some fatigue and disorientation were perceived, both among the group members and the facilitators. According to the facilitator, some participants, hence, expressed themselves less. These obstacles were overcome with time, knowledge, and networking among the team of facilitators, but also with a larger network of supportive organisations within the partnership. The respondents from other cities also referred to a process of learning about the PL-method and participatory possibilities. In C3, for instance, this view was repeatedly voiced by all categories of respondents. C3 involved a lot of young people with a migrant background in its PL-sessions and choose youth participation as the main focus of their micro-experiments and recommendations. All respondents from this city, but especially the younger ones, reported differences between the levels of participation in the beginning and at the end of the process. Respondents said they needed to get acquainted with the PL-method before they could participate fully. In this regard all types of respondents spoke about the progressive trust that was built between participants and the time it took to learn to open up and share ideas. This observation was shared by different respondents,

including the young people themselves, as is evidenced in the citation below. (See citation 41 for an additional statement from the facilitator.)

"We needed to open our mind to what participation is. We needed to separate it a bit from the concept that participation is only for some people or that it only interests a certain type of people" (young focus group respondent, C3, migrant background, 2nd generation).

"I used to listen to someone who works in the city council, because they are people in suits and ties, super serious, super formal and they are not like that... I have felt very comfortable talking to them and working with them" (young focus group respondent, C3, migrant background, 2nd generation).

The respondents from C1 and C3 were not the only ones to report a learning curve. Also the citizens with a migrant background, stakeholders, public officials and facilitators from the other cities were so new to the method that **the goals and the codified rules of engagement were frequently defined as emergent qualities**, that slowly took shape and were only really substantiated as the PL-sessions and meetings progressed and focused more on the operational dimensions. However, many respondents, mainly grassroot stakeholders, some public officials and representatives of the migrant community, also pointed out that focusing on the more operational dimension of the PL-sessions caused instances during which non-migrant voices imposed themselves on those of migrant representatives, who were not always able to take the floor, creating **unbalanced relations between participants.** Although the respondents generally showed great appreciation for facilitation, many stressed that at the end of PL1 and during PL2 when the discussion started to centre around the outcomes, more mediation and more explicit attention to the voices of migrants would have been appropriate. A member of the focus group, representing the young migrant community in C1, for instance, claimed that the focus on the outcomes did create some frictions in PL2 with mainly, members of associations, creating a situation where young migrant representatives were not actively listened to (see citation 42 in the annex). These dynamics were also observed by the facilitator of C1, but she claimed that hurdles were overcome over time, leading to equitable roles and participation from all categories of participants (see citation 43 in annex).

3.3.2 The social conditions required to exercise agency

Balanced equitable relations were not always easy to create or maintain. They are, however, important prerequisites for all participants to exercise agency. As was mentioned on p2 in D5.1 *"agency refers to unpredictable active participation that contributes to changing structures and narratives that are produced in social interactions (Baraldi, 2022), such as policy labs. Participation as agency is particularly important during the policy lab meetings and in MUST-a-Lab an important objective of policy labs is using participants' agency, and in particular migrant participants' agency, to provide proposals and recommendations about local policies*

Agency can be observed when participants can **freely share their experiences, emotions and opinions** and *"is expressed as attribution of **rights and responsibilities in producing knowledge**, which is called **epistemic authority** (Heritage & Raymond, 2005). This knowledge is produced in narrative form, in particular concerning experiences, points of view and sometimes emotions" (deliverable 5.2, p5).* In the context of a policy lab, agency can be exercised if a context is created in which participation opportunities are equally distributed and individual expressions are empowered, by facilitators and/or by the conversational space and support that other participants provide.

Interestingly, the cross-city analysis of respondents' views revealed that the social relational dimension and the knowledge dimension were both deemed essential by all categories of respondents for the exercise of agency to be possible. This social orientation emerged from several metaphors that were employed during interviews and focus group discussions. One focus group respondent that represented the migrant community in C5, for instance, referred to a policy lab as a 'family' and painted a very vivid picture when describing her PL-experience:

> *"I see the policy labs as a family gathered around a table to have dinner. They are laughing, talking an sharing. In a family you feel safe, different things can be shared and you are equal" (focus group respondent, C5, migrant background, 1st generation).*

This metaphor of the family as she formulated it, seems to emphasise togetherness, safety and equality as vital parts of participation in a policy lab. In C3, one of the young people that took part in the focus group, used the word 'connection': for her the labs meant a connection between the different parties involved. She pointed out that, although each participant started from a different point of view, they all worked in the same direction when they progressed in the PL-cycle. When the other respondents in the focus group in C3 were asked what participation meant for them, they claimed it mainly referred to the opportunity to **express their opinions and personal experiences** on different topics. They also reported that they were given the possibility **to share knowledge, listen to different perspectives, change their mind and make decisions together.** These views were expressed in all focus group discussions and many interviews of all types of respondents across cities. A safe inter-group dynamic that was already described as an essential requirement for participants to remain involved, seems to have been the stepping stone for the exercise of agency and the balanced distribution of epistemic authority within policy labs. **Such dynamic was greatly influenced by the facilitators** that took part in the PL-meetings, as is evidenced from the following citation from a young respondent that took part in the focus group of C1 (and citations 44a and 44b in annex):

> *I would say that I felt very comfortable, and I would also say that the facilitators played a very important role. They always found a way to encourage you to express yourself and dig deep into your thoughts to find a common idea (interested citizen, C1, migrant background, 1st generation).*

Sometimes, however, as was mentioned in the previous sections, equity of expressions and decision-making was not so easy to maintain, as is evidenced from the reflections of a stakeholder in C4, who was very aware of the role that professionals took up in the PL-sessions (see citation 44c in annex). **Overcoming participation hurdles, and thus guarding equal speaking opportunities, balancing out epistemic authority and stimulating the exercise of agency, was mostly realised by facilitators** of the policy labs, as is evidenced from the analysis in deliverable 5.2. We will look at the functions participants attributed to facilitation and its links with agency in the following section.

3.3.3 Facilitation

Facilitation is a fundamental prerequisite for a policy lab to succeed and the participants that took part in the interviews and focus group discussions all mentioned facilitation at some point and greatly appreciated how it influenced the exchanges. Also the facilitators themselves claimed that for equitable participation to continuously be a reality, a **skilful**

facilitation of the sessions is needed, both in plenary and in workshop forms and that facilitation was mostly perceived as guiding the process and less as directing it (see citation 45 in annex for an example from C4). The thematic analysis revealed that four functions were considered relevant in all cities and by all types of participants.

Firstly, facilitation greatly helped participants in terms of **mediating and clarifying the goals of the PL-exchanges.** In most cases clarifications were provided verbally, but respondents also appreciated structural and visual components that the facilitators provided and did not explicitly make a distinction between the verbal prompts and structural and visual dimensions. In C3, for example, respondents claimed that the sheer structure that the facilitators provided gave him peace of mind and made him more motivated to engage. In C3, this structure was visually supported and communication prompting materials were provided that participants could use, as was the case in all cities and especially in C2 and C4 (see citations 45, 46 and 47 in annex). Different from other cities C4 used graphic facilitation throughout all parts of the PL-meetings, also when listing needs when debating the micro-experiments for instance. In those moments they created 'visual vignettes' that could help all participants, but especially the TCN's who were not fluent in the local language. This was highly appreciated by all respondents.

A second function of facilitation that was mentioned by the majority of respondents was that it contributed **to a safe group dynamic and trust.** In C5, for instance, the facilitation team reportedly made a lot of effort to unite all types of participants and make them share and connect (see citation 48 in annex). Creating trust and confidence was also mentioned as the most essential added value of having facilitators present during the PL-sessions in C3. Interventions of facilitators to that extent reportedly resulted in more invested interactions in the debate.

> *"There were a few times when one person spoke less, but in those cases the facilitators asked them to give their opinion. So, we could all contribute equally" (stakeholder youth association, C3, migrant background, 2nd generation).*

A third function of **facilitation** that was reported by many respondents consisted of **guiding or even safe-guarding the speaking turns** and thus had the potential to enhance the exercise of agency and to balance out participants' epistemic authority. In C5 this is evidenced from the following citation from a stakeholder from a civil society organisation in C1 and from the citation of an interested citizen with a migrant background.

> *"Facilitators did a very good job. They built a safe environment and most of the participants were open and comfortable. They made sure every participant had the time and space to talk. There was one incident in the third policy lab, where a stakeholder interrupted a migrant who was trying to elaborate on something he found interesting, and the stakeholder tried to impose his opinion. Facilitators assisted in this situation and supported the migrant" (stakeholder civil society organization, C5, non-migrant background).*

> *"No one invaded each other's space, everyone was allowed to speak, also thanks to the work of the facilitators. It was very helpful to have a facilitator who makes the topic easier. In the end everyone had an impact in the discussion, in fact I was even very surprised by it if I have to say" (interested citizen, C1, migrant background, 1ste generation).*

A stakeholder from C1, however, reported a situation during which the space was not equally distributed and clearly indicated that intervening or stepping in at one point is part of a facilitator's job and stated that the facilitation team could have done this more often. The same respondent pointed out that initially, during plenaries sometimes the facilitation team itself seemed overwhelmed by the discussion and it seemed challenging for them to intervene (see citation 49 in the annex).

A **fourth perceived function** of facilitation consisted of **helping different participants overcoming all sorts of language barriers.** Generally speaking, language barriers were created for two reasons: because participants did not speak the local (and hence the PL operational) language (well) or because they were not acquainted with the **specific technical jargon** used in policy debate. The former barrier occurred mainly when TCN's or first generation migrant citizen representatives were involved, the latter was additionally perceived in relation to a part of the second generation migrant representatives, some less formal stakeholders, and all the younger participants and children. Facilitators across the partnership dealt differently with these barriers, ranging from slowing down the interactional pace over repeating parts of the conversation, to translating words or engaging professional translators.

In sum, according to respondents of the interviews and focus groups, four broad functions of facilitation were discerned: clarifying goals, creating trust, safeguarding equitable turn-taking and overcoming language barriers. All these functions seemingly helped participants to exercise agency, share narratives and make decisions. We will take a look at the interplay of these functions and participatory possibilities respondents perceived in the different structural components of the PL-meetings below, first focusing on the plenaries and subsequently zooming in on the small-group workshops.

3.3.4 Participation, agency and facilitation in the plenaries

As was discussed in the section about the organisation of the labs, the PL-meetings incorporated different types of plenary sessions: ice-breaking or check-inn sessions, check-out sessions and introductory, deliberative and summative plenaries. All these plenaries served different purposes and included supportive elements and hurdles regarding inclusive participation and balanced exercise of agency.

Plenaries as ice-breaking and check-out moments and participation
Most respondents that took part in the interviews were enthusiastic about the participatory possibilities of the ice-breaking and check-out activities. Facilitators had selected techniques and tools such as presentations with cards, check-inn deep democracy tools, movement and orientation cues, which facilitated a s**afe group dynamic and space**. A stakeholder from a civil society organisation of C1, for instance, liked the structural simplicity of those initial moments and the facilitator of C1 claimed these moments helped participants increasingly share stories and exercise agency, also in terms of autonomously overcoming language barriers. This view was corroborated by other respondents, also those that represented the migrant community (see citations 50, 51 and 52 respectively in annex). Some respondents in other cities were more critical of such moments at first, but later recognised its function of getting acquainted and laying the foundations for a safe and equal group dynamic (see citation 53).

In the analysis of the participatory observation in deliverable 5.2 ice-breaking activities were also described as a useful way of exploring personal stories and views on and from lived experience. In most cases, however, after the ice-breaking activities were concluded, these personal stories were discontinued and not dealt with in the remainder of the PL-meetings. This led to the reflection in deliverable 5.2 that ice-breakers are certainly useful to start the facilitation of exchanges in deliberative processes with different stakeholders, but that they are not at all sufficient to establish inclusive dialogic collaboration. This view seems to be partly confirmed by the respondents in the interviews and focus group discussions, although they did not offer many explicit reflections about continuation of narratives beyond the plenary in which they occurred (see citation 27 once more in the annex for an implicit reference).

Another benefit of the icebreaking techniques was that they **structured turn-taking and thus contributed to a (forced but) equitable conversational space** for the different categories of participants, safeguarding the turns of migrant representatives.

Introductory, deliberative and summative plenaries and participation
In other plenaries this equitable distribution and clear understanding was not always the case. A first problem respondents reported was the fact that the **length of the plenaries and the amount of information** that was shared made it easier to **lose sight of the main goals and topics.** In C6, for instance, the policy maker compared the plenaries to a shop where one may get lost because there are too many product to buy.

> *"In the big group, each person was giving their own opinion for so long, that the time was over. [This way] you don't get to an end, you don't have a result and nobody really knew what we were talking about. I think it's just like a shop. If a shop has a thousand similar products, you get confused. What do I buy? For one is present in a thousand options. And also, no matter what the topic is, the discussion is the same, each one says something and in the end nobody knows who said what and what we wanted" (policy maker, C6, migrant-background, 1ˢᵗ generation).*

Also a citizen with a migrant background in C1 claimed it was easy to lose track of the main conversation (see citation 54b in annex). He attached a lot of importance to facilitation during the plenaries and liked the fact that the discussions were broad, but claimed the **group also needed direction and facilitation. Moreover, some stakeholders across cities took up more time and space, also displaying epistemic authority** (see citation 54a in the annex for an example from C5). In order to overcome these issues facilitators did indeed mediate and invite other participants to take the floor, often by asking linear and direct questions. As was mentioned in deliverable 5.2, however, by facilitating all interactions for all categories of respondents, facilitation in all cities, paradoxically sometimes upgraded the epistemic authority of participants that were more fluent, i.e. stakeholders, public officers and policy makers, even more, in spite of the fact that these participants also mentioned that they deliberately held back to give enough space to others to express their ideas (see citation 55 in annex for an example in C2).

When plenaries were used to report back on the brainstorming sessions and discussions of the small-group workshops, problems of unequal turn-taking occurred as well. More often than not, the spokespersons that summarised these discussions in the plenaries were also experts or civil servants, reinforcing and perhaps upgrading their epistemic authority once more. When this role was taken up by less experienced stakeholders this created feelings of uncertainty, as was the case in C6.

> *"No, I certainly wasn't annoyed. I just felt uncomfortable that we realised at some point in the group that we should have divided up the roles at the beginning as suggested, because then of course there was the question of who would present the results in front of the politicians and the public. We got lost for a moment. [..]. I found it hard to bear that we couldn't come to a conclusion and were discussing things without a red thread. And then I took the initiative and structured the results. I had an idea for the presentation but I didn't really want to present it. However, the group was very supportive and wanted me to present as well" (stakeholder grassroot organisation, C6, non-migrant background).*

We do not have testimonies from migrant representatives about the role of the spokespersons, so we cannot determine how they perceived it. We can, however, say something about the **language barriers within the plenaries.** As mentioned before, language barriers were created when participants did not speak the local language (well) or because they were not acquainted with the **specific technical vocabulary** used in policy deliberations. Since summative or deliberative plenaries tended to be faster and participants easily lost sight of their language use, these language barriers occurred mainly with respect to two main groups of participants.

Firstly, **TCN migrant representatives that were foreign-language speakers had more difficulty to follow the flow of the conversation and participate** (see citation 56 in annex for an example). In C5 this observation made other respondents claim that facilitators should have created more collective moments where migrant representatives could contribute on a more equitable level (see citation 57). Sometimes migrant representatives that did not understand the interactions searched for solutions themselves. The public official in C1 for instance, gave an example of two migrants, who were highly schooled and fluent in English and tried to reach out in English, creating a reversed situation where other participants could not participate fully and where facilitators translated for them. When asked how she thought language barriers could be solved, the public official offered that official **translators would perhaps be a good idea**, although she was quite hesitant on how translation would work exactly:

> *"If there was a translation ... if that was the way, I don't know, because translation is always a mediation anyway, isn't it? And therefore also the emotional dimension is lost if there is someone who has to translate so I don't know if that ... and however it is clear that at that moment there ... there was a barrier for someone, surely" (public official, female, C1, non-migrant background).*

The facilitator in C1 claimed that the choice of avoiding formal translators helped most of the migrants to exercise agency (see citation 58 in annex). In C4 interpreters were systematically enlisted to help non-native speakers express themselves. Respondents in this city did claim that the use of interpreters was imperative for foreign-language speakers to participate. Some stakeholders and the public officer with a migrant background explained the importance of interpreters as a form of facilitation (see citation 59). Yet, according to the facilitator of C4 these translations did not come without challenges. She elaborated further on the quality of the translations and pointed out one of the pitfalls of working with interpreters (see citation 60). After these challenges the project team decided to use English as the interacting language, as an addition to the local language and used untrained but more prepared student translators instead. This was challenging for some of the stakeholders, but reportedly worked out in the end.

A specific moment regarding language barriers in the plenaries concerned the formulation of recommendations in PL3. The fact that ideas for recommendations were presented collectively during the last plenaries broke the interactional dynamics in some cities and had a negative effect on levels of participation for migrant representatives (see citation 61 for an example from C5). Yet again facilitators were important in those moments.

> *"The facilitators created an environment of trust and openness, and this helped all of the participants express their opinion and be open without fear of judgement. They were present and active both during small-group discussions and in big groups and this enhanced the agency of the*

A second language related barrier in plenaries concerned the children in C2 and initially also **the young people** in C1 and C3 **who seemed to have more difficulty to follow the language that was used in the deliberative and summative plenary sessions**. In C3 a stakeholder of a grassroots organisation reported that the levels of participation of young people were lower in the plenaries than in the small-group discussions and the child that was interviewed in C2 herself claimed she took the floor less, as is evidenced in citations 62 and 63 in the annex.

In the interview the child made a difference between facilitation in the plenaries and facilitation in the small-group workshops. In her perception plenary sessions were linguistically more challenging than small-group workshops:

"N explained everything very well, but sometimes I really had a group of difficult words, and I did not ask N because I was so focused on something else and then I did not know what it was about because the words were so difficult. But I do understand that because they are adults, they use more difficult words than children do. So yes, that is normal" (pupil in primary school, migrant background, second generation).

When asked which facilitative actions did help during the plenary sessions, she said it especially helped her that the facilitator she worked with explained the words to her and checked if she understood what was being discussed by the other participants from the plenary (see citation 64 in annex). Yet the she also painted a more nuanced picture about requirements for her participation in large groups in general. When asked how her participation could be increased in the plenary discussions, she said it simply took time for her to trust people, irrespective of the fact whether they were adults or children and that no one would be able to make her speak more than she had done in large groups during PL1 (see citation 65 in annex). Most respondents from C2, nevertheless, observed that children did not always take part in the plenary sessions. At one moment this greatly concerned one of the facilitators (see citation 66 in annex).

We will come back to the role of the facilitator that worked with the children in the section below. In terms of clarity and involving children in mixed group deliberative processes, however, it is also interesting to share a reflection by one migrant representative who claimed that **the children's presence in the PL-sessions itself perhaps functioned as a facilitation technique on a meta level in itself,** because more complex terms were being avoided and the children themselves asked questions about factual things and consequences, thus mediating the conversations in a way, while also exercising agency (see citation 67 in annex).

In summary, plenary sessions in the PL-meetings served different functions and were considered important by all types of respondents. First, they served a **social purpose,** connecting and uniting all participants around a common theme. This social purpose seems to have crystallised mainly in check-in and check-out moments during which especially but not exclusively migrant representatives shared personal experiences and narratives. Plenaries, also served a **deliberative function.** This function was operationalised differently in different cities, sometimes re-evoking barriers. One way forward definitely seems related to a clear facilitation of the plenary sessions, creating dialogic collaboration more consistently.

3.3.5 Participation, agency and facilitation in the small-group workshops

As was mentioned earlier, the small-group workshops were used for several reasons, mainly for brainstorming and developing micro-experiments. Most respondents, from all categories in all cities preferred working in small groups and reported **higher and, in most cases more inclusive levels of participation.** In their collective views we can discern different reasons for this perceived heightened sense of participation.

Firstly, small groups apparently brought forth more **closeness and a sense of safety and connection** and fostered the possibility of getting to know other participants on a more personal level. The different categories of respondents had different (self)perceptions about the different target groups. **Public officials and stakeholders generally felt at ease** in the small-group exchanges. Regarding the **sense of safety from migrant representatives, the observations of respondents from the administrations and the stakeholders' categories were mixed.** On the one hand respondents from these groups observed that the safe and smaller scale context did contribute to the fact that migrant representatives expressed themselves more, even representatives that had no prior experience in deliberation and were not fluent in the local languages (see citation 68). On the other hand respondents claimed that migrant representatives actually may have struggled in the small-group discussions as well as during the small groups, where technical jargon sometimes took over. A stakeholder of C5 said that facilitators tried to install inclusive language use, but that due to the high turnover of participants, respondents mentioned **inclusive language use was not always maintained**. In some cases the barriers were overcome because facilitators stepped in and asked questions or gave the floor to more silent participants. In other cases the presence of other stakeholders who took up a facilitative role helped to solve these problems (see citation 69). We do not have many statement from migrant foreign-language speakers about this specific view. One foreign-language speaker in C2 confirmed that even in small groups she did not always get the chance to speak. But she did not mention whether this was linked to her native language skills.

> *"Even in the small group, not everyone got a chance to speak. I experienced myself that others were talking a lot. It is not easy to say this because you have to dare to do that, to interrupt people. There was also a moderator who did not facilitate this" (parent with migrant background, C2, 1st generation).*

Migrant representatives that had previous experience with deliberation seemed to have contributed equally to the small-group discussions and reported no barriers (see citation 70 for an example from C4).

A second reason for the perceived enhanced participation in small groups was the fact that the set-up apparently generated **direct interactions between different actors which resulted in more targeted discussions and the possibility to co-create practical ideas and solutions** (see citation 71). These co-creation possibilities seemed to grow over time and increased greatly during PL2 when the discussions were steered more towards the implementation of ideas (see citation 72 for an example from C6).

Nevertheless, small-group workshops also posed certain challenges. Firstly, roles and positions of group members during workshops were not always clear, leading to the same problems that arose in the plenary sessions: uneven conversational space for different participants, often leading to (unvoluntary) **inequality in turn-taking and dominance from more experienced stakeholders and civil servants and ensuing epistemic authority imbalances.** Secondly, small-group discussions also had **composition problems,** creating situations in some cities where migrant representatives or certain stakeholders were not represented. These hurdles were different for small-group

exchanges that were facilitated and for workshops that were not, so we will discuss these perceived hurdles and perceived solutions separately for both type of small-group exchanges.

The effect of non-facilitated small-group workshops on participation
When small groups were not facilitated roles and positions between members were more blurry which created additional hurdles. According to many stakeholders the **perspective of migrants in those unfacilitated small-group discussions was sometimes crushed by the other participants and stakeholders**. A stakeholder in C1, for instance, gave many examples of **occurrences of cited expertise**, including, paradoxically, from herself. As she was mainly present in small-group-discussions about her field of expertise, she claimed she felt called upon to take a more leading role and did so on one occasion. And she was not sure whether this was beneficial for the development of ideas from (young) migrant participants. When asked if she thought formal facilitation of the workshops would have helped to overcome these group dynamics she confirmed this and said it would have probably shed more light on the needs of the migrant community (see citation 73 in annex).
In C4, there were similar difficulties in balancing out the hierarchical dynamics in small-group workshops.

> *"Small-group discussions were unfortunately jeopardized by the number of facilitators we had in each group. We needed more facilitation because the institutional partners took the role of facilitators, meaning that they also took the role while they were not the facilitators. They ended up guiding the conversations"* (facilitator, C4, non-migrant background).

This observation was corroborated by other respondents who mainly claimed it was important to support the small groups in guarding speaking turns and to help clarifying the focus of the discussions. If this was not done, some, but not all migrant representatives had less opportunities to speak (see citation 74). The public official in C1, made similar observations, claiming that the small-group exchanges in PL1 represented operative moments, but that the **absence of formal facilitation created a mediation void** in which she also felt invited to step in. She claimed that she herself took a step back when she noticed this was happening because she did not want to undermine the work of other participants. She observed that different participants took a different approach to this duality (see citation 75).

Also the public official in C2 observed these dynamics, in some of the workshops in PL2 that were not facilitated during which micro-experiments were developed. She mentioned that she literally stopped herself from speaking at times, because that gave others the opportunity to talk and propose actions (see citation 76). She also said that these discussions initially made her scrutinize the interactions and the group dynamics more, claiming that participants needed more time to investigate who they were and from which angle they were approaching the topic. A public official of C4 expressed a similar view.

> *"Perhaps sometimes in small groups, there were times when we - when I say we, I really mean the group - wondered about the whys and wherefores, but above all, it was perhaps linked to the time, we had very short times, I think that was the difficulty. Working in small groups is very interesting, but you need time precisely to be able to set the themes, the processes, the action plans, and time was too limited, I think"* (public administrator, civil servant, C4, migrant background, 2nd generation).

In spite of these hurdles and (temporary) imbalances, other migrant representatives could easily take the floor in small-groups that were not facilitated. Mostly these were migrant citizens who spoke the local language well, or groups that were in the majority, like the young people in C3.

One quote of the facilitators in C5 pointed to a specific type of dynamic between the administrators, the various stakeholders and the participants with a migrant background during the small-group discussion that was not raised in other cities. The facilitator used the word teachers when she spoke of stakeholders that helped the TCN to express themselves during the small-group discussions (see citation 77). We have no data from these participants with a migrant background to know how they perceived these dynamics.

The effect of facilitated small-group workshops on participation
In most cases in all cities at least part of the small-group workshops were facilitated by a facilitator or someone who was assigned to take up that role. For an overview of the sessions that were and were not facilitated we refer to deliverable 5.2. From the perspective of the respondents **these facilitative interventions were beneficial to the depth and the ease of the conversation**.

Nevertheless, even facilitated group discussions had problems related to uneven turn-taking possibilities. When many public officials were present (as in C4) or experts were assigned the role to mediate (at some point in C6), respondents mentioned situations during which unequal hierarchic attitudes still occurred. Sometimes these situations concerned the experts steering the conversation towards a solution.

Sometimes these problems were reinforced by language barriers, sometimes language barriers were solved by the facilitators. Although first generation migrant parents in C2, for instance, said they sometimes had difficulties speaking in the plenaries, they were more satisfied with the way facilitation occurred in facilitated small groups, because the latter discussions occurred at a slower pace, with more breaks and with fewer participants, making it easier for the respondents in question to follow the flow of the conversation and contribute.

> *"We had a facilitator who did a good job. She made sure we had breaks, often asked clarifying questions, asked about other experiences, made us think and so we could delve deeper. This was helpful. It was more than a conversation. Everyone was active and thought along"* (parent with migrant background, C2, 1st generation).
>
> *"If you don't speak the native language very well, a moderator is very helpful in a small group"* (parent with migrant background, C2, 1st generation).

Regarding the presence of **young people and children in small-group discussions**, respondents also offered reflections. In C2 the children always stuck together and were assigned a facilitator that worked with them in all sessions. According to the analysis reported in deliverable 5.2 this resulted in the fact that the facilitator often spoke instead of the children and upgraded her epistemic authority. According to the child from C2 that was interviewed, however, this bond with the facilitator and the constant presence of the other child felt safe. Indeed the pupil that was interviewed spoke very favourably of working with the facilitator who functioned as a fiduciary to her. Other respondents also offered interesting reflections about this dynamic. On the one hand, these respondents confirmed that according to their view facilitating children with a fixed facilitator ensured their participation, as is evidenced from the citation from an interested citizen with a migrant background (see citation 78 in annex for an example). On the other hand, some

respondents indeed wondered whether the type of facilitation that was used had sometimes taken away opportunities for the partaking children to exercise agency (see citation 79 for an example).

The child that was interviewed herself said that during small-group workshops the facilitator again explained difficult words to her and that she helped her and the other child to express themselves because she used artistic brainstorm techniques and drawing. She also again added a personal dimension to her preference for small-group interaction: the fact that she simply liked one to one interaction more generally, irrespective from the method or the context that was provided in MUST-a-lab (see citation 80).

During small-group discussions visualisation of the goals and the process and the brainstorming techniques also greatly facilitated comprehensibility and the youngsters from C3's motivation to take part in the different PL-exchanges. Regarding the young people in C3 the largest facilitative need in small-group discussions also seemed to involve language. In the literal and the figurative sense. In C3, the literal language barriers were created by the fact that some stakeholders used **specific technical jargon**. On the one hand the young participants did not always understand what was meant by these technical terms, on the other hand it made them more **reluctant to speak**.

> *"The young participants would communicate differently than the other stakeholders or the policy makers. For the young participants it was the first time they heard [certain words] and they needed other words to express themselves. The stakeholders and the policy makers used technical words that the younger people did not always understand. So maybe that was kind of like a little language barrier"* (facilitator, migrant background, 2nd generation).

> *"Sometimes I am in the clouds... because I can't understand some of the things you say"* (focus group respondent G., migrant background, 2nd generation).

When facilitators were present in small-group workshops, they reportedly clarified specific terms and tried to help others to getting their point across (see citation 81). When no formal facilitators were present young respondents highlighted and valued the occasional effort of stakeholders or policymakers to take up that role and reformulate what they said. Regarding the adult stakeholders and civil servants one of the young citizens with a migrant background of the focus group said:

> *It is as if I had an invisible barrier in my head, that did not exist, and it has been broken...whether it existed or not, and the fact that I could talk in confidence with people that I had a lot of respect for their work has been very cool), focus group member, young person, C3, migrant background, 2nd generation).*

Figuratively, there were other language barriers for the young participants as well. The facilitator that was interviewed had not prior knowledge about facilitation, but understood this and claimed that she did have another asset: being a young person herself, she had a lot of implicit knowledge about what worked for the target group she facilitated. Young participants had someone there who they could relate to and was closer to them than the other facilitators. The facilitator stated that, during workshops her role was to help **bridge the gap** between the different participants by **modelling** and functioning almost as a

metaphorical translator (see citation 82) that steered her peers and inspired them to exercise agency more themselves as time went by.

Regarding small-group exchanges in general such time and experience seemed to play a role. According to the facilitator of C1, the learning curve was equally observed. In her opinion **repeated small-group exchanges were of pivotal importance to engender trust and the exercise of agency of all participants:**

> *"The small group unblocked these things and made it possible in fact in PL3 to really have everyone participating, giving their opinion, really talking in any way, making themselves understood in any way, trying to make a contribution … because it is important, because they understood the value and importance of this project so much as to give their own experiential connotations of their life experience, of the things they did …. I remember a girl from the large group who, towards the end, really told her experience … she expressed herself clearly and she was one of those in the PL0 who hardly spoke, she had difficulty understanding the language and I was really very, very happy because in my opinion this is the goal" (facilitator, C1, non-migrant background)."*

She reported that this type of repeated small-group activity stimulated the participation of even those who struggled the most, who then came to express themselves in the large group afterwards. In C1 this led to the last PL that was organised as a world café, which implied that small groups moved among different tables (six in this specific case) to discuss specific themes and formulate recommendations. Each table dealt with the micro-experiments and other themes proposed during PL2, with the task of recommending future policies. In fact, the "small groups" were coupled duo's of one stakeholder and one migrant. Each table was monitored by a facilitator. This latter example shows a learning curve that took place within the PL-cycle. Similar mixtures of structures, organisations and techniques to create more self-steering capacity were experimented with in other cities. We will come back to some of those below. One example explicitly ties in with this possibility: the suggestion of the public officer in C2 to use the **circle method** in the small groups (see citation 83). As was suggested in deliverable 5.2, however, it might be possible to create prompts were participants can self-organise small-group discussions, but these possibilities should be seen as an evolutionary achievement and require time and experience of all participants involved.

In conclusion, small-group workshops were considered important moments in the PL-meetings by all types of respondents. Similar to the perceptions about the plenary sessions, respondents discerned two main functions of the small-group workshops, affiliating both those functions with a set of strengths and hurdles. First, small-group workshops seemed to serve a **social purpose,** uniting a smaller set of participants under a common goal. Most respondents reported they liked the more targeted interactions and claimed that trust, safety and solid group dynamics were created and or refined during those moments. Small-group discussions theoretically left more room for an equal distribution of conversational space, yet even in the workshops uneven speaking turns and an upgrading of epistemic authority of certain respondents were mentioned as well. These hurdles partly seem to have been related to logistic reasons, such as time constraints and different language backgrounds, but they probably were also related to the second function of the small-group workshops: the **brainstorming and deliberative function.** As the PL-cycle progressed, small-group discussions increasingly became more outcome oriented, as they shifted from exploratory talks to the selection of micro-experiments and the formulation of recommendations. Within such conditions more habitual roles and hierarchical structures may have been reinforced in some cities: experts stakeholders and civil servant that had more experience sometimes took up more space and weighed heavily on the choices,

especially in workshops that were not facilitated, even if they were aware of it and did not want to fall into this pitfall.

In the previous sections we have seen how facilitation supported participation and agency and helped to create equitable relations. Doing so, we have mainly focused on the functions of facilitation in plenaries and workshops. Yet facilitation of course is not only functional, it is very technical as well. In the next section we will briefly list what respondents said about verbal and non-verbal facilitation techniques.

Facilitative actions and techniques
According deliverable 5.2 the following effective facilitation actions were used by facilitators in the MUST-a-lab project: invitations to talk, particularly to present and add/expand, focused and open questions, minimal responses and repetitions of words or short sentences, showing active listening and claims of receipt, formulations of the gist of participants' contributions, appreciations and thanks providing affective support to participants' actions.

During the interviews and focus groups, respondents did not go into technical details that much. If they did say anything regarding communicative facilitative actions they mainly referred to the facilitators **inviting them to talk, asking questions and actively listening to their contributions**.

Sometimes other respondents mentioned they learned from facilitators and this helped them change their proper interactions. One stakeholder in C3, for instance, claimed he took over the role of a facilitator and **changed his position towards the younger group of stakeholders**. In the first PL-sessions, he placed himself in a more dominant position and took up more conversational space. This changed in the following policy labs in which he took a listening stance and reportedly asked more questions. This attitude gave younger stakeholders more turn-taking potential.

> *"I think that in general we technicians intervene more than we should. We are not looking for the limelight, but we are naturals in expressing our perspective. It took us a few sessions to relax and learn what our role was. I tried to be more of a facilitator or at least it was my intention to give a voice to the young people who were working with us. Basically, what I have done is asking a lot of questions and trying to reformulate the proposals that came from them in a more technical language"* (grassroot stakeholder, C3, non-migrant background).

Interestingly, this respondent also stated that the facilitators gave the incentive to create this shift in his behaviour. They gave a **mandate** to the young people to take up their roles (see citation 84).

In deliverable 5.2 the following ineffective facilitation actions were also observed: making comments and suggestions (upshot formulations), introducing interruptions and (a few) conflicts that were not managed and left to self-organisation. In some situations, the stakeholders took the floor when the migrants were expected to participate, and the facilitators did not manage these situations. Comments and suggestions were not literally mentioned by the respondents, maybe indicating they did not mind these kind of actions. Not managing conflicts did not come up in the interviews that much. When conflicts were mentioned, respondents seemed to be of the opinion that either the facilitators or other participants did mediate. Not guarding conversational space for migrant representatives on the other hand, was mentioned several times as was evidenced in many of the citations and reflections above. Aside from these actions a lot of dialogic techniques were used and reported on in the interviews. In what follows we will discuss these in a summative fashion.

Firstly, **visualisation** was mentioned by the majority of respondents at some point. As

was already mentioned earlier, visualisation and more elaborate graphic facilitation in C4 mainly fulfilled a clarifying function. Regarding the latter technique, we already mentioned that focus group respondents in C4 stated that it was also beneficial for its capacity of visually synthesizing ideas and discussions in real time. Having continuous visuals seemed to promote understanding and memorisation of the concepts discussed.

Secondly several **brainstorm techniques** apparently helped respondents to take on new perspectives and often brought a new dynamic in the group discussions, irrespective of the fact these were used in plenaries or in small-group workshops. All categories of respondents in all cities highlighted that these tools and practices generated ideas, involved different participants, broke barriers in roles and positioning and supported interactions. The use of techniques helped to deepen the discussion and respondents mainly focused on the way they facilitated interpersonal connection or aided reflection and planning.

"All the information we got through creative techniques and presentations helped me to understand the concept and genuinely comprehend it. I did not know so much about social issues, integration, inclusion, migration…. I was pushed beyond the surface level to analyse topics and information and I was challenged to think about different viewpoints" (stakeholder, coordinator local integration project, C5, non-migrant background).

The facilitator from C1, who was already working as a facilitator prior to the facilitator's training had some interesting reflections about the tools she had learned in the transnational training sessions. She observed it was useful to learn more tools that could be used in the context of a PL-session, but also claimed that most were a bit difficult to put into practice. To overcome this complexity and yet make use of the techniques she claimed the facilitation team in C1 selected some of the suggested techniques and simplified others to the local needs (see citation 85). From the techniques that were covered in the transnational training the spider technique was the most popular one across cities. Interestingly, the public official in C1 also selected the spider technique as an interesting multi-purpose tool, but stated that it would have been a better idea still if facilitators would have reserved more time to work with it (see citation 86).

Also the **lotus flower technique** was perceived by respondents in different cities as a technique that could generate numerous ideas (see citation 87). In C3, combining this brainstorm technique, with their habit of rotating and thus changing the composition of the small groups allowed respondents to interact more closely with the stakeholders and the policy makers.

"The lotus flower helped them the most to express themselves [referring to the young participants]. The mind map visualised what we were working on, and it helped to produce solutions. It also helped us to give all our opinions and ideas in order to make difficult decisions in the PL-sessions" (facilitator, C3, migrant background, 2nd generation).

Also the **persona technique** was discussed by several respondents across cities. On the one hand a focus group respondent from C3 explained that this technique helped her to break her "fear" of interacting with the policy makers. On the other hand in C6, the persona exercise seemed to be perceived as reinforcing stereotypes (see citation 88).

The 'policy-lab-of-horror' (an adapted version of **reverse brainstorming**) was more popular in C6, and some techniques that involved writing and drawing. We have little data from migrant citizens in C6, so we cannot verify if they perceived writing as conducive to

their participation levels and supported their turn-taking and agency. We do have a citation from a migrant citizen in C2, however, who claimed that writing things down helped to structure the conversation and distribute turns more equally (see citation 89). The same respondent also commented on her experiences while brainstorming with the children and said that the combination of writing and drawing increased their engagement visibly (citation 90). Other participants also noticed that these small-group discussions and drawing prompts motivated the pupils in C2 to share their stories in the larger group later on (citation 91).

Aside from brainstorm techniques, respondents commented on techniques that were more active and involved moving and meeting other participants in between the fixed exchanges. Those physically more active techniques were highly appreciated and respondents suggested that they be used more often (citation 92-94). Sometimes more active techniques were combined with verbal brainstorm techniques, as is evidenced from the following citation from C3.

> *"I think that one of the best practices was the gymkhana, in which you put some continuous papers on some tables, and we were rotating to come up with ideas and solutions for each paper/topic"* (stakeholder youth association, migrant background, C3, 2nd generation).

In sum, among the facilitation techniques that were used during the PL-sessions, most categories of respondents across cities pointed out that the ones that worked best were **those that involved elements that prompted** interaction and involved some kind of creativity on the part of the participants. Interaction in this context was understood as **sharing different perspectives**, presenting **new and concrete ideas and supporting the decision-making process**.

Intermediate summary
These reflections and examples made clear that **participation and the possibility to exercise agency in the PL-meetings was quite high for all categories of respondents**, who claimed that **facilitation supported them** to share stories, discuss and decide about priorities and outcomes and that their self-confidence and sense of safety increased as the PL-cycle progressed. However, both in the plenaries and the small-group discussions and more particularly in summative plenaries and unfacilitated small-groups, **some turn-taking and unbalanced epistemic authority problems** were mentioned, especially with respect to the less experienced participants, namely migrant representatives. Within the category of migrant representatives foreign language speakers and children reportedly encountered higher hurdles than the other migrant representatives, especially concerning non-inclusive language use. Stakeholders and policy makers claimed they were very aware of their roles and deliberately made efforts to restrain themselves, but across all cities, both of these groups also observed situations where they or their peers took over. This may have been partly due to **the high turnover of migrant representatives, sheer enthusiasm on the part of the stakeholders and the focus on implementations of some piloting activities within a rather short time-frame.** When facilitators were present turn-taking was perceived as more equal, although the facilitators also needed to gain experience themselves and sometimes upgraded the epistemic authority of stakeholders and policy makers because they facilitated all speaking acts in the same way, implicitly giving more voice to the already experienced speakers.

Experience and clear goals and (visual) prompts contributed to the possibility of s**elf-steering deliberations by the end of the project**. In most cities a learning curve was observed and participants that did experience the whole PL-cycle and contributed to the micro-experiments increasingly exercised agency, including the (young) participants with

a migrant background and grassroot stakeholders that did not have (much) debating experience prior to the project. Respondents reported different levels of engagement with the micro-experiments, an observation we will explore in more depth in the next section.

3.4 Satisfaction with the outcomes

Analysis of respondents' satisfaction with the outcomes of the MUST-a-lab PL-meetings refers to two things: satisfaction with the selection of micro-experiments that were developed as a result of the selected integration challenges cities had chosen and satisfaction with the ensuing results and recommendations. For the first subsection responses from all respondents were used in the thematic analysis. For the last subsection, responses stem from the last two interviews that were conducted after the last PL-session: the interviews with the facilitators and the second round of stakeholders or migrant representatives.

3.4.1 Satisfaction with the selection of the micro-experiments

Most respondents across cities stated overall satisfaction with the selection process of the micro-experiments as a whole. Cities did not follow the same process entirely, however. In some cities decisions about micro-experiments were made collectively in the plenaries, in some cities they were partly made in plenaries and partly in workshops, in some cities decisions were entirely made during the small-group discussions. It is not always clear from the data how this operationalisation worked exactly in the different contexts.

Nevertheless, the thematic analysis revealed that all respondents mentioned supporting elements and several hurdles, that seemed to re-occur at both important moment of the process, during **1) the selection of the micro-experiments 2) the further development**

3.4.1.1 Selection of experiments

In several cities participants voiced difficulties in deciding and distinguishing between the first set of priorities, irrespective of whether this was undertaken in larger or smaller groups. A basic concern across cities seemed to be the relevance of the topics and the role participants assumed in the deliberations. **Relevance** was sometimes defined as building on already existing projects and sometimes envisioned as creating innovative actions. In C4, for instance, a migrant representative that worked as a civil servant highlighted the importance of continuing along the same paths of other projects.

> *"Yes, it's necessary to work collectively with what already exists; that's what came out of the workshops on one of the priorities. The PL-method could help with that" (civil servant, C4, migrant background, first generation).*

A stakeholder from the same city underlined her happiness about working with **multiple stakeholders and collectively building something from the ground up** (see citation 95). A public official in C2, initially also saw the micro-experiments as opportunities to create innovative piloting actions, but claimed her role sometimes intervened during the deliberations (see citation 96). Since she was very aware of this she reported that she never pushed her ideas forward and also said that after seeing the first concrete plans for the micro-experiments, she actually found them more innovative than she had anticipated. But she did mention this feeling of holding back during the first phase of the selection process. Another public official who took part in the capacity of an administrator in C5 also expressed a sense of responsibility, especially concerning the fact that both migrant and non-migrant voices were weighing on the decision-making. According to her, both categories of respondents indeed had a voice in the sessions that listed priorities for experiments.

> *"I think that participants [the members of the migrant community] felt empowered and dynamic, they had a 'voice' and they spoke up about*

However, many other respondents in C5 also mentioned that **not all participants could truly weigh on decision-making**. According to the facilitator decision-making was mainly perceived as the task of policy officers and policy makers and both migrant representatives and stakeholders did not seem to want to take up that role. In C3, the reverse impression was shared by young respondents with a migrant background that took part in the focus group discussion. These respondents stated that they felt good about the selection precisely because of the shared responsibility and the lack of **hierarchical barriers** between them and the public officials (see extract 97). They did, however, claim it was not always easy to choose which ideas and projects they wanted to select within the youth participation approach, a position they shared with all other categories of respondents.

To make a final selection of micro-experiments, two main criteria came up in the cross-city analysis. Firstly, respondents claimed that they supported certain ideas based on **feasibility**. Others claimed that **finding common ground** was the decisive criterium for the first selection. Concerning feasibility all categories of respondents at some point mentioned the available budget and concretisation of micro-experiments were important to make well-informed decisions. They did not, it seems, perceive these elements to be completely clear in the current form of the PL-sessions they witnessed (see citation 98). Other respondents stated that the micro-experiments chosen lacked a bit of an innovative factor and claimed that time and budget constraints might have directed participants towards making more (or too) feasible choices (see citations 99 and 100).

Generally, the final selection of micro-experiments was done based on two approaches which sometimes were both used in individual cities: 1) majority voting with a raise of hands, ballots, or post-its 2) consensus-seeking, sometimes explicitly allowing consent decisions using deep-democracy methods (see citations 101 and 102 for examples).

3.4.1.2 Further development of the micro experiments

Once the topic of the micro-experiments were chosen, they still needed to be developed and that development also involved decision-making. The interested citizen with a migrant background of C2 that was interviewed after the micro-experiments had already been started up, claimed that during the final phase of the preparations, the decision-making process changed because of this implementation.

"I think decision-making changed over time. In the beginning, before the topics were chosen, we really choose democratically. Then the experiments were conceived and then the decision-making became very much the responsibility of the person who was then, say, the spearheader of the micro-experiment. Then the decision-making was left to that person or group" (interested citizen, migrant background – 2nd generation).

Not all participants wanted to be a part of the implementation. In C6, for instance, one of the local stakeholders explained that the extra efforts that were expected in the execution of the micro–experiments were not tailored to the day-to-day challenges of his job and NGO-organisation (see citation 103 in annex). The facilitator of C6 corroborates this statement and explained that participants were surprised with the extra effort the execution of the micro-experiments demanded because it was not clear to them at the

beginning of the project (see citation 104). In C6 and C5, this resulted in the fact that most PL-participants were only marginally involved with the implementation phase and the project organisers steered the experiments more themselves. In C1, C2, C3 and C4 all categories of participants were to some extent and with varying numbers and representations all involved in the implementation phase.

Nevertheless in C1 a respondent from a grassroot organisation put forward the **strong involvement of local stakeholders, which perhaps resulted in slightly less involvement of participants with a migration background in the micro-experiments chosen** (see citation 105). We have little data about the way non-partaking participants viewed this process and whether this view was different for the different categories. In C1, the migrant citizen who also worked for a sports association and was interviewed after PL3 showed disappointment about the fact that sports were not included in the micro-experiments, as is evidenced from citation 106 in annex. This did not impede this respondent from taking part in the other experiments and he explained he was involved in a pilot activity about language teaching. The other citizen with a migrant background that was interviewed after PL3 also actively contributed to the experiment of C2 and claimed to have liked that phase of the project a lot. Her only suggestion concerned more previous clarity about the possibilities and expected results such as the available time and budget.

> *"I think it would have been helpful if we had known in advance about the deadlines of the experiment and if there was a real budget for the implementation. If you know these things in advance you know: okay, this is feasible and this is not feasible"* (interested citizen, C2 migrant background – second generation).

It is much harder to know how other respondents that were interviewed immediately after PL2 and took part in the focus groups felt about the micro-experiments. In the focus group in C2, **one parent of migrant background did claim that she found it a pity that she was not, at that time, involved in the micro-experiments** and said she did not understand how the implementation would take shape or how she could make clear she wanted to be involved. Although she reportedly did find a way to signal she was interested, she did not take part in the end and did not turn up for the last PL. It is unclear what her reasons were for not participating. Also the **child that was interviewed in C2 initially had been very keen on implementing her ideas herself**. In the interview she even claimed to have given priority to a feasible idea she thought she could put into practice and co-create with the other pupil-participant of the policy lab (see citation 107). **Unfortunately the children did not get to steer a micro-experiment themselves** in the end. Practical reasons and the new school year impeded them from developing their ideas further and putting them into practice. The children did not take part in PL3 and were not interviewed after the second PL-session so we it is not clear how they perceived this evolution.

3.4.2 Satisfaction with the results

While discussing satisfaction with the outcomes of the PL-sessions is very relevant to the MUST-a-lab project, from an evaluative perspective we only have partial qualitative data to report on. As was mentioned above, the second round of interviews (with the last stakeholders or migrant representatives) and the facilitators, took place while the micro-experiments were still being carried out which results in the fact that we can only partially gauge respondents' satisfaction. For a more detailed analysis of participants' satisfaction with the results, we refer to the last section of deliverable 5.1, which reports on the results of the questionnaires.

Most respondents that took part in the last interviews, indeed reported a **high satisfaction with the results of the micro-experiments**, be it from different perspectives. The facilitators mainly reflected on the process and lessons learned. Although the majority of the facilitators claimed that the chosen experiments were relevant, they also said it would still be preferable to engage more participants and especially migrant representatives in the implementation of those piloting activities. According to them this also implied foreseeing more time to engage with (migrant) participants about the concept of a policy lab and the role they could take up in the experiments (see citations 108 and 109). Some stakeholders that were interviewed agreed with this view and reflected on a continuation of the PL's as a sustainable approach to integration pathways in policy making. In some cities stakeholders noted that perhaps the micro-experiments did not reach the most vulnerable target groups (see citation 110 for an example from C4). In other cities the migrant representatives emerged as the protagonists and (co)organisers of the experiments, as was the case in C3 and partly in C1, where young migrant took charge of the experiments.

In some cases there was little capacity from participants to practically manage experiments. In those cases the project team had to manage and develop the micro-experiments on top of the tasks they already had (see citation 111 in annex for an example from C5). Also other stakeholders involved in the micro-experiments stated that some had their limitations in terms of feasibility. Some claimed they would have welcomed more feedback and further **analysis to evaluate the entire experimentation phase**. Nevertheless, they also expressed their enthusiasm for the method and their hope for sustainability of the project, as is evidenced from a citation of one of the stakeholders in C4.

> *"We realise that not everything will be implemented, but if nothing is done, the whole project will lose its credibility. It's important that there is time for feedback and analysis. The stakeholders around the table are waiting for concrete results. […] It would be great if this could be replicated. There are still a lot of gaps, and everyone is still working in their own way. I hope that the momentum generated by this project can be sustained, also in the form of tools for this type of governance"* (stakeholder, C4, project manager, non-migrant background).

Some respondents claimed that the impact of the project should have been more far-reaching and that this would only be achieved by being more innovative and making adjustments and refining the micro-experiments along the way. These respondents claimed it was an asset that local synergies emerged throughout the micro-experiments, but that there was still a lot of work to be done to give voice to the needs of migrants and TNC's more effectively (see citation 112 and 113)

This led several respondents to the conclusion that the work was not finished at the end of the PL-sessions and that a continuation was required (see citations 114 and 115 from C3). In this respect the facilitator of C2 also explained that public officials and policy makers were enthusiastic about scaling up the micro-experiments in the last year and that the practical nature of the selected experiments did not diminish their enthusiasm.

One last finding about the outcomes of the PL-meetings is that **respondents had remarkably little to say about the recommendations** that were produced in PL3. What they did offer, were reflections on the process of developing and writing local recommendations.

Concerning the process **most respondents positively framed it as narrowing down and crystallising needs and ideas in a cooperative sense**. Most respondents referred to the plenary as places where the recommendations were made, sometimes in combination with a World Café set-up.

> *In the large group on recommendations, I also had an opportunity to speak. It was a funnel, it came to my mind funnel ... in the sense that it started from a group of people with different ideas, expressing the different ideas ... and from many opinions come out few ... like if you put some pretty big pieces of nuts in a funnel, maybe one comes out, at most two or three (interested citizen, C1, migrant background, 2nd generation).*

Two city's referred to the fact that recommendations were based on the experiments and the ideas that were discussed prior to the final selection of experiments. Hardly any reflections about the lifeline and the concretisation of the recommendations were made, with the exception of the facilitators of C5 and C2, who respectively claimed they did not know what their role in the implementation would be and that some exceeded the reach of local policy structures. According to the facilitator in C2, this did not necessarily mean that local policy could not support the recommendations in another way, by sharing the message and supporting initiatives in a bottom-up fashion.

In sum, respondents of all categories across all cities were mostly satisfied with the results of the PL-meetings. Some found the micro-experiments too much work to take on, some would have preferred to be involved more. Generally most respondents shared little about the recommendations.

3.5 Focus on the production of narratives and decision-making

In this section we will look at the data and reflections from the previous sections through the lens of producing narratives and the perceived decision-making potential. We will also cross-link this analysis with the analysis reported on in deliverable 5.2.

3.5.1 Producing narratives

As was mentioned on p4 of the 5.2 report *"the specific aim of PLs is enhancing and supporting the production of narratives about diverse personal cultural trajectories (Holliday & Amadasi, 2020), particularly of migrant-background participants, in defining local policies",* a goal that was definitely achieved to some extent in the MUST-a-lab project. The analysis of the participatory observation showed that many participants, especially those with a migrant background had a **preference for sharing narratives of personal experience and personal trajectories.** To such an extent that it was not always easy to reach the other objectives of the PL-meetings and develop micro-experiments and recommendations. Moreover, in spite of this preference for sharing personal narratives, the analysis in deliverable 5.2 showed that these individual narratives only rarely interlaced with other narratives and that if they did, the interlacement occurred mainly within the same category of participants. The thematic analysis partly confirms these findings.

Firstly, the analysis revealed that **respondents described narratives** in different ways**, as personal experiences, sharing opinions and expressing emotions** and that they shared all of these types of narratives both in plenaries and in small-group workshops, but mostly in the icebreaking plenary sessions. Respondents in the interviews across cities seem to confirm that especially these **icebreaking plenaries produced personal experiences,** often facilitated by turn-taking techniques and/or facilitated by facilitators that were very keen on making sure everyone had equal conversational space. In all cities all categories of respondents that we have data from reported that they did indeed feel supported to share personal stories during the plenaries, even the more formal stakeholders and policy makers. However, according to all types of respondents they also noticed some voices overbearing the voices of others. Mostly, and in spite of the focus on integration policies, **the voices of more formal stakeholders like stakeholders, policy makers and educational partners sometimes sounded louder, than or produced vicarious narratives about the migrant representatives creating unbalanced epistemic authority.** Facilitators also observed that it was more difficult for newly arrived TCN's to share their experiences fully, particularly when there were language barriers (see citation 116 in the annex for an additional example).

According to deliverable 5.2 personal narratives were not often explored in more detail during the small-group discussions, nor used as the basis for interlacing. In seems **that transitions from and to small-group discussions resulted in a break of the continuation of personal narratives.** The thematic analysis cannot fully confirm that the respondents perceived this phenomenon. The analysis of the interviews and focus groups showed that respondents did not explicitly mention sharing personal narratives that much in small-group workshops, which is remarkable as they did express feeling of connection and safety during those exchanges. Perhaps a focus on the deliberative and collaborative component made them experience these exchanges differently from the personal exchanges in the icebreaking plenaries and the **informal moments like lunches and coffee breaks, where the production of personal narratives** reportedly occurred the most.

If respondents did mention the production of **personal narratives in the workshops, they mainly mentioned the different structural elements** that prompted them to express themselves on that level. In C3, for instance, personalised interviews were part of the set-up in PL1, leading all categories of respondents to share experiences explicitly.

> *"It was much more enriching [to talk in small groups]. There were a series of personalised interviews with all the people in the group. This generated a lot of things in a short period of time. We were debating. It generated closeness and dialogue. People who find it more difficult to speak in the large group, felt much more comfortable and so their participation increased. It also generated a feeling of belonging to what was being discussed in a group manner"* (policy maker, C3, non-migrant background

When such clear structure was missing or no one took the lead in small-group discussions, the focus of the exchanges in most cities initially became less clear, perhaps also blurring personal exchanges and the expression of more random opinions, as may be implied in citation 117 from the focus group in C6 in the annex.

According to deliverable 5.2 in most cities **interlacement of personal narratives** occurred, that is: a narrative received a comment from another participant, thus creating interlaced narratives. According to deliverable 5.2 interlacement mostly occurred within participant categories, among stakeholders (and politicians) and among migrant representatives, some important exceptions notwithstanding. Some respondents confirmed they noticed these patterns. In the analysis of the participant observation of C2 interlaced narratives were observed between a migrant-background citizen and stakeholders. During the semi-structured interview the facilitator in C2 indeed reported that different perspectives sometimes did build on each other and interlace. She gave the example of a part of a plenary discussion about head scarves where participants built upon each other's stories, guided the conversation themselves and needed little facilitation. In C1 the analysis of participant observation also revealed interlacements between different participants. In the focus group discussion, similarly one participant from a migrant background referred to the interlacement of narratives, describing it as a mosaic:

> *"The word is 'mosaic', in the sense of bringing together different knowledge, different cultures and different cultural backgrounds of knowledge, but above all trying to find a common idea. When you go to see the mosaic, the result is beautiful, so we all came together, everyone with our own experience and background of life and work, we came together to find a solution, to create a mosaic of colours that when you see it you say wow!"* (Focus group respondent, C1, migrant background, 1st generation).

In sum, some of the observations about sharing narratives in deliverable 5.2 are confirmed by the thematic analysis of the interviews and focus group discussion. Some elements that did not come up or were only implicitly present in the qualitative data.

From the interviews we can deduce that the majority of personal narratives was shared by participants from the migrant community. **Generally, as was evidenced throughout the report they mentioned the following actions and organisational elements to be supportive:**

- active listening of all participants, both in plenaries and in small-group discussions
- facilitation, especially in deliberative plenaries and small-group discussions that lack focus
- inclusive language use and visualisation techniques
- some amount of structural predictability of general PL-meetings and separate PL-sessions
- informal moments

- time both within and between (sub)sessions and over the PL-cycle

Conversely, the following elements were perceived as barriers to the production of narratives:

- language barriers both regarding native language use for foreign language speakers and a lack of inclusive language for (young) migrant representatives
- uneven conversational space and turn-taking possibilities
- uneven group compositions
- upgraded epistemic authority of some participants
- unclear roles
- a strong emphasis on outcomes
- a lack of facilitation
- a lack of time

3.5.2 Decision-making

As was mentioned in the introduction of deliverable 5.2 (p3) *"theories of participative democracy urge the implementation of more democratic political life by providing opportunities for individuals to participate in decision-making and to enhance reform of political systems."* The set-up of the MUST-a-lab project was such that in comparison to PL1, PL2 and PL3 was more oriented to decision-making and instrumental objectives, a fact that was also observed in the analysis of deliverable 5.2.

This observation was already mentioned in a cursory manner in the above sections and was indeed confirmed by the thematic analysis of perceived decision-making potential in the interviews and focus group discussions. **According to the participants decision-making generally seemed less stringent in PL1 and became more stringent along the way.**

In the interviews and focus group discussions respondents defined decision-making as debating, selecting, confronting different opinions and having impact. Decision-making was mostly mentioned explicitly when the selection of priorities and micro-experiments were discussed. Respondents transversally mentioned that although the foundations for decision-making were created in small-group discussions, the final decisions in most PL-meetings across cities were made in the summative plenary sessions, be-it in slightly different ways and not without challenges.

In C1-4, the final plenary sessions of individual PL-meetings were used to find consensus. In these cities decision-making capacities seemed to grow over time and were influenced by participants' growing experience, facilitation and organisational matters. A particularly interesting plenary session was the final plenary in C1 during which decisions about the recommendations were made. Since stakeholders were grouped with migrant representatives the decisions they came up with did not have many epistemic authority problems. Interestingly, though, the last plenary seems to have reopened a space where brainstorming and the sharing of personal narratives occurred.

In C2, final plenaries were used to seek consensus about priorities and the selection of micro-experiments in PL1 and PL2. Decisions were debated and priority lists were made. But the turnover of migrant representatives and children and the large number of participants from other categories may involuntarily have favoured the decisions of more formal representatives, especially when it came to the implementation phase where only one of the migrant representatives remained active. The final plenary in PL3 was not organised due to a very limited amount of participants in that meeting. The recommendations were, however, shared with all the participants virtually.

In C3 decision-making was reportedly based on a long process of reaching consensus with different check-inns and many targeted discussions. The plenaries were the place where final decisions were being made. This solid strategy of reaching consensus over and over again was appreciated by all categories of respondents, but it was also described as a

challenging process. One stakeholder of a youth association explained that **conflicting experiences were** sometimes at the heart of the difficulties. In spite of the time it took to create this consensus seeking system, finding common ground in the large group seemed important to all the PL-participants, including the young people with and without a migrant background. Mixing up the group participants seemed to advance decision-making. One respondent reported that the combination of all the participants and their different roles during plenaries were needed to come up with **viable decisions that were feasible and worked for everyone** (see citations 118-122 for further examples).

In C4 different check-ins were also used to create consensus, part of them involving voting. This reportedly led to shared decisions by all categories of respondents in initial, intermediate or final plenary sessions. Decisions were also made in the small-group workshops, however. Generally, respondents felt that **the time available for reflection was very short to have an in-depth discussion about complex subjects** and claimed this impacted the decision-making potential (see citations 123 and 124 for further examples).

In C5-C6 decisions were made by majority voting. In C5, multiple stakeholders stated there were difficulties with decision-making in the plenary sessions of PL1 and PL2: **either decisions were not made and/or decisions were influenced by experts or policy makers.** Difficulties in decision-making arose because the goals of the policy lab were not always clear to all respondents and time was limited. In C5, the fluctuating presence of migrant representatives and the fact that they mostly were TCN's who encountered language barriers, created a situation in which migrant representatives gave their opinions, but did not contribute to decision-making fully. We do not have data from the migrant representatives after the second PL-meeting, but we know from the facilitator that was interviewed in the last stage that migrant representatives were mainly contributing to decision-making in a consultive capacity (see citations 125 - 127 for further examples).

In C6, similarly decision-making was done by means of voting and was also complicated due to the lack of time or budget. Different from other cities, the PL-meetings in C6 were mainly operationalised in small groups and decision-making was hence supported using paper ballots. Respondents had the impression a lot was achieved during small-group discussions. Especially when it came down to deciding which micro-experiments were going to be developed in a World Café style it seems levels of participation rose accordingly (see citations 128 - 130 for further examples).

From the cross-city analysis of the interviews and focus group discussion we can deduce that all respondent were positive about the decision-making potential of the PL-meetings, but mainly in final plenaries or by a longer type of consensus seeking in which pre-structured group formations and World-Café techniques were helpful. However, all type of respondents also raised doubts here and there about the full inclusiveness of these processes. Since mainly the representatives from the migrant community had a large turn-over, they may have been less consistently represented and in spite of all the efforts that were made their perspective may have been overshadowed at times by more formal and experienced stakeholders. When migrant representatives stayed on and followed the whole PL-cycle, they increasingly seemed to exercise agency, which also manifested itself in the capacity of collaboratively making decisions and implementing pilot activities.

Generally, as was evidenced throughout the report, respondents mentioned the following actions and organisational elements to be supportive to decision-making:

- facilitation
- a clear structure, with a clear organisation of intended goals in plenaries and small-group discussions
- clear roles in small-group compositions
- visualistion and brainstorm techniques

- time and the acquisition of debating and listening skills over the course of the PL-cycle

Conversely, the following elements reportedly created barriers to making decisions:

- A large turnover of participants, especially with migrant background
- upgraded epistemic authority of some participants and unbalanced distribution of epistemic authority in the policy lab members
- unclear and inequitable roles
- a lack of facilitation
- a lack of time

Conclusion

This report has focused on the perceptions of participants in the MUST-a-Lab Multistakeholder Policy Labs and focused on the dialogic practices and participatory opportunities of the PL-meetings. We can conclude that all categories of respondents saw the value of Policy Labs and the way deliberations can contribute to local policy about integration. The thematic analysis yielded interesting results about respondents' perception of success factors and hindrances. The majority of the findings seems to tie in with the findings of deliverable 3.3 and 5.2. To conclude, we will summarise the most important results and briefly discuss their implications.

Composition

Respondents of the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions listed a lot of reasons why they wanted to enrol for the MUST-a-lab project, the most important being the topic of the local policy challenges and the possibility to have impact on policy development. Respondents of all categories shared several reflections about the way they perceived their own presence and the presence of other groups. Generally, within the context of the MUST-a-lab process, it was **difficult to maintain a clear delineation between the proposed target group participants.** Contextual, societal and logistic factors contributed to the blurring of group categories. Attempts for equal representation of different groups were transversely made, but for all categories of respondents a turnover of individual participants was detected, **the least stable groups seems to have been the representatives of the migrant community.** Reasons for this turnover varied from personal life circumstances to supposed language and social barriers.

Participants with more policy and debating experience such as policy makers and several groups of stakeholders seemed to be self-aware regarding the challenges and their symbolic and effective roles. They attached great importance to the presence of migrant representatives, including children and youngsters in cities whose policy challenge was linked to those target groups' needs. They reported the pitfalls of epistemic authority and observed and sometimes produced vicarious narratives about migrant representatives. Policy makers with and without executive powers both seemed to agree that their presence is required to operationalise debated policies in practice. Both types of policy makers were seen by other respondents as essential for continuity and implementation reasons. Their presence was much appreciated, although they reportedly took up too much space at times, in spite of the fact that they restrained themselves. Sometimes other respondents, paradoxically, seemed to rely on their debating expertise to mediate exchanges. Regarding the large group of stakeholders reflections vary. On the one hand both the more formal and the grassroot stakeholders were perceived as essential to implement change in daily life and some type of stakeholders such as educational partners or labour partners were missed. On the other hand some stakeholders, mainly certain grassroot stakeholders and some civil society representatives seemed critical of more formal representatives in the sense that they steered the conversation.

Participant categories with less experience in policy and debating, such as the migrant representatives and other grassroot stakeholders, seemed to gain trust in the PL-method and the collaboration with other participants as time went by. Of some of these representatives it is clear that they dropped out or missed a session due to work-related or personal reasons. Of most of the representatives of the migrant community we have too little qualitative data to gauge the reasons for sure. Following the analysis of the questionnaires in deliverable 5.1, we can assume that some of them dropped out because they did not feel involved or represented, but this does not show clearly in the analysis of the interviews and focus group discussions.

Based on their reflections in the interviews it seems safe to assume that **if a PL involves children and youngsters (of a migrant background), the organisers should carefully consider and balance out the different target groups.** According to all types of respondents, their number should be high enough to overcome problems with the

distribution of epistemic authority, hierarchical relations and effectively facilitating their exercise of agency.

Learning
Generally, all types of respondents **appreciated the preparation phase** of the project and claimed that it did to different extents prepare them for the PL-meetings. Some stakeholders, migrant representatives and facilitators seemed to suggest that the **preparation phase and the training sessions were not entirely sufficient**. All types of respondents also mentioned a need for **more clarity concerning 1) the timeline and the budget that is foreseen for practical piloting activities 2) expected personal time investment in those piloting activities.** Some respondents from all categories reported **a wish or even a need to carry the PL-cycle further** than the foreseen number of sessions. They seemed to suggest that such continuation may lead to more experiments, but also to more exchanges and a deepening of the relational bond between collaborating PL-members. Perhaps such deepening refers to the need for more interlaced narratives and hybridity as well. Because of the setup of the evaluation dimension we have little data about the period after PL3, however, and can hence not substantiate this reflection fully. All cities reported that taking part in PL-meetings involved learning about participatory possibilities. In the initial PL-meetings pre-existing deliberative skills and networks of more established stakeholders and policy makers created instances of **unbalanced epistemic authority**, sometimes overshadowing the voices of migrant representatives. In PL2 the combination of this lack of experience and a focus on outcomes seemingly reinforced that risk. As all categories of participants gained experience, however, and with the help of facilitation, these risks were mitigated more as time went by.

An interesting finding is the importance all categories of respondents attached to informal moments, even from the perspective of equity. We can assume that informal moments and/or contexts (even online) are very important. We should bear in mind as well to organise them by enhancing the agency of the participants. From a receptive perspective, getting to know the other participants on a more personal level and hearing their personal stories reportedly helped respondents to gain trust and open themselves up to others. From a productive perspective, **the opportunity to exchange personal stories without judgement, starting from equal positions, created connection, togetherness and safety.** Possibly informal moments and the resulting bonds between different types of participants, also contributed to decision-making and has the potential to inspire the co-construction and interlacement of narratives and **a stronger group-identity.** Perhaps a longer PL-cycle is necessary to reach such participatory dynamic. According to all types of respondents what was needed in the context of the MUST-a-lab project was **more time** to make informal encounters and ensuing dialogues during formal moments possible.

Generally, plenaries were perceived as spaces where respondents reported back on the brainstorming sessions, sometimes kept on brainstorming, summarised ideas and deliberated and decided about the selection of micro-experiments and the recommendations. According to all types of respondents conversational space and epistemic authority was not evenly distributed during all plenary sessions. Especially migrant representatives who did not speak the local language fluently, youngsters and children had more difficulties to take the floor, in spite of the fact that many stakeholders and public officials also claimed that they held back during plenary sessions. Technical jargon and experience with debating in groups probably contributed to these (momentary) imbalances. In general plenaries were commended for the fact that they united all participants and made collective goals visible. Additionally icebreaking activities and check-inns of the initial plenaries were mentioned frequently as spaces where personal narratives were shared and turn-taking was structured. In this sense these icebreaking activities can be linked to the informal lunches, coffee breaks and other pauses.

Concerning small-group discussions respondents were equally very positive about the collaboration with other participants, be it in smaller compositions, allowing more targeted

discussions. Nevertheless, some unbalanced relations and turn-taking occurred in these settings as well, especially if small-group workshops were not facilitated. Respondents saw different solutions to overcome hurdles to equitable participation and collaboration in these sessions. First, they seemed to prefer more time in general, **opening space for more exploratory conversations** and a reduced initial emphasis on outcomes. Second, as was experimented with in some cities, a **pre-defined group composition** with a representative sample of participants in each group was seen as beneficial to the clarity of the interactions. If a set composition was accompanied by **clear techniques and instructions** some respondents claimed that over time self-organised small-group workshops would be a possibility. This entails, however, that all type of respondents would continuously remain engaged in the PL-meetings, and that the proportion of different types of participants, particularly migrant representatives should be monitored each time before engaging in PL-meetings. Participants first need to establish trust and get acquainted and experienced with the specific type of participatory practices that policy labs necessitate. In order to achieve this, it seems that for most cities small-group discussions initially always required the presence of **skilled facilitators.**

Concerning the facilitators and the double or even triple roles they assumed in the MUST-a-lab project, it seems safe to say that **facilitators are considered of crucial importance by all categories of participants**, including the facilitators themselves, but that the role of project manager is difficult to combine with the role of facilitator. Facilitators self-reported that they needed training to facilitate Multistakeholder Policy Labs and felt supported by working in teams and by the support of local and transnational networks involving other facilitators and knowledge partners. Other respondents perceived facilitators as mediators, safe-guarding equitable roles, turn-taking and decision-making. In sum, they seemed to be the motor of a participatory and collaborative PL-dynamic.

We conclude this report with a selection of quotes that underline the optimism the PL-method clearly infused in the participants across cities. Indeed all categories of participants described their experiences with MUST-a-lab as an experience that was challenging, but instilled hope in them and made them feel optimistic about the possibilities of deliberative democratic exchanges.

"It is a choice of field: either you're in it or you're not. I mean, you can't just be in it, let's say, by listening with one ear. You have to be there with your head, with your heart ... with your belly, I mean, with everything, ... to be fully in it. Only in that way you can try and receive the trust of participants" (public official, C1, non-migrant background).

"It is a method in which different stakeholders participate in an equal position. So, policy makers and education professionals, but also parents and pupils take part. In an ordinary consultation or in an ordinary setting participants don't always start from an equal position. In a policy lab they do. When I think about that, for me that's what makes it different" (facilitator, C2, non-migrant background).

"I am satisfied. These young people previously had been not approached about processes of participation… Now their city council has offered them a place to take ownership in these policies. From this point of view alone, I am satisfied. To see them take initiative within these projects and in the micro-experiments… They exist now in the town council in a natural way. And their presence is necessary so that other people with migrant descent can be represented" (policy maker, C3 non-migrant background).

M: I have felt very good, to be honest because it is like the fear has been removed. J: That stigma…M: Yes, yes… of a politician, who you perceive as someone superior, and you do not realise that they are just normal people (Fraction of the focus group conversation with two young people, C3, migrant background, 2nd generation).

"At a time when we are pretty gloomy in our sectors [referring to immigration laws], when the outlook is not very rosy, we need to have proposals, bubbles of air where we can dream a little" (focus group respondent, stakeholder civil society organisation, C4, non-migrant)

"Participation in the sessions opened my mind and made me think differently, out of the box. It gave me the opportunity to get rid of stereotypical thinking about cultural differences" (focus group respondent, C5 migrant background).

"I felt very, very, very welcome, both personally and in my position, for my topic. I think that also stands for the quality of the project" (focus group respondent, public official, C6, non-migrant background).

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Annex: list of extra citations

Citation 1a

"I think that their main concern is to find a fair job and earn some money to live normally and feed their families. They don't think that these projects help them in any case. I can see a lot of disbelief... maybe it would enable them more to organise more preparatory workshops and in-person meeting. Thus informing them more about the project, the objectives, and the tools you have at your disposal to help them" (stakeholder, civil society organisation , C5, non-migrant background).

Citation 1b

"Stakeholders shared good ideas and proposals and decision-making was part of their role. Migrants were more hesitant and took on a listening stance. I think they wanted to see actions, not words. They are used to being promised that things will get better but they will not believe it anymore, unless it really happens" (local stakeholder, non-migrant background).

Citation 1c

"The only critical point I found was a prevalence of contributions from local stakeholders, which is what, let's say, annoyed me a bit, in the sense that when, in my opinion, the young migrants were speaking - and I believe that in these contexts made for them it is precisely the time to let them speak and to listen to them - in my opinion the voice of those who belong to associations - who certainly know the topics, have interesting things to say - went a little over the top" (stakeholder civil society organisation, C5, non-migrant background).

Citation 1 d

"I had the impression that people could speak quite easily, there were no difficulties in that respect, at least from my point of view. Perhaps at certain points in the workshops, it was difficult for the beneficiaries to speak up...yes...there I felt a little restraint" (public official, migrant background, 2nd generation).

Citation 2a

"First and foremost, I think about the parents who participated - what a commitment! - to participate in that way, to take time off. That shows commitment" (public official, C2, non-migrant background).

Citation 2b

"About the voice of the parents and children: we already knew from the beginning that they were underrepresented. So, we tried to mobilise more pupils, but that was not so evident. We then tried to bring in that voice in other ways, like with those video clips and so on. So, I think, yes that they participated, but they were low in number' (facilitator, C2, non-migrant background).

Citation 2c

"Yes, I think what concerned me most was those children and young people. We felt it very strongly, it was a general feeling, I think, a very great concern that they could and should participate. It felt as something very cautious… […] Those two girls also looked nervous sometimes. I think that the group really wanted this to succeed, really giving them the space. One question is: suppose you could get past that caution and also challenge them a bit and tell them 'Go go go!' But maybe they were too young for that. And the boy was

there only once. I think, they need even more time to be able to dare to take up such a place. So, when all groups were together, I found myself thinking: this is quite a challenge" (public official, C2, non-migrant background).

Citation 2d

"*We had to motivate him because it was difficult to engage him. He also did not know he was going to come before because he normally had an internship training that day. He attended without preparation and that was difficult"* (primary school director, C2, non-migrant background).

Citation 2e

"I think it was an intimidating position to start in. He was suddenly there and I think that his level of participation was lower because he was not informed in advance and it was not clear whether he really wanted to be there. Towards the end he did still pretty much claim his place and gave input. But yes, I think that is also because he found out during the first half what the PL-session actually was about. So, I think informing new participants before also does have an effect on participation" (interested citizen, C2, migrant background, 2nd generation).

Citation 3a

"Even at the generational level […] there were people who were a bit more, not older people, but, I mean, people who were in an adult age group, there were teenagers, there were young adults ... so maybe the way of communicating was completely different … even on the subject of communication I remember someone saying "no, the institutions communicate in a way that is now old fashioned for us, we use a QR-code, we frame a QR-code" (stakeholder civil society organisation, C1, non-migrant background).

Citation 3b

"Just for my work, that meeting was ... super important, it really helped me ... it also helped me to understand things ... but if the migrants hadn't been there, I wouldn't have understood those things" (stakeholder civil society organisation, C1, non-migrant background).

Citation 3c

"In the first sessions the policy makers and public officials had a much greater say than the young participants. Later on, in the other sessions, we made sure this wasn't the case anymore. Because the interesting thing about these sessions was to listen to the voices of the young people and not being too critical about new perspectives or ideas. This way they could make it easier for the young participants to speak" (stakeholder civil society organisation, C3, non-migrant background).

Citation 4a

"The two aldermen attended and participated in the [first] PL-session, thus recognising the relevance of the project and contributing from their own personal perspective on education. That was cool. They spoke about their own school days and migration background" (stakeholder education sector, C2, non-migrant background).

Citation 4b

"For some topics, it is actually essential that policymakers are involved. Sometimes you really hit limits, for example in constructing the idea of a diverse teachers' room. There is a university college here [that trains future teachers]. This would be an interesting partner

for an experiment, but there needs to be higher-level thinking about how to organise these things better systematically" (stakeholder education sector, C2, non-migrant background).

Citation 5

"We still have a lot to learn and to re-invent ourselves. I think that the result of this exchange of ideas made our political vision grow. Knowing how a young person sees the city and what barriers they have to overcome, it is important. So, in this project we have adapted to the needs of young participants and have facilitated their participation. Participation projects should be adapted to their realities" (policy maker, C3, non-migrant background).

Citation 6a

"I think that this heaviness and this fear that I was telling you about at the beginning, in my opinion on the one hand for the group was because of the participation of the people from the municipality and therefore ... "[they] have to make, let's say, a good impression, you know, [speaks as if she is speaking from the perspective of a participant] 'I can't let myself go too much because there are the institutions'" (facilitator, C1, female, non-migrant).

Citation 6b

"Super good... I didn't think it would be like that at first I was afraid to say what I thought, but I realised that they value what we say, they take everything into account, they listen to us" (focus group respondent A, participant, migrant background, 2nd generation).

Citation 7

'[We need] less city administrators because they bring back the old ways they want. [They think in terms of:] you have to listen to the boss, if not? [There will be] no job for you. […] We need more normal people, associations to get into dialogue, to get their opinions. People from the city departments don't always explain the real story because they are afraid for their own positions. They just claim they know the stories anyway and do nothing about it" (policy maker, migrant-background, 1st generation).

Citation 8

"The colleagues from the municipality sometimes did what I wouldn't have done, I mean, they entered the group, not leaving the space, but a bit invading it. Maybe if they hadn't been there and they had trusted us a bit, let's say, as facilitators. Maybe everything would have been a bit lighter. On the other hand, as facilitator, my point of view was, let's say with respect, I also have to make a good impression, I have to get to the point, I have to achieve the objective and show that my role has value. On the other hand, their presence was positive because they answered questions that we undoubtedly would not have been able to answer to the large group, they were able to relaunch what were the objectives of the project, I mean, what was going to be done concretely also after PL3. It was very important to have a support from the institution, I mean, to divide the tasks, and I saw more collaboration, not that there was not also before, but I saw it particularly in PL3" (facilitator, C1, non-migrant background).

Citation 9

"Conversational space wasn't quite equally distributed. That has to be said. Representatives of the city who have been working in this field for 20 years, simply have 15 ideas for every single aspect" (focus group respondent, local administrator, C5, non-migrant background).

Citation 10a

"In the first policy lab mainly, my position played a role and in the second maybe even more, because it went more into depth: I was being very conscious that everyone could voice their opinions and that I was not being too dominant myself" (public official, C2, non-migrant background).

Citation 10b

"At times, even in the very first PL, I would have liked to take the floor more, I also had to understand what were the right "measurements", what were the right "weights" and ... so much so that I remember at one point I said, I mean, Can I speak? … Tt times there was a risk my role had too much influence and so I took steps backwards in a very conscious manner" (public official, C1, non-migrant background).

Citation 10c

"Because at that moment there, as administrator, you know that the judgment can be there and ... but the relationship of trust that must be established must be bidirectional, I mean, not only them towards me but also me toward them, and ... and it is part of the process. And ... and when even the participants understand that they are free to say what they think, always with respect - mutual respect between people that must never be lacking - this helps to fully explore the problems" (public official, C1, non-migrant background).

Citation 11a

"Educators helped us a great deal in the third policy lab. Primary teachers advertised the project to the parents of migrant children that attend their schools. We had more representatives coming from the migrant community using this method. I think it is especially important as well that they understand that [this project] is something safe and will benefit them" (facilitator, C5, non-migrant background).

Citation 11b

"We could have reached out to more local stakeholders, such as [lists local organisations], who were not very present and had things to say" (focus group respondent, C4 migrant background, 1st generation).

Citation 11c

"Not everyone was able to participate in the same way. Participation was easier for people who are used to being in advocacy; other people were less able to do so except when there were physical activities" (stakeholder civil society organisation, C4, non-migrant background).

Citation 12

"I have been working as a facilitator before when I was not involved in the project and this time I was involved as a project manager in the project and this also affected my role as a facilitator, because all of the participants knew me personally and I think that helped me a lot as a facilitator. When I think of the first policy lab, I think that was the most challenging policy lab for me because the group was new. A lot of energy went into the formation of the group and the group dynamics, creating the basis of trust so collaboration could be established. I found it quite challenging to do that with a group that is not quite sure why they are there. There were a lot of question marks, also regarding the project: 'How will this work? How will the micro experiments work? What do you expect from me? How many resources do we need to put in the project and so on and so forth?' So there were a lot of questions also addressing me as a project manager and not as a facilitator.

This is why I had to switch roles constantly. It made me feel I had to bear a lot of responsibility" (facilitator, C6 non-migrant background).

Citation 13

"Yes, I definitely felt that the topic was what people were excited about. There was actually a very nice energy. I also really did have the feeling that the people who were there also really wanted to be there, … so in itself this meant that from the start one did have the feeling of a kind of hope, I think for many participants. We hoped that something would come out of this. We hoped that we could do something meaningful" (public official, C2, non-migrant background).

Citation 14

"The group unfortunately changed from the first to the second PL. It was a break in continuity, in terms of the composition of the group but also in terms of the way we could follow up on the things discussed in the first workshop. I would make participants' presence more binding. We should stay together and continuously work to actually build things up as a group" (stakeholder local NGO, C6, non-migrant background).

Citation 15

"The agenda should be given in advance. We have family and professional constraints, and our employer isn't necessarily going to give priority to this project. It's hard to commit to four or five dates, even if the desire is there" (stakeholder civil society organisation, C4, non-migrant background).

Citation 16

"It is clear that it was the first time ... I mean, when you are there, you say "but what do I do, who do I call"? And you begin to make an analysis of the associations, of the institutions … and we have tried, we have made this choice internally ... I wonder perhaps if this choice could have been done in a more shared way, to enlarge even more... because that choice was also very much influenced by, I don't know, relationships that we have as the education department, the sports department, or the youth policy department, so with all that network present in the city" (public official, C1, non-migrant background).

Citation 17

"It was good for the group dynamic that we did not know each other before … I would not organise more meetings before. When I had enrolled T did have an info moment just one on one. Well, mine was with M, … so there were two of us, but not more and there she did explain the purpose of a PL which was good to be prepared" (interested citizen, C2, migrant background, 2nd generation).

Citation 18

"I don't know if it is a prerequisite for a PL. But what happened here is: I did not know everyone, and no one knew everyone and so I think there was an advantage there. The informal conversations focused very strongly on the topic of the policy lab. I can imagine, for example, if you do something with a group, but those people all know each other, then you also have the danger that in between the conversation steers off" (public official, C2, non-migrant background).

Citation 19

"It was a very new approach to me. I wanted more information and feedback about the policy lab methodology. I wanted to participate in more preparatory meetings, so I could

learn more about the policy labs and be prepared" (stakeholder grassroot stakeholder, C5 non-migrant background).

Citation 20

"I do not remember much from the first and second policy lab, because it has been a long time since we participated in them. I think that there should not be so much time and distance in between labs. We need to be able to keep up with the methodology, the object and the connections we have made with the participants" (stakeholder, international organisation, C5, non-migrant background).

Citation 21

"I know that if we had seen each other more in shorter periods of time and then in less hours, the confidence of the group would have increased and there would have been greater participation in a large group" (policy maker, C3, non-migrant background).

Citation 22

"If there had been more sessions, many more things would have come out and it would have been possible to work in depth on some concepts. Interesting things were expressed but at some point, it was necessary to redirect them due to the time limitation" (stakeholder civil society organisation, C3, non-migrant background)

Citation 23

"I think that there should be more meetings, to keep up with current affairs and create a small group of people within the local community to discuss issues of interest" (focus group respondent, C5 migrant background).

Citation 24

"I would prolong the project and give other people the opportunity to express their ideas in this direct way. I would have liked [the young people] to be in more meetings. I would have liked to hear more of their experiences and points of view" (stakeholder youth association, migrant background, C3, 2nd generation).

Citation 25

"I think that the policy lab has brought results at the level of expression of opinions, and what people think, those people who participated, that yes ... everyone with their limitations and skills ... but ... if there were more policy labs, in my opinion ... more to involve maybe the youth of the city, in my opinion, it would be better. It would allow more and more people to express themselves, to give an opinion, to be active … I mean, active members of the community … Sometimes without these means of expression you struggle to pull what you have inside, what your opinions are" (interested citizen, C1, migrant background, 2nd generation).

Citation 26

"It gave me a lot of peace of mind that it was all thought out. It was all in phases. Everything was a series of things and so we followed an order" (young participant focus group discussion, C3, migrant background, 2nd generation).

Citation 27

"It is really my experience and one of the most important things I learned, that even proven techniques may not work. It depends a lot on the group. I felt, for example, it would have

been a better idea to not use so many different techniques in the first policy lab when the group was still new. But to use them at a later stage and to focus more on the relational level of the participants in the first policy lab and not to overwhelm them with a lot of different creative techniques" (facilitator, C6, non-migrant background).

Citation 28

"I think each and every policy lab was different also because we had a lot of variation of the participants. We would have needed to use a welcome technique and establish trust to get to know each other at the beginning of every policy lab, because there were still new participants that didn't know each other" (facilitator, C6 non-migrant background).

Citation 29

"What was missing? Even more time for getting to know each other; we were immediately involved in the project, but maybe that part was missing" (stakeholder civil society organisation, C4, non-migrant background).

Citation 30

"At the end of the sessions a circle was always formed. Everyone had to stand up and step in and step out of the circle: 'if you agree, take one step forward, if you disagree, take one step back.' Something like that. I don't know if that increased participation. It was done at the end of each session and after that there was no activity, so to speak. But I do think that it was important, because everyone was involved, and it created a bit of group connection. People were more honest about what they really thought, and everyone could speak because they did not have to wait for someone else to give them the floor. This may have created stronger bonds and perhaps increased participation in the next PL-session" (interested citizen, C2, migrant background, 2nd generation)

Citation 31

"These [plenaries] were moments where freedom of speech and expression was more than present. At some point a stakeholder expressed an idea -I think it was during the last policy lab- that was kind of provocative. There was a futile discussion afterwards. But it did not bother me, because the reason that he expressed his point of view was that he felt free and comfortable to do it, it was not staged, there were no fights or something like that." (stakeholder, coordinator local integration project, C5, non-migrant background).

Citation 32

"There are always people who talk a lot. We didn't have a moderator in the small group working sessions and how do you slow someone down when you're not officially a moderator? Then you can ask someone else: "What do you think?" But [conversational space] wasn't quite equally distributed. That has to be said. Representatives of the city who have been working in this field for 20 years, simply have 15 ideas for every single aspect" (local administrator, C6, non-migrant background).

Citation 33

"So, I talked and reflected with the people present at the different tables. The first day for me, I was at an institutional table, that was a shame though, there was only one 'public' participant present at our table. The second day, though, that of the micro-experiments, was great, it was really a collective one with whom I stayed in contact, with whom I work not every day but at least several times a week" (stakeholder civil society organisation, C4, non-migrant background).

Citation 34

"The division into small groups was done in such a way that there was one person [that represented] each different group of stakeholders [young participants, adult stakeholders coming from grass root organisations, private organisations and associations, policy makers and local administrators]. This made it easier. All those dynamics… I find it much more interesting. It generated space for group work and sharing" (stakeholder civil society organisation, C3, non-migrant background).

Citation 35

"The space and the location also played a very big role. The fact that you could arrive at a comfortable place and people were already looking at each other in a circle. I would not organise these sessions in a school building" (interested citizen, C2, migrant background, 2nd generation).

Citation 36

"There is the notion of setting the right spaces for interaction. It took me actually a fairly large amount of time to figure out how the spaces for interaction would work. In the first policy lab, we were at a very large city stadium. I thought it was very interesting, how the thinking [of participants] in the different spaces would change. […]. People could have coffee in the morning. The minutes of the previous meetings were there. […] So in the space, we always had these elements for people to find out where we were [in the PL-process]. The space and what was presented in this space was important" (facilitator, C4, non-migrant background).

Citation 37

"In the little coffee place, we would speak with each other more and got to know each other more and in a more individual and personal way. It was easier to express ourselves and just take turns in the conversation if we felt like we could and we wanted to" (facilitator, C3, migrant background, 2nd generation).

Citation 38

"The coffee and the lunch breaks also helped, because we discussed about our interests and our daily lives, and the ice was broken" (stakeholder civil society organisation, C5, non-migrant background).

Citation 39

"In general, you get to know other people better during lunches. It would have been useful to provide more moments like this." (young citizen, C1, migrant background, 2nd generation).

Citation 40

"It was a coincidence, but it was Ramadan. So not everyone joined us for lunch in the afternoon. Pupils went out and were not there. That was unfortunate" (primary school director, C2, non-migrant background).

Citation 41

"So, it was like trying to learn how to participate in a policy lab and which way to go. The young participants were thinking about what, how in what moment and in what way they could speak. Throughout the different policy labs, we learned what the participation method was about and how to use it. Eventually the young participants seemed to open

up more and it became easier for them to express themselves" (facilitator, C3, migrant background, 2nd generation).

Citation 42

"I noticed that there was a lot of active listening among the participants, precisely because the goal was also to find a solution. However, sometimes I found more walls, but this was more from representatives of certain associations. There was more of an obstacle in communication and therefore the protagonists, the young people, were not listened to so much. So, in short, from active listening we moved on to a kind of confrontation to make ideas prevail and not to find solutions" (focus group respondent Pm1, citizen, C1, migration background, 1st generation).

Citation 43

"Astonishment, astonishment combined with cohesion and integration, yes, these words come to my mind, let's say because... I would never have imagined how it went, how it was in the beginning, [and evolved] from PL0 to PL3. I was struck by how much the young participants but also me, you know, also me, how we grew and arrived at PL3 with... really so much desire to talk, to participate, to share opinions, to share thoughts, and that in my opinion was really nice" (facilitator, non-migrant background).s

Citation 44a

"I honestly didn't follow how the project works at first, but then I understood, and I had the opportunity to express myself when I had my own idea. It was the facilitation that helped me" (young citizen, C1, migrant background, 2nd generation).

Citation 44b

"Personally, I think that explaining and rephrasing helped to explore the issue from different perspectives" (young citizen, C1, migrant background, 2nd generation).

Citation 44c

"There's one thing I completely adhered to in the context of the PL and that's to be in a position of equal status. And when I felt that there was an imbalance there, and it's always an imbalance that's taken by the professional, for me it was very important to return to this position. […] to make sure that there can be this position of equal status, […] I can think of a professional who tended to give a form of instructions, I had to rebalance that so that we didn't end up in that situation, so that the participants could be free to come up with their own solutions, because that's the key to what we're describing here: it's not the professional who, as usual, is over-formatted and will give an answer. […] Innovation comes precisely from the fact that we're going off the rails, that it's not our formatting that's going to be expressed this time. I'm going to say that I felt free to do so, because for me it was really important to let the participants have their say. And I hope I didn't take over during the exchanges" (stakeholder educational sector, C4, non-migrant background).

Citation 45

"Well, first of all, we intervened as facilitators very little in terms of event time spent speaking in the policy labs. I made sure that we would introduce briefly each section and then have small groups that directly interacted through the entirety of the process. So that in terms of time, there was a lot of spoken time by the participants. […] I also felt like they- the three categories of participants [stakeholders, representatives of the migrant

community and policy makers or local administrators] were actively speaking and interacting and suggesting things throughout the process. There was no time when any category of participants just stopped interacting. Anything in the process of the input that they could bring to the table (facilitator, C4, non-migrant background).

Citation 46

"It was very clear that they had prepared very well. There was a clear schedule, and it was always clear for participants what to do and where to go. That also gave confidence" (primary school director, C2, non-migrant background)

Citation 47

"I appreciated the visuals and diagrams of the graphic facilitator" (focus group respondent FM, stakeholder, social worker, non-migrant background).

Citation 48

"Yes, graphic design is a very good tool, and as someone with a photographic memory, I found it very interesting to have something other than the written word, since we're used to having written documents. So yes, original" (public administrator, C4, migrant background, 2nd generation).

Citation 49

"I mean, in my opinion, I repeat, it's their job, they must have had their reasons why they did that too, so maybe they didn't do something for a specific reason, but if it had been me, I would have stopped and said: 'okay, we understand what you want to say, but let's give the floor to other participants' … maybe a bit rude, but I would have really taken the situation in hand and said: 'let's give them the floor'" (stakeholder civil society organisation, C1, non-migrant background).

Citation 50

"All participants said something about themselves, they said some very personal things that, you know, in a context like that it wasn't easy to say. And so, from that point of view maybe the rotation helped, it's clear that I don't imagine that in a discussion of this kind it can be said "okay, now everyone makes a contribution, let's start with you and move on". Maybe, I don't know the techniques right now, but a middle way ... that is, a free discussion, but with the guidance of facilitators would help" (stakeholder civil society organisation, C1, non-migrant background).

Citation 51

"From PL1 to PL2 something shifted and perhaps it had then allowed us to get into the swing of things a bit, also thanks to the ice-breakers we used at the beginning to break the ice a bit, to loosen the tension a bit … to such an extent that in PL3 the group did not scatter" (facilitator, C1, non-migrant background).

Citation 52

"The ice-breaking activities have been helpful in allowing people to express themselves, to open up and so on ... I think they are very useful" (interested citizen, C1, migration background, 1st generation).

Citation 53

"In the beginning during the introduction, different methods were used in the plenary. It took a long time, and I watched the time go by. I wondered if it was a good decision that I had decided to participate. My mind was still occupied with everything I still had to do in school. I was also anxious to get information and get started with the PL. In the end, this long introduction did ensure that there was a high sense of safety between the participants" (primary school director, C2, non-migrant background).

Citation 54a

"The plenary allowed for much more discussion, but then in the end it was difficult to get to the gist of the discussion, in fact the role of the facilitators was crucial in this" (citizen, C1, migrant background, 1st generation).

Citation 54b

"Even there were those who didn't say anything anyway for fear of saying some rubbish ... or saying maybe, of not being able to express themselves at their best, for example [name of a male migrant], in my opinion he had a lot to say, but he always had to be enticed to talk about it ... however when we talked singularly he said so many things ... in fact I used to say "why don't you say it " and he said "you know how it is, I'm a little afraid of being wrong, of saying things" (interested citizen, C1, migrant background, 1st generation).

Citation 55

"In those plenary sessions, you think more about the big picture, it does not have to be an in-depth discussion yet. I don't think that I just said what I thought. In the first policy lab mainly, my position played a role and in the second maybe even more, because it went more into depth: I was being very conscious that everyone could voice their opinions and that I was not being too dominant myself" (public official, C2, non-migrant background).

Citation 56

"In the big group, some people really talked a lot, and I could not follow the conversation. This was different in the small group. I could ask something and dared to say more. In the big group, I did not always dare to ask questions" (parent with migrant background, C2, 1st generation).

Citation 57

"Well, I think that they should have organised more plenary sessions to give more time to the migrant community. To make them feel more comfortable and give them more of a voice so they could fully understand the vocabulary that is used in a policy lab" (civil servant, C5, non-migrant background).

Citation 58

"I didn't see any big language gaps, because even those who were struggling a bit still expressed themselves … Putting myself in their shoes, if I had had someone, you know, who, let's say in quotes, did it for me, I don't think I would have arrived at PL3 with all this lightness in speaking, in explaining myself, because there is the interpreter" (facilitator, C1, non-migrant background).

Citation 59

"I think it's very useful, even compulsory, for people who don't understand, because they were able to participate, they even participated a lot. I think back to people, I play the film

in my head, and without it they would never have been able to participate, they would never have been able to express their points of view, their feelings, their experiences too; they expressed their experiences a lot, on many of the situations evoked so yes, it was very useful" (public official, C4, non-migrant background).

Citation 60

"Yes, except for that one interpreter that I have to be completely honest… I'm a trained interpreter, so I was a bit shocked. […] The problem is that we had an interpreter that was that's used by every single office here to [translate] Dari. So the reason I ruled out using him in the second PL, [was because] he ended up participating. I was very dubious about him actually translating. Well, I saw he wasn't necessarily always translating and he really did not interpret properly. The Afghan participant ended up speaking English with me as an interpreter because it was just not working out" (facilitator, C4, non-migrant background).

Citation 61

"The tiring presentation in the 3rd policy lab…I think that it took so long, and it was quite boring hearing about recommendations and results …some migrants that were present and new to the policy labs needed to talk and be heard, but there was not enough time given to them due to the presentation of the proposals… I am talking about an imbalance in who speaks and for how long… It would have been useful to let migrants speak more instead of presenting recommendations…I don't know if this could have happened, but it would be more productive" (stakeholder, coordinator local integration project, C5, non-migrant background).

Citation 62

"When the group is large, the capacity to speak is very diluted. There are many people who find it difficult to speak in front of large groups. Young people are one of these groups who find it much more difficult to speak when they have people in front of them who are older than them or more technically prepared. The only way to make plenaries more productive would be to silence the [dominant] voices" (stakeholder civil society organisation, C3, non-migrant background).

Citation 63

"In the large group, there were obviously more adults, fewer children. They started talking to each other with difficult words. In the small group, they took us into account more, because then there were two children" (pupil in primary school, C2, migrant background, 2nd generation).

Citation 64

"Especially explaining the words. Sometimes I didn't ask that myself but then she would ask 'do you get that or understand that? Do you know what that means?'" (pupil in primary school, C2, migrant background, 2nd generation).

Citation 65

"I don't think anything could have been done better in fact. I actually liked it already. I don't think you could do anything to make me say something in a bigger group. It is just not nice to say things in big groups, also not in class. … I'm not someone who will trust people easily because I have like a scanner inside, I can - just from seeing people, just from their inside - actually already feel them. That is also how I make friends" (pupil in primary school, C2, migrant background, 2nd generation).

Citation 66

"Then with the children, the pupils, it was very difficult to have those plenary sessions, it was not so evident to really give them a voice. So then we took care of that by involving N [facilitator who worked with the children]. But gosh, I think it was during the second policy lab session, there was a whole, yes, a whole discussion, there was a lot of chatter and only one pupil was left. And she did not say anything, did she? And then I was like: oh that is not good" (facilitator, C2, public official, non-migrant background).

Citation 67

"Every time the conversation became more abstract an philosophical, the kids were there to actually become more factual. […] When we were talking about the dress code at school for example, .. classical terms such as neutrality, singularity and identity were easily used. But a conversation like that easily kind of fades away. I think the kids' role was [..] to always come back to factual things and consequences" (interested citizen, C2, migrant background, 2nd generation).

Citation 68

"Small groups helped to create a safe space to work together, share ideas and listen to each other. The [workshops] were more interactive and fruitful than large groups discussions where sometimes, especially if you do not know the language well, you got lost. In small groups you can develop a deeper understanding of the materials and make sure that all people contribute" (civil servant, C5, non-migrant background).

Citation 69

"As for the three migrants, they were very active, and they expressed their ideas without any fear or concern. They were not familiar with the terminology, or the vocabulary used, but stakeholders helped them a lot with useful information" (civil servant, C5, non-migrant background).

Citation 70

"Discussions in small groups give depth to the exchanges. When there are four or five people in a group, it's very interesting, and working in synthesis is a very good way of continuing to work" (stakeholder civil society organisation, C4, migrant background, 1st generation).

Citation 71

"In the small group, on the other hand, we already had a goal to achieve so it was much easier to communicate, it was much easier to get to the to the gist of it than in the large group" (interested citizen, C1, migrant background, 1st generation).

Citation 72

"We were developing the micro experiments in the second policy labs, the people were really committed about the topics they really wanted to find solutions for. The challenges had been identified and therefore all the opinions were important. Participants were really working together and I think that that was a momentum where also especially people that were maybe more silent in the first policy labs, were able to raise their voices and give their opinions" (facilitator, C6, non-migrant background).

Citation 73

"Well, both, in the sense that it would certainly have made the whole discussion less fluid. Perhaps it would have helped to bring out these things, the real needs of those within the group who were not local stakeholders but were participants, let's say ... so, yes, I don't know how to put it in terms of facilitation, but perhaps it would have had more ... more positive effects than negative ones, if I had to estimate" (stakeholder, civil society organisation, C1, non-migrant background).

Citation 74

"It's important to have a facilitator who stays close by, supporting the group, because self-management of the group is not so simple, depending on the composition. It's very important to have a facilitator who guarantees the flow of ideas, otherwise things can get out of hand" (stakeholder, project manager, C4, non-migrant background).

Citation 75

"There are those who participated more as individuals and thus bringing their personal story inside, and there are those who participated more as representatives of associations, other institutions and trade unions, sports associations, voluntary associations ... and here you could see the shift ... I mean, there is a difference, there is ... but these are two important dimensions… and sometimes, a bit like [it can] happen with the institutional role [a participant] who was also … part of an association - and therefore also has a different experience both at individual and collective level - sometimes risked ... ... being ... how shall I put it in word ...... to not allow the free participation of the personal level of other participants, who felt a bit judged. [They behave] more expert more overbearing " (public official, C1, female, non-migrant background).

Citation 76

"That was the moment where I really stopped myself. I really literally sat on my hands and then I had to say to myself for 20 minutes: no, no: you can't take up that role here. This is not, this is not meant to be. It's not your role" (public official, C2, non-migrant background).

Citation 77

"Some of the stakeholders took up the role of teachers to help the representatives from the migrant community to express their feelings and ask them, what do you want to change? What are your real problems in your daily life? That was very helpful. I think that most of them did not want to feel uncomfortable, or they were embarrassed to speak in front of everyone. It was easier to express themselves in smaller groups. (facilitator, C5, non-migrant background)

Citation 78

"I think the children also played a very big role, especially from primary school, and I think their participation was actually ensured by the facilitator. Because the context of a lab is a bit complex in the sense that yes, it is an open space, so you actually have to kind of claim a place yourself. […] and I think that it is a bit more difficult for children in a venue where there are only adults. So I thought it was very good that there was a person there and that she ensured the participation of the primary school children as well. The participation was also very high, in the sense that that also gave a lot of input and I felt that their voice was also quite important" (interested citizen, C2, migrant background, 2nd generation).

Citation 79

"I do think, it is necessary for the children to have the space to be able to work by themselves. …Yes, I don't really know, I find it, I also find it difficult myself … The fact, that they had a spokesperson with them at the table, someone who represented their voice, ... I don't know if that always helped them, per se. Maybe that way we are also saying: 'you are going to find this potentially very difficult and will not be very good at it, so we are going to have someone who is going to translate your words into words that we as adults understand better. Nevertheless N [the facilitator for children] did that super well and still left an enormous amount of space for the children themselves" (public official, C2, non-migrant background).

Citation 80

"So I liked that because then we were not in a big group. In class I'm like that too, when we work in small groups I have more to say than in the big group. […] In the small group we did not have many disagreements. We mostly agreed like that and it was nice that I could also say something of course. M [the other pupil] coloured everything" (pupil in primary school, C2, migrant background, 2nd generation).

Citation 81

"Once me or another facilitator made [the technical language] clearer, we were alle able to understand each other. After a while also the younger stakeholders knew how to get their points across." (facilitator, migrant background, 2nd generation).

Citation 82

"Being closer to the young participants, because our ages were similar, made it easier for them to understand how they were supposed to participate and also, be closer to them than the other facilitators. We shared a common vision in the things that we thought about. I took up more of a representative role that was closer to the younger stakeholders. They identified with me and could see how they could participate" (facilitator, C3, migrant-background, 2nd generation).

Citation 83

"I do think that could be methodically built in, that you are actually saying very methodically what people need to start doing. You could link that to a clear instruction: 'every 5 minutes you are obliged to be silent for 10 seconds and check: have we heard everyone enough?' That could be very methodological. To get people together from different angles to come to something out of the box I think you always need methods" (public official, C1, non-migrant background).

Citation 84

"The facilitators insisted that the main word had to be that of the young participants. The *young people were empowered in that way. I consider this to be something that facilitators need to do, give the voice to the population that wants to be heard"* (grassroot stakeholder, C3, non-migrant background).

Citation 85

"We used the "Spider Technique" a lot, which in any case was difficult, but it helped to concretise. We adapted, for example, "the person method", we didn't do copy-paste, we adapted it because it is complex" (facilitator, C1, non-migrant background)

Citation 86

"The first part of the "web-activity", … the spider ... well, after that first part, when together … even after the part with images, [that was] more emotional in which we achieved the objectives, then there was to [time to] decline the ideas and draw up a real project to be realised, perhaps if ... a little more time would have allowed us to ... give everyone the chance to do something actually feasible" (public official, C1, non-migrant background).

Citation 87

"Techniques, such as the 'Lotus Blossom' [helped]. I remember that each group had a different question to answer and develop ideas and proposals. We worked as a team and this method made us activate our imagination and be spontaneous" (stakeholder, coordinator local integration project, C5, non-migrant background).

Citation 88

"I found the exercise with the persona problematic in terms of stereotypes and prejudices. There emerged some statements in the description of the person, of which I thought OK you have to maybe do that differently next time to come to the goal. Simply find another method" (local stakeholder director NGO, C6, non-migrant background).

Citation 89

"Certain techniques in small groups also invited participants to ask each other: 'what would you write here?' That way [the technique] kind of give turns to engage in conversation again" (interested citizen, C2, migrant background, 1st generation).

Citation 90

"The children were very excited to draw. The drawing itself helped them to be active and engaged during the conversation. They could take notes and so they got a lot of ideas too" (parent with migrant background, C2, 1st generation).

Citation 91

"When the children brought their stories based on the drawings that was brilliant and that worked. They gave a wonderful presentation of their discussion" (primary school director, C2, non-migrant background).

Citation 92

"At some point we had these big flaps and then people had to stand up and walk around. I think that is an interesting thing to do, because it allows people to lean back into themselves and think for a moment. In the meantime, they walk around and meet each other, two by two […] Yes, I think that is conducive and also nice to do. You see someone sticking a post-it to a paper and that makes you think of something else again. Collectively deciding and choosing the priorities, I found more difficult" (public official, C2, non-migrant background).

Citation 93

"The medium doesn't always have to be language either. There are plenty of other methodologies, for example a 'walking conversation' to make visible how you relate to something. When agreeing or disagreeing, people physically position themselves in the space [without explaining]. So you immediately see how the group feels and this brings

about enthusiasm without using words" (pedagogical coach secondary school, C2, non-migrant background).

Citation 94

"We started with a polemical issue, and people had to take a position for or against it, and justify themselves. The aim was to stimulate debate and ensure that people come away with something other than their initial conviction" (focus group respondent, C4, stakeholder, coordinator, non-migrant background).

Citation 95

"I'm convinced that it's actually a much richer, faster and more relevant way of working, because thinking and building with the participants is already a step up" (stakeholder, C4, non-migrant background).

Citation 96

"For myself, there are two things. My position as a public official towards others and the way I know that I can give input on a personal level. I know I can generate a lot of ideas, rather quickly, which is an asset, but in a group this sometimes holds others back. Additionally, I might suggest something and people say: oh yes, that's a good idea. Which leaves me thinking, really? That's obviously not such a good idea, that's just the start" (public official, C1, non-migrant background).

Citation 97

M: I have felt very good, to be honest because it is like the fear has been removed.
J: That stigma…
M: Yes, yes… of a politician, who you perceive as someone superior, and you do not realise that they are just normal people (Fraction of the focus group conversation, C3, migrant background, 2nd generation).

Citation 98
"There was a lack of understanding of these roundtables, we had to explain what they were, the concept that is. So it's more a lack of understanding. Yes, once the concept had been clarified, they [referring to beneficiaries] were able to speak up, there were no difficulties in that respect" (public administrator, C4, civil servant, migrant background, 2nd generation).non-migrant background).

Citation 99

"I think these are all interventions [referring to the micro-experiments] that are certainly very valuable, but I think there is a bit of an innovation factor missing and I think there were so many people involved, but ultimately - which of course also has a lot to do with the fact that there is very little time and a very limited budget - there are just no big leaps possible, to say, we are not changing something completely in the long term. I think that's a bit of a shame. But I think it's also the timing, with the summer and so in between and then it's relatively tight. But also with the possibilities that you have, if you say you have three or four dates for creating something, it's just difficult to do something really sustainable - you have to hope that someone then picks up and then continues" (local stakeholder NGO, C6, non-migrant background).

Citation 100

"It [referring to time] had a big impact, although I understand that facilitators couldn't give us ten hours, you couldn't exactly have the timing of the group work, so some things

were just thrown in there because we had to finish, there was no time, it took us a long time to finish them. Yes, I think a little bit of the pressure of time was felt" (stakeholder, civil society organisation, C1, non-migrant background).

Citation 101
"I'm thinking, for example, in the in the first policy lab, we had a kind of voting in the end, so everybody had the same power to speak because everybody got like this ballots and they could vote through the topics. So this was also some kind of nonverbal speaking, raising, raising the voice or opinion. Umm. And after that, I really felt that, especially the migrant participants, they became more and more confident in the process and in the last well, yes, yes, over the different labs exactly" (facilitator, C6, non-migrant background).

Citation 102

"In the exchanges at this table, participants expressed a desire to take this or that subject in hand. Typically, A. said straight away: "I'd like to suggest, I've got a bit of time, I can do this, that and that"; J.: "I can do that, I can contribute in this way"; H said: "I'm interested in contributing". I found that there was a real opportunity for participants to assert their role in relation to the subject" (stakeholder, C4 non-migrant background).

Citation 103

"It was an unexpected additional project that involved challenges for us that were not foreseen when our team decided to join the policy lab. There was a lot more work than expected, as the other team that participated in the PL as well, which originally had the idea for the pilot project, cancelled due to a lack of resources. In the end our team got stuck with the pilot project. The project worked quite well, but it would have been easier if we had implemented it together with the other team" (local stakeholder, employee NGO, C6, non-migrant background).

Citation 104

"I think they were happy with the ideas that came out of the PL. I think they were not so happy about the fact that they would have to make an extra effort to really make the micro experiments happen. They were not so sure about that at the beginning of the project: that they would have to implement the pilots themselves" (facilitator, C6, non-migrant background).

Citation 105

"The strong involvement of stakeholders, yes, I think so … moreover, from a certain point of view, personal characteristics, linguistic difficulties ... contributed, so there were people [referring to participants with a migration background] who perhaps for shyness or even a lack of knowledge on the topics did not particularly contribute. For example, the fact that on sport, which could have been a subject that young people could be interested in, there was not that interest, as also for volunteering. I really noticed that on the activities that we are going to realise… I mean, it was all very focused on people who have to deal with descendants or with asylum seekers and so on, but not on them directly. The focus was not on what migrants need. I think that even in some situations migrants' ideas were a bit crushed. And also, in the fulfilment phase this happened" (stakeholder, civil society organisation, C1, non-migrant background).

Citation 106

The process that led to the micro-experiments was difficult .... Obviously all of us having different ideas and different opinions, and still different topics to be addressed, obviously all of us would like to address a certain type of topic, but in the end narrowing it down was

not easy. […] There were times when I wanted to express myself [more] ... out of four policy labs it must have happened to me two or three times. For example, when we were putting down the micro-experiments and sports came to mind, I thought "but why we are not addressing sports?" ... But in the end I thought that if these micro-experiments came up it meant that you had to prioritise these, I thought they were the main problem (interested citizen, C1, migration background, 1st generation).

Citation 107

"Teacher S has already said this idea is feasible and so I am already hopeful that it can be done. We still need to know how we are going to do it, though. I had a few ideas and M will have more ideas too. We can then see together what we can do. If we have another PL-session, we can discuss it with the other participants as well" (pupil in primary school, C2, migrant background, 2nd generation).

Citation 108

"I would have maybe spent more time between PL-1 and PL-2 to work with the migrants on what exactly are [policy labs]. You know, to give them more knowledge on how we make actions here, what kind of actors are around the table and how they can help in making actions happen. I think bringing them more knowledge and giving them more authority in this moment would have helped between P1 and PL-2" (facilitator, C4, non-migrant background).

Citation 109

"We expressed our ideas and their importance of doing this as a community. Some of them were very happy and helpful in the experiments. Others did not want to participate. […] I think that we could give some money to motivate participants. To motivate stakeholders and migrants was not easy because participating [in the micro-experiments] is extra work for all of them" (facilitator, C5, non-migrant background).

Citation 110

"In this type of project, if we really want to get people involved, how do we finance, how do we give the means to small structures, those that are very close to the public? If we really want to involve the most vulnerable members of the public, we have to think about that" (stakeholder, C4, non-migrant background).

Citation 111

"The facilitators team choose the experiments. Yes. We discussed what we had to do in terms of feasibility and the means we had available. We did not have money. Unfortunately, for the facilitators, the way this happened, was unfair in different aspects. We all did more than was agreed upon in this project. The six month implementation was a lot of work. There should have been more time to develop this, to discuss this with the stakeholders and migrants and to observe and follow-up" (facilitator, C5, non-migrant background).

Citation 112

"It gave us the opportunity to then be able to think and create three micro-experiments that then will be adjusted over time … in the sense that, I mean, I agree with the participants when they pointed out negative sides, on which we have to work with time, because it's never good the first, right?" (facilitator, C1, non-migrant background).

Citation 113

"The impact of this project needs to be bigger through innovation. I believe that the labs created a basis for collaborations, and they also fostered synergies at a local, national and international level. The municipality can work now with innovation actors and seek more synergies to solve social issues and to help migrants and TCNs more effectively and include them in the procedures" (civil servant, C5, non-migrant background).

Citation 114

"We still have a job to do within the project, which is the evaluation and how it is being transferred to them, [the young participants]. We also need to think more about the conclusions for our city in the long term" (policy maker, C3, non-migrant background)

Citation 115

"I would like that in the future (hopefully not too far away) the MUST-FuenLab group can be like a safe place where people can come with proposals for participation, and I would also like that we do not lose contact with the technicians and politicians who have helped them throughout this process. And that in the future the group will be able to find other problems and work on them until they are solved" (stakeholder youth association, C3 migrant background, 2nd generation).

Citation 116

"It was very difficult for migrants who did not speak the native language. Maybe they were a little embarrassed to express their feelings" (facilitator, C5, non-migrant background).

Citation 117

At the beginning of the first PL I also found the exchange appreciative, but towards the end of the event it became a bit too much for me. I had the feeling that everyone was just saying something, but we weren't working together. But I don't know, there were always different group compositions" (focus group respondent, local stakeholder, employee NGO, C6, non-migrant background).

Citation 118

"We didn't all come from the same place and sometimes it was complicated to understand the conflicting experiences but, in the end, we managed to understand each other. A decision was not based on my opinion or on the opinion of some of us. It was based on everyone's opinion" (stakeholder youth association, C3, migrant background, 2nd generation).

Citation 119

"We were all going in the same direction... It felt supporting to connect everyone with everyone" (young focus group respondent A, C3, migrant background, 2nd generation).

Citation 120

"There were different opinions and reasons why we should focus one way or another, but everyone gave their opinion. And then, little by little, we were seeing how everyone wanted to work towards the same goal. This took a little bit more time. It was not hard to make decisions then. We already talked about it in the small groups and created ideas. This made it easy to reach a decision because everyone thought more or less the same" (facilitator, C3, migrant background, 2nd generation).

Citation 121

"The participation of the technical part has been as important as the participation of the rest; they have guided us in making important decisions by contributing their experience and points of view. In relation to the political part... the same as I have felt with the technical part... their contribution has been as important as ours, or even more, because without them it is possible that we would have taken decisions that were not entirely correct" (stakeholder youth association, C3, migrant background, 2nd generation)

Citation 122

"Working in small groups and dynamically changing the composition of the groups, worked as an element that enhanced decision-making and the co-creation of new forms of resolution. [In small groups], we never worked with the same people, so we always came up with different ideas, even if they were about the same topic" (stakeholder youth association, C3, migrant background, 2nd generation)

Citation 123

"We used plenary sessions really at the moments where we needed to summarise what had happened and asked each other questions in order to move on or make decisions as a group. […] The plenary moments were typically organised at the very beginning with a theatre-format-activity. Every time there was an activity that was closing, there was a synthesis and a vote" (facilitator, C4, non-migrant background).

Citation 124

"In a society where everything takes time, it's also good to move fast and make decisions. But the question remains: 'Can you make such important decisions in such a short space of time?' Decisions are being made with a lack of analysis" (stakeholder, C4, non-migrant background).

Citation 125

"I already mentioned that there were no decisions taken yet. I mean we talked about suggestions and proposals, but nothing solid. I think this needs time and fertile soil to work…but one thing that I am sure of is the true will of the participants. I remain sceptical about decisions…I really want to see actions...and I think solutions will eventually come up, but first municipal officials should take responsibility" (stakeholder, coordinator local integration project, C5, non-migrant background).

Citation 126

"Decision-making is part of the stakeholders' role, they did try to be involved, including me. But migrants were more into listening and pointing the important things out. Personal meetings with stakeholders to involve them in decision making would be useful" (civil servant, C5, non-migrant background).

Citation 127

"We helped with the proposals and ideas. We talked about things that need to be done and now it is the turn of other parties to take action." (focus group respondent, local stakeholder, C5, non-migrant background).

Citation 128

"I think we would have needed more time in the groups to exchange, also with the stakeholders" (local stakeholder, employee NGO, C6, non-migrant background).

Citation 129

"The second day was mainly just a World Café and then these different implementation phases were discussed. I think these implementation phases where you then went to the next table :I also found that very fascinating. How much went on there, because time was so short and you had to make decisions" (focus group respondent CB, C6, local stakeholder, non-migrant background).

Citation 130

"We were developing the micro experiments in the second policy labs, the people were really committed about the topics they really wanted to find solutions for. The challenges had been identified and therefore all the opinions were important. Participants were really working together and I think that that was a momentum where also especially people that were maybe more silent in the first policy labs, were able to raise their voices and give their opinions" (facilitator, C6, non-migrant background).