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inequality with and for Future generaTions

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Co-creation with young people in Amsterdam

Research approach and Reflexive Policy Agenda

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1 Introduction

This document aims to outline the process of co-creation of housing policy in the city of Amsterdam. It is directed at researchers and policymakers who wish to gain more knowledge of the objectives, strategies and methods pertaining to the development of a Reflexive Policy Agenda.

For young adults on the Amsterdam housing market the accessibility of housing has been decreasing for years, due to soaring house prices and rents, the shrinkage and residualization of the social rental sector, and the precarization of the labour market. Consequently, many young people struggle to secure an affordable and adequate dwelling and are stuck in insecure and chaotic housing pathways. Current housing policies in Amsterdam are struggling to effectively respond to these challenges. In this context, the UPLIFT co-creation process had the ambition to better understand and address the specific housing problems of young people, by letting the municipality of Amsterdam, housing association Lieven de Key, resident organization !Woon, Delft University of Technology and a group of local young people work together in a participatory manner. The final goal of this co-creation process was to unravel the real-life experiences of young people and to co-create new or improved policy initiatives with them.

In Amsterdam, the process of co-creation was organized in three cycles – so-called Sprints. Each of these Sprints was focused on a specific topic and followed the same structure. All Sprints started with a kick-off meeting, followed by a inventory stage, where the problem at hand was analyzed and personal experiences shared; then a solution oriented stage followed, where young people elaborated proposals of tools and approaches to tackle the analyzed problem; and finally each Sprint was concluded with a feedback stage, where the proposed solutions were presented to institutional partners and options for policy implementation were explored.

In three consecutive Sprints, the following three topics were covered:

1. Temporality on the housing market;
2. Community oriented housing concepts;
3. A youth housing policy agenda.

Each of the Sprints resulted in a set of suggestions and proposals for the institutional actors to consider for implementation.

This report examines the results of the above policy co-creation process in order to evaluate its methodology as well as its impact on the participating actors - young people in particular - and on the policymaking approach. It represents the main output of work package 4 (WP4)

of the UPLIFT project in Amsterdam, as it combines the research on co-creation as a method – and all the consequences it may have on local policymaking processes – with the outcomes of the policy co-creation carried out in Amsterdam.

The report starts by briefly describing the context of young people's housing problems in Amsterdam; then in Sections 3, 4 and 5 it addresses the objectives of the co-creation, the role and cooperation of institutional stakeholders, as well as the strategies for the recruitment of young people and for the management of the Youth Board. Then, in Sections 6 it proceeds to describe the process of co-creation, its value in terms of capacity building, the interaction dynamics among stakeholders and young people, the management of the process and the implementation of the proposed policy suggestions. Section 7 provides a critical evaluation of the whole process, while Section 8 presents the Reflexive Policy Agenda as it emerged from the co-creation, followed by its implementation in chapter 9. Finally, Section 10 collects best practices and recommendations for all phases of the co-creation, in order to provide a useful tool for all those who wish to embark on a similar process.

2 Research context and problem statement

In this Section, we define the target group of young people involved in the co-creation process, and we describe the problems and the inequality that they face in the housing market.

2.1 Definition of the target group and their problems

The general focus area for the policy co-creation in Amsterdam is housing, specifically housing for vulnerable young people between the age of 18 and 29. Young people are vulnerable in the field of housing if they lack a secure and affordable accommodation, for example because they are on a temporary contract or are not able to find adequate accommodation.

In recent years, the housing market of Amsterdam, traditionally known for its large share of social rental dwellings, has experienced a trend of commodification and financialization. Due to its central position, good facilities and strong economic base, the Dutch capital has become very popular among both house seekers and investors (Gentili & Hoekstra, 2022). This has resulted in a large shortage of dwellings and serious housing affordability and accessibility problems, particularly for starters on the housing market, who also have to grapple with the precarization of the labour market (Hochstenbach & Boterman, 2015; Lennartz et al., 2016; Jonkman, 2019, Boelhouwer, 2020).

In the last quarter of 2022, prices in the private rental sector (€25/month per square metre) and the private home ownership sector (€7200 per square metre) were too high for a large majority of young house seekers. Theoretically, the social rental sector could offer an alternative for young adults with a lower to middle income. However, Amsterdam's social rental sector has shrunk considerably in recent years (Kadi & Musterd, 2015) and waiting times have grown to a staggering 13 years (Hochstenbach, 2019). This reflects the general residualisation process that has characterized the Dutch social rental sector since 2010 (Hoekstra, 2017). Furthermore, temporary rental contracts (mostly 2 or 5 years) have been allowed since 2016 in both the private and the social rental sector, thereby seriously reducing the security of households that do manage to find a rental dwelling (Huisman, 2020).

The above problems have several negative consequences, such as a delayed emancipation and a prolonged co-residence of young adults with their parents, high housing costs for those who do reach residential independence and an increased reliance on intergenerational transfers to access homeownership (Lennartz et al., 2016; Arundel & Doling, 2017). Access to homeownership has become a requisite for economic security in later life that sets apart those who can rely on family wealth to better their position from those who cannot (Arundel, 2017). The latter group is often trapped in chaotic and insecure housing pathways (Hochstenbach & Boterman, 2015). They are forced to look for alternative housing options (expensive private rent, home sharing, squatting, living on a camping) or leave the city altogether. The housing problem in Amsterdam is so dire that it also affects the choices that young people make in the

field of education, labor market and personal relations. For example, it is increasingly common for young people to delay the end of their studies in order to be able to remain longer in their student accommodation (Gentili & Hoekstra, 2023).

Last but not least, it should be noted that the Amsterdam housing market developments also have a clear spatial component. Due to gentrification, the central city neighbourhoods (within the so-called ring road) are increasingly becoming the domain of higher income groups, whereas poorer households (especially those with a migration background) are pushed outside and end up in more peripheral parts of the larger metropolitan area. The accessibility of jobs or education centres from these areas is considerably lower than from Amsterdam itself, while commuting costs are much higher (Gentili & Hoekstra, 2022). Many youth housing and student complexes are also located outside the city center of Amsterdam.

2.2 Institutional and policy context

In the Netherlands, several national policies are in place to regulate both the social housing and the liberalised rental sector, and they strongly influence the level of affordability and accessibility of both sectors for young adults. However, they are generally not well tailored to combat the inequality on the Amsterdam housing market, as they have remained unchanged or have become more market oriented in recent years, thereby further enhancing the uneven outcomes on the housing market.

Dutch rent regulation is based on a point system that assigns scores based on dwelling size, quality and location and that applies to both dwellings owned by housing associations and private landlords. Below a certain number of quality points, dwellings have to be rented below a certain threshold (763,47€ in 2022) and qualify as social rental housing when they are owned by housing associations and regulated rent when they are owned by private landlords. Social rental housing dwellings are allocated based on regional housing allocation systems. These systems are characterized by long waiting times and potential social rental tenants have to satisfy strict income requirements.

When dwellings score above a certain threshold in the point system, they qualify as “liberalized” dwellings and can be rented without restrictions regarding initial rent levels¹ (the annual rent increase is regulated though) or income requirements. In 2015, the national government adjusted the point system and included house values (in Dutch: WOZ) among the scoring criteria, in order to allow rent levels to be recalibrated to local market demand (although this does not apply to student and youth housing complexes with shared facilities). As a consequence, in expensive locations – especially Amsterdam – most rental units score enough points to be shifted to the free-market sector once sitting tenants move out. Private

¹ This is likely to change in the near future since the Dutch government has recently launched plans to extend the point system and the rent regulation to a part of the more expensive rental sector (the so-called middle segment).

rental landlords, but occasionally also housing associations, are keen to use this opportunity and as a result of this the share of affordable rental housing in Amsterdam has decreased in recent years.

Housing subsidies also exist (so called rent allowance – *huurtoeslag*). The amount of housing allowance one is entitled to depends on the households characteristics, the household income and the rent level. Moreover, one can only receive a rent allowance if one rents a social rental dwelling (including youth and student housing) or a regulated private rented dwelling. This means that young households in the liberalized private rental market cannot get any state support towards housing affordability and are at the mercy of speculative high prices².

Until recently, the only type of rental contract in the Netherlands was one with an unlimited duration, that provided good tenant protection and could only be terminated by the landlord for a very restricted number of reasons. However, in 2016 the government introduced temporary rental contracts. These may last 1 or 2 years (private rental sector) or up to 5 years if the landlord is a housing association. Of course, these temporary rental contracts provide much less housing security for tenants. They can be applied in the private rental sector but also in the social rental youth housing (for tenants between 18 and 28) and student housing (for tenants who are enrolled in a study program, regardless of age). The rationale behind temporary contracts is that a more dynamic rental sector would increase the availability of rental options for households. However, this is hard to achieve in a tight market such as that of Amsterdam, thus the insecurity entailed in a temporary contract has the potential of creating substantial problems (see Huisman, 2020 for an overview of temporary contracts, their meaning and their impact on the Dutch housing system).

Local housing policies at the Municipal level – with regard to social housing allocation, tenure and price differentiation, and housing construction – are intertwined with national guidelines related to homeownership, mortgage credit and social housing requirements. Thus, the municipality, along with housing associations, has a role to play in shaping local housing opportunities for young people, although mediated by the national regulations.

The local housing policies of the city of Amsterdam are mainly focused on protecting vulnerable groups. For example, the municipal government applies the 40-40-20 rule for new housing developments. This rule implies that in new housing projects, 40% of the dwellings should be social rent, 40% should be affordable private rent (monthly rent between €763 and €1068) or affordable home ownership (below €325.000)³, and only 20% may have full market prices. Furthermore, in order to temper the negative impact of buy-to-let investments, a so-called self-residence obligation has been introduced in 2022. This obligation states that

² The current minister of housing has recently proposed a reform of the rent allowance that will also open up this allowance for tenants in the private rental sector. However, this new bill has not passed the parliament yet.

³ Prices refer to 2022.

dwellings with a cadastral value of less than €512.000 may only be sold to people that will not rent out the dwelling in the four years after the sale.

Finally, the municipality of Amsterdam has the ambition to give young adults a stronger voice in the housing policy making process. That is one of the reasons why they have decided to participate in the Uplift co-creation process.

3 Objectives of the co-creation process

The co-creation process had different objectives depending on the type of participants. For young people, the process was meant to provide the opportunity to gain knowledge of the housing context and policy process; to be taken seriously and be able to safely express their opinions; to influence local decisions about housing and to feel empowered – that is, to feel like they can make an active contribution to the institutional life of their city. For institutional partners, the aim was to increase their knowledge and understanding of youth housing problems and to create a channel of communication with a group that has specific needs and is not well represented in the current policy-making processes. Overall, we wanted UPLIFT to provide the opportunity for institutional actors to think together with young people, in order to develop policy solutions more attuned to their needs and to show that co-creation can be a sustainable and useful method for policy development.

Overall, it can be said that the activities in WP4 have four types of objectives: societal (improve life chances, empower vulnerable young people), institutional (create sustainable institutional structures), policy oriented (create more tailor made local policies) as well as academic (generate novel research findings and methodologies). This Section illustrates them in more detail.

3.1 Societal objectives

The main societal objective of the co-creation process in Amsterdam was to give young people a real voice in local housing policy making. Through co-creation techniques, young people have been involved in the various phases of the policy-making process: problem definition, current policy evaluation, new policy formulation and implementation. We expected this to have societal benefits for both the young people that were part of the so-called Youth Board (see also Section 5) and the policy-makers.

In particular, the objective was for Youth Board members to:

- Feel they are taken seriously by the policy-makers. This was expected to empower them and raise their self-esteem;
- Have the opportunity to express their needs and desires with regard to housing policy. This was expected to result in a housing policy that better fits their needs, and in more trust towards the institutions;
- Gain valuable insights into the policy making process. This may have an added value for both their personal life and their professional career.

All the above objectives refer to enhancing the capabilities and/or functionings that young people have. Therefore, framed in terms of the Capability Approach, the societal objective of

the co-creation activities was to increase the capabilities and real freedoms (life chances) of young people, particularly in the field of housing⁴.

With regard to institutional stakeholders, the objective was for policy-makers to:

- Be equipped with tools and approaches to better understand and address socio-economic and intergenerational inequalities within their territorial scope;
- Be able to refine targeting, policy tools, and intervention measures to better match the resources, needs, and motivations of the youngsters most in need;

Scope of the co-creation process

The co-creation process was applied in collaboration with two different institutional stakeholders: housing association Lieven de Key and the municipality of Amsterdam.

With regard to Lieven de Key, co-creation has focused on two specific aspects: the temporary 5-year rental contracts that they use for young people and the mixed/communal housing concept that is at the basis of several of the association's housing projects. The objective was to gain knowledge about the role of 5-year contracts in the housing pathways of young people, and about the social consequences of communal housing projects on the life chances of vulnerable young people. The interaction with both tenants of Lieven de Key and other vulnerable young people in different positions in the housing market should provide evidence and input for the housing association to potentially adjust its policy tools according to their feedback.

With regard to the municipal level, a more general discussion has been carried out between the young people and the municipality in order to identify the problems and obstacles of current housing policy measures and to define alternative policy solutions. Here the aim was not so much that of evaluating a specific piece of policy or co-producing a new policy tool, but rather that of creating a meaningful interaction between the two sides of the policy process.

3.2 Institutional objectives

The institutional objectives of the co-creation process largely run parallel to the societal objectives. The general aim of the project was to develop an effective methodology to increase the agency of policy subjects that can be replicated in different locations and policy areas. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to establish an institutional framework that secures the possibility of further reflexive policy making processes. Thus, in Amsterdam, the objective was to eventually transform the Youth Board into a durable institutional structure, a sort of permanent "youth panel on housing" that would provide feedback to the municipality and the housing associations with regard to housing market problems and solutions. Such an

⁴ For an overview of how we use the Capabilities Approach in the UPLIFT project you can see [Deliverable 4.2 „Updated Action Plans”](#) and [Deliverable 3.2 „Case Study Report Amsterdam”](#).

institutional structure would establish regular channels for institutional stakeholders to be engaged in a responsive feedback mechanism with local communities and policy subjects. In order for this to be possible, the collaboration between municipality, Lieven de Key and the other local actors needed to be effective and yield positive results during the two years of the co-creation project. In this sense UPLIFT acted as a sort of trial period; if the Youth Board can prove useful for the young people, the municipality and housing association Lieven de Key, there are good chances that this collaboration and co-creation structure can be maintained in the future (even though this also depends on political and financial factors that are external to the project). In this sense, a sound evaluation of the co-creation process and a good dissemination of its added value are of key importance.

3.3 Policy oriented objectives

Since the co-creation process was carried out for two different institutional stakeholders, (see Section 3.1), the policy oriented objectives also followed a similar twofold structure. For the policies of Lieven de Key, the objective was to assess existing tools and their effects – like the temporary contract and the communal housing concept – in order to make policies and/or communication more adaptive to young people's needs. With regard to the municipal level housing policies, the objective was to provide a different overall outlook that was more attuned to the evolving and heterogeneous needs of young people and, at the same time, to develop additional tools to help young people navigate the existing housing market.

The key for this type of objectives was to understand the available room for maneuver. Indeed, while we had the cooperation of local public actors, they often did not have the formal power to change the things that young people were most concerned about, or had to negotiate that power with other governance levels and/or other local interests. Therefore, it was crucial for us to develop objectives that could have an impact on the local level and could be implemented by the involved partners. On the other hand, we were aware that the local implementation partners (ideally together with youth representatives) could bring the more ambitious proposals to other, more appropriate and more powerful tables, and lobby for change based on the results of the co-creation process. Therefore, this type of advocacy also fitted within the policy objectives of the Amsterdam WP4 activities.

3.4 Academic objectives

The academic objectives of the WP4 activities were also twofold. On one hand, similarly to the social and institutional ones, they revolve around the novel methodology that UPLIFT aimed to develop in terms of reflexive policymaking. On the other hand, they are linked to an improved knowledge of the impact of current policies on the housing pathways of young adults, and how they increase or decrease (housing) inequality.

Testing a novel methodology

With regard to the first aspect, the objective was to study the methodology in itself, in order to evaluate whether, and if so under what conditions, actual co-creation of housing policy with young people is possible. The research on the co-creation implementation process intended to answer various questions:

- How does the interaction between decision makers and policy subjects work in practice? Does it lead to an increased agency on the part of target groups? How is it perceived by the local government and other local stakeholders?
- Does policy co-creation truly enhance capabilities for vulnerable youth? Which policy interventions have most potential in terms of the capability approach?
- Is it a sustainable approach in the long-term, when no EU funded researchers are there to stimulate institutional cooperation and innovative modes of interaction?
- What are the pros and cons of the various techniques for co-creation? Which method works best?

On a very practical level, the main question we tried to answer was whether this project has been able to generate successful outcomes: have we been able to co-create a new piece of policy or to modify an existing one at any level? These questions were the engine of the project, as we strived to make co-creation and citizen involvement a durable and replicable model embedded in policy making.

Gaining knowledge on the impact of policies

With regard to the second aspect, the objective was to gain in-depth knowledge of the effects that current policy measures have on young people's housing opportunities. What results are current housing policies in Amsterdam achieving? In what way are they taking into account the wishes and desires of the local youth? How can they be changed and improved? The interaction of policy makers (municipality and housing association) with their target population represented an invaluable source of information to understand how housing needs are conceptualized and responded to by the different actors.

Academic output and publication strategy

The publication strategy related to the WP4 outputs included a book chapter and a journal article. The book chapter discusses the use of focus groups and co-creation methods in participatory action research as part of a book on interventionist research methods in the built environment that will be published by Routledge. The journal article focuses on the relevance of co-creation processes in the empowerment of youth, and is part of a special issue about youth vulnerabilities in European cities that will be published in *Frontiers in Sustainable Cities*.

Moreover, we have disseminated our findings in various national and international events, and our outreach strategy also includes an online course and training materials for actors interested in setting up a co-creation process.

4 Institutional framework for the co-creation process

One of the main objectives of WP4 is the creation of a (hopefully durable) institutional framework that enhances the life chances of young people in each implementation site. In this framework, academic partners, NGO's and the local government collaborate with the target group of young people in the co-creation process. In this Section, we identify the main stakeholders in the co-creation process in Amsterdam and we outline how they have cooperated throughout the project. A separate Section (Section 5) is dedicated to the formation of the Youth Board.

4.1 The main stakeholders in the co-creation process

The original UPLIFT partners for the co-creation process in Amsterdam were Delft University of Technology (TU Delft) and housing association Lieven de Key. However, soon after UPLIFT had started, the municipality of Amsterdam also decided to join, because the objectives of UPLIFT clearly matched with their own ambitions of giving young people a stronger voice in housing policy development.

As the task leader and research partner, TU Delft coordinated the formulation of the research content in collaboration with the other partners. This included but was not limited to the definition of general strategies for recruitment and Youth Board functioning; the identification of topics, methods and strategies for the focus group discussions; and the interface between research coming from different work packages. Furthermore, TU Delft has been responsible for the scientific dissemination of the research findings (see Section 3.4) and the writing of the formal deliverables.

Lieven de Key was the main implementation partner, and as such it had a double role. On one hand, it was an object of research and a gatekeeper, thus it provided access to its organisation and tenants in order to evaluate its policies; on the other hand, it is a housing provider, thus it actively participated in co-creation meetings to involve young people in the policy making of the association itself and provided feedback to the proposed actions.

The municipality was involved in the co-creation process as the main local housing policy maker in Amsterdam, thus it provided input about the housing situation in Amsterdam, it actively discussed its housing measures with the Youth Board and it was required to react upon the feedback it received. The collaboration with the municipality of Amsterdam allowed to extend the scope and budget for the co-creation project, and it has also enhanced the potential impact of the co-creation activities.

When drafting the action plan for the co-creation activities in the first half of 2020, the three initiators of the co-creation process quickly realized that they lacked the necessary connections to the target group of young people. Therefore, it was decided to involve !WOON, an NGO

that advises on the rights of tenants in and around Amsterdam, as a fourth participating actor. !WOON agreed to collaborate and became responsible for the recruitment of young people and the day-to-day management and facilitation of the co-creation process. Since !WOON has a strong network among local professionals and policy-makers, their involvement also increased the potential to defend the right to housing for young people in Amsterdam. Finally, the architectural firm INBO was involved more incidentally, with a support and moderation role only for the co-creation sessions related to the development of communal housing concepts. In Table 1 a more detailed description of the role of each stakeholder is provided.

Table 1: Stakeholders in the Amsterdam co-creation process and their roles

Partner	Role	Role description
Delft University of Technology (TU Delft)	Task leader and academic/knowledge partner	Provides scientific and methodological guidance for the co-creation process and its outcomes. As WP4 coordinator, TU Delft acts as a mediator between the different WP4 locations, ensuring comparable processes. Filters the results of other work packages and translates them into useful input to inform the co-creation process.
Housing association Lieven de Key	Implementation partner	Sets up the stakeholder structure for the co-creation process. Acts as a gatekeeper to reach vulnerable youngsters through its channels. As a housing association, Lieven de Key is one of the recipients of the policy input that results from the co-creation process. Lieven de Key is committed to the implementation of the co-creation results.
municipality of Amsterdam	Implementation partner	The municipality of Amsterdam is one of the recipients of the policy input that comes from the co-creation process. Together with housing association Lieven de Key, TU Delft and !WOON, they are part of the steering group that guides the co-creation process.
!WOON	Facilitator of the co-creation process	!WOON is the main contact point for the Youth Board and the main gatekeeper and recruiter of youth board members. They also take care of the practical organization and moderation of the co-creation meetings.
INBO	Facilitator of the co-creation process	INBO has a moderating role and provides specific support to the youth board in Sprint 2, in which a new communal housing concept is developed.

4.2 Institutional coordination of the co-creation process

Setting up a solid and fruitful collaboration between stakeholders is a time intensive and potentially complicated process. In this regard, it is important that the roles and objectives of the different stakeholders are as clear as possible. Consequently, in the first six months of the UPLIFT project, the stakeholders were involved in the set up of an elaborate action plan with specific goals, a clear scope and focus, a division of task between the scientific (TU Delft) and the implementer partners (Lieven de Key, municipality and !WOON), and a rather detailed time planning.

Notwithstanding the above, it is impossible to plan to whole process upfront, and flexibility and anticipation remain important. In order to retain this flexibility, a local co-creation team with representatives from the municipality of Amsterdam, housing association Lieven de Key, !WOON and TU Delft was established. This team met on a regular basis (once every week or once every two weeks) in order to discuss and evaluate the progress of the co-creation process, plan ahead, and adapt to unforeseen circumstances. During these meetings, minutes were taken and action points were identified.

5 The Youth Board

5.1 Recruitment and commitment strategy

5.1.1 Recruitment

The UPLIFT project started in January 2020 and the first half year was dedicated to building the stakeholder network and drafting the action plan. Only in the second part of 2020 the actual formation of the Youth Board took place. Through their networks and by making use of a social media and online advertising strategy, !WOON started to recruit young people that were interested to participate in the UPLIFT co-creation activities. The online strategy was chosen because of the constraints due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of the young people were directly contacted by !WOON, whereas other were found through gatekeeper organizations in the field of social work or youth work, or through the networks of young people that had already been recruited (snowball sampling). In Sprint 2, Lieven de Key has contributed to the recruitment by sending a letter to all their tenants between the age of 18 and 27 that explained the project and asked if they were interested in participating.

The initial recruitment strategy was to reach out to a much larger number of young people than what was necessary, in order to have potential additional participants in case the initial ones dropped out and needed to be replaced. Moreover, people who were contacted but were not available at that time were asked to join a „spare list”, in case they wanted to join at a later stage. In the end, we managed to set up a Youth Board of around 8 people who were structurally involved in the co-creation process, which implies that they attended the majority of the meetings that were organized around a specific topic (so-called Sprints). Some of these Youth Board members participated in more than one Sprint, thereby guaranteeing a degree of continuity. However, !WOON also recruited several young people that did not have the time or interest to become full-fledged Youth Board members, but that more incidentally participated in the co-creation sessions – a so called youth pool.

After the end of the first Sprint of the co-creation process, new Youth Board members were recruited by !WOON in order to compensate for attrition and bring new energy into the process. Fortunately, several of the original youth board members decided to participate in the second and third Sprints as well, thus guaranteeing some degree of continuity within the Youth Board.

5.1.2 Commitment strategy

The participatory work in WP4 operated on the grounds of clarity and trust. It was important for us in the beginning to be clear and explicit about the reasons why we were involving young people – we needed to hear their voice if we wanted changes in social policy to be effective; what was expected of them – engagement and reflection; and what they would get in return

– being taken seriously, empowered in their condition of policy co-makers and not simply policy subjects. Most of all, we made sure to highlight the fact that by joining the project they could voice their problems to local institutions and have a chance to influence the housing policies of both a housing association and the municipality of Amsterdam.

What emerged as important for the Youth Board members is that getting involved in the co-creation process would provide a valuable learning experience – of research, of policy making, of cooperation among different groups – that could be useful for future education, training or job purposes, as it would look good on their resumes. In this regard, the institutional stakeholders made themselves available for the Youth Board members when they had questions or wanted to learn more about a specific topic.

All of these were considered as valuable motives for participation by young people; nonetheless, since co-creation is a long process that requires a substantial commitment in terms of time and effort, it was crucial to make the meetings and the general circumstances of the co-creation process attractive for them also from a more mundane point of view. Indeed, in order to make the sessions pleasant, we provided food ('pizza sessions') and refreshments, as well as occasions for social engagement during the Youth Board meetings. Furthermore, the municipality of Amsterdam decided to pay a so-called volunteer fee to the most active Youth Board members, as a compensation for the large amount of time that they have invested⁵. Last but not least, three active Youth Board members were invited to participate (with all costs covered) in the UPLIFT consortium meeting in Barakaldo, Spain, that took place in the autumn of 2022.

One of the aims of the co-creation was to foster a sense of community among the young participants. This was not easy because due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the related restrictions, the Youth Board members could not meet in person during the first few months. However, they successfully collaborated in the many online activities that were organized by !WOON during the first Sprint and gradually started to form a close group that started through online chats and developed into real life at a later stage.

5.2 Composition and size of the Youth Board

The Youth Board is composed by young people between 18 and around 35⁶ that are, or have been, in a vulnerable housing situation in the city of Amsterdam – including homelessness. As explained in Section 5.1, the recruitment process resulted in the set-up of a stable Youth Board of 10 to 15 active and fully committed members, who participated in all or nearly all the co-

⁵ Since the Municipality of Amsterdam is not an official UPLIFT partner, this payment took place outside the framework of the UPLIFT project.

⁶ Although according to the UPLIFT definition, young people are defined as people younger than 30, we have decided to also include some people in their early thirties in the Youth Board. This is due to the fact that also this group suffers from serious housing accessibility and affordability problems.

creation sessions, and of a so-called youth pool – a group of 15 to 20 young people who have been involved in a less intensive way and who participated in a limited number of co-creation sessions. This double structure allowed on one hand to have continuity within the co-creation process, and on the other hand it provided a larger and more diverse vision about relevant issues and proposals. Indeed, there was also a flow between the two groups, whereby people who were only incidentally involved in the first Sprint took on a more proactive role in subsequent Sprints and vice-versa.

In terms of gender, there was a balance in the Youth Board, although some sessions had a slight overrepresentation of women. Ages ranged between 18 and 32 with relatively many participants in their 20's. In terms of ethnic background, the group was diverse, and there was a good mix between working and studying Youth Board members. Also on other aspects, the diversification was high. One of the Youth Board members has been homeless, whereas there were also Youth Board members who were single parents, with physical disabilities, or a with a refugee status. With regard to education, participants with a somewhat higher education were overrepresented, despite efforts to include youngsters with a lower education as well. All Youth Board members were to some extent vulnerable in the field of housing.

5.3 Inclusiveness and gender sensitivity

The goal of the Youth Board is to articulate the voice of the target group of young people. To be able to optimally fulfil this role, it is essential that principles of diversity are respected in its composition (e.g. gender balance, ethnic representation). When recruiting new members, !WOON has purposively looked for youngsters that would contribute to the diversity within the Youth Board composition, therefore the background of the Youth Board and youth pool members was diverse in terms of age, gender, ethnic background, and housing situation.

With regard to inclusiveness, we strived to provide equal opportunities to participate and have their voice heard for youngsters from all backgrounds, as it is of crucial importance to assess how differences with regard to gender and ethnic background could influence the process and the participants' feeling of safety and empowerment.

Diversity and inclusiveness has been taken into account also with regard to the outcomes of the co-creation process. Indeed, the resulting policy initiatives tried to take into account that youngsters with different genders and/or ethnic backgrounds may experience different problems, and may therefore also need different solutions. This was evident for example during Sprint 2, when discussions about a communal housing concept highlighted a difference in the perception of shared spaces (in terms of safety) between young women and young men. How to increase the (feeling of) safety of shared spaces became part of the discussions only after the input of the female Youth Board members.

6 The co-creation process

6.1 Generic approach

Based on the theoretical notions of reflexive policy-making discussed in previous WP4 deliverables (Hoekstra & Gentili, 2020, Hoekstra & Gentili, 2021), we developed a general methodology for structuring and shaping the co-creation process. This methodology consists of four steps (see Figure 1):

1. *Preparation of the co-creation process: institutional arrangements*

In this step, the institutional and academic stakeholder network that organizes the co-creation process is being set up. The objectives and the focus of the process are determined and the stakeholders involved make agreements on how they will collaborate. See Sections 3 and 4 to know more about this step.

2. *Involving young adults in an inclusive manner: the Youth Board*

In the UPLIFT co-creation process, the young people are represented by a so-called Youth Board. In the second step of the co-creation process, decisions with regard to the recruitment, the size and the composition of the Youth Board are taken. This step was outlined in Section 5.

3. *Running and moderating the actual co-creation process*

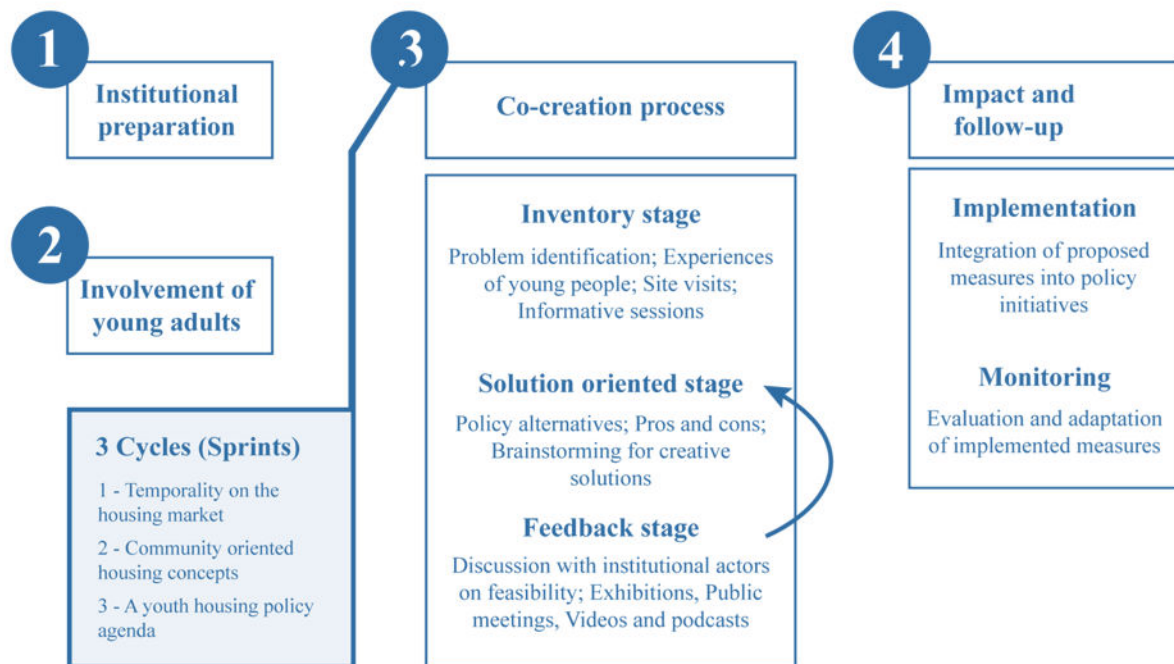
Step 3 of our approach - the actual co-creation process - is divided into three stages: an inventory stage, where the problem at hand is analyzed and personal experiences are shared; a solution oriented stage, where young people elaborate proposals of tools and approaches to tackle the analyzed problem; and a feedback stage, where the proposed solutions are discussed with institutional partners and options for policy implementation are explored. For each of these stages, decisions need to be taken with regard to the type and focus of the organized meetings. Furthermore, strategies to keep the Youth Board members engaged and committed, and make the co-creation process as inclusive as possible need to be developed. This step will be further explored in the rest of Section 6.

4. *Assessing the impact and follow-up of the co-creation process*

The co-creation process is intended to have an impact at different levels. First of all, it is our aim to empower the participating young people. Second, we intend to change the mind-set of the institutions that are receiving the policy advice of these young people. Third, we strive for a co-creation process that results in a reflexive policy agenda that has the potential to be implemented in practice. And last but not least, we will make an effort to ensure that the collaborative structures that were developed within the framework of UPLIFT will continue after

the project funding has ended. See Sections 7 and 8 to know more about implementation and evaluation.

Figure 1: A schematic representation of the UPLIFT co-creation process in Amsterdam. Source: authors



6.2 Overview of all activities/meetings

In Amsterdam, the actual co-creation process consisted of three co-creation cycles, so-called Sprints; each of which dealt with a different topic.

Sprint 1: temporality in housing

This thematic Sprint started in October 2020, when the recruitment phase of the Youth Board had been completed. The starting point for this Sprint was the observation that temporality on the housing market had become more important in recent years. Indeed, since the change of the rental laws in 2016, temporary rental contracts (usually for 2 years in the private rental sector and 5 years in the social rental sector) have become the norm for many young people in Amsterdam. The pros and cons of this development, for both tenants and prospective house seekers, have been extensively discussed throughout this Sprint. Furthermore, ample attention

has been given to the house seeking process in general, and the information and resources that are needed to successfully navigate on the Amsterdam housing market, in particular.

The process started with an inventory stage (see also Figure 1). In this stage, the Youth Board members have participated in a range of capacity building activities, such as webinars and mini internships, that were specifically organized for them by professionals from Lieven de Key, TU Delft, !WOON, and the municipality of Amsterdam. The goal of these activities was to familiarize the Youth Board members with the housing situation in Amsterdam, the housing actors and housing policies at the local level, and the topic of temporary housing.

In the inventory stage, the Youth Board members also reached out to other young people in their network in precarious housing situations, so that they would get a good insight into the various real life experiences with regard to temporality. At the end of the inventory stage, it was concluded that temporality and temporary housing contracts negatively affect the sense of security of young people. They feel they cannot really settle down, and are constantly worried about what happens when their rental contract ends. Furthermore, it was observed that the available information regarding housing opportunities and housing rights for young people is scattered and incomplete. Young people often did not know where to turn to after the end of their temporary rental contract. Finally, it was noticed that the interaction of temporary contracts and a tight housing market has the negative effect of increasing the chances of exploitative behaviour on the part of landlords.

The inventory stage was followed by a solution oriented phase – consisting of several online group discussions – in which the Youth Board has developed policy solutions that aim to improve the position of vulnerable young people on the Amsterdam housing market. Because this Sprint took place during the run-up to the national elections, the Youth Board also wanted to influence the national debate regarding youth housing. That is the reason why the Youth Board members have recorded a number of videos in which they showed what they would do if they would become the new minister of housing. While the policy suggestions for the national level remained rather general, the solutions that were developed for the local level contained more detail. These solutions, that were prepared in smaller groups, started from the conviction that a structural reform of the housing system (such as the abolishment of temporary rental contracts) is not feasible in the short run. However, also within the framework of the current system, small changes may make a considerable difference. For example, extensions of the temporary rental contract could be provided to young adults that have nowhere to go, and special arrangements could be made for young people with children. But above all, the availability of housing and the communication about existing housing options needs to be improved. Taking this latter aspect into account, three local policy solutions were proposed (see Table 2).

Table 2: Proposed policy solutions in Sprint 1 and their follow-up.

Solution	Rationale	Follow-up
Floating tiny houses in the social rental sector	Tiny housing provides an affordable and flexible housing solution, there is a lot of water in Amsterdam	Youth Board members were connected to professionals already working on this topic
Extend the geographical scope of the housing allocation system for social rental housing	The proposed extension makes it easier to find a social rental dwelling in smaller municipalities outside Amsterdam, thereby removing some of the pressure on the central areas	Youth Board members were connected to professionals in and outside the Municipality already working on the reform of the social housing allocation system
Develop a virtual platform for young people that look for affordable and adequate housing in the city of Amsterdam.	Objective information on housing rights and housing opportunities is scarcely available, youngsters can learn from each other's experiences on the housing market	Idea was embraced by institutional partners. Implementation possibilities are being sought for.

In May 2021, the Youth Board presented its policy solutions to representatives from housing association Lieven de Key, the municipality of Amsterdam, !WOON and TU Delft in two separate meetings (one with professionals and one with executives). There was a large appreciation for the creativity of the Youth Board and the soundness of their ideas. However, it appeared that two of the three proposed policy solutions were already considered in another context, and the Youth Board members were put in contact with the relevant policy-makers so that they could exchange ideas. The third proposed solution – a virtual platform for young house seekers – was further developed by a subgroup of the Youth Board, after which a search for implementation possibilities started (see Section 9 about implementation).

Sprint 2: developing a new communal housing concept

The second co-creation Sprint commenced in September 2021 with a kick-off meeting at which both the Youth Board and the local UPLIFT partners were present. After pizza and drinks, followed by some ice-breaking activities, the evening continued with a general discussion on vulnerability. It was concluded that everyone is vulnerable at some point in their life, and that housing is often a crucial factor when it comes to vulnerability. Problems in someone's personal life (e.g. illness, divorce, unemployment) may lead to loss of housing, thereby further enhancing one's vulnerability. Indeed, having adequate housing seems to be a necessary precondition for getting out of a vulnerable situation ('housing first').

In the second part of the evening, the proposed focus of the second co-creation Sprint was explained in more detail by representatives from housing association Lieven de Key. The idea for this Sprint is that the young people develop a new inclusive communal youth housing concept that has the potential to be implemented by said housing association. The potential location for this housing concept is next to an existing housing complex of Lieven de Key, where currently a bike shed is located. Since this Sprint not only has elements of co-creation but also of co-design, the architectural firm INBO was asked to moderate the co-creation sessions in collaboration with !WOON.

Two inventory sessions followed after the kick-off meeting. In the first of these two sessions, the Youth Board members visited two already existing communal housing concepts of housing association Lieven de Key. They looked at the design and the functionalities and talked with the community manager about the process of community building. In the second inventory session, the Youth Board members reflected on the pros and cons of existing communal housing complexes. Based on this reflection, they formulated a set of requirements for what they would see as a successful and inclusive communal housing concept. The requirements addressed five aspects:

1. The building (architecture and identity, communal facilities and meeting spaces, sport facilities, lightning)
2. The dwelling/living unit (size, distribution, facilities, type of windows, comfort level)
3. The environment of the building (connection to public transport, facilities in neighbourhood, green spaces)
4. The social cohesion/community within the building (meeting spaces, freedom versus compulsory activities)
5. The contractual conditions (eligibility criteria, terms of the contract, rent levels, 'house rules')

In the two solution oriented sessions that followed, this set of requirements was further developed and specified, based on an exploration of the location and an assessment of some relevant reference projects. Specific attention was paid to the desired community processes and the 'house rules' within the prospective complex, as well as to the possibilities for including vulnerable groups. This process led to a more refined set of requirements (a so-called functional brief) that was translated into three different scale models, composed of blocks that represent different functions within the building (see Figure 2).

All scale models involved a transformation of the existing housing complex (adding extra layers with dwellings and communal facilities), whereas two of three scale models also planned to construct new dwellings and communal facilities in the place of the bike shed. Moreover, they all plan several communal facilities in the new building: roof garden, laundry rooms, co-working spaces, a restaurant, sport facilities, rooms for occasional visitors and multi-functional spaces. The idea is that these facilities are not only accessible to the young people that are

going to live in the housing complex, but also for the residents in the neighbourhood. Dwellings that are suitable for housing disabled people are planned in the plinth of the housing complex, whereas greenery and facilities for urban farming should appear in its direct neighbourhood.

In a final feedback session, the proposed communal housing concept was presented to, and discussed with, professionals from Lieven de Key and the municipality. The professionals appreciated the inclusiveness, the comprehensiveness and the creativity of the proposal. However, they also raised some critical questions with regard to the costs involved and the degree of innovation. Initially, the Youth Board was taken by surprise by this somewhat unexpected criticism. However, already during as well as immediately after the feedback session, ideas were developed to make the housing concept more financially feasible, for example by self-management and/or renting out communal spaces to non-residents. The final result of this Sprint was a booklet by INBO and the Youth Board that was presented to housing association de Key (INBO & Youth Board, 2022).

Figure 2: An example of one of the scale models. Source: INBO & Youth Board, 2022



Sprint 3: developing a new housing policy agenda for the municipality of Amsterdam

The third co-creation Sprint has run from February 2022 to December 2022. The aim of this Sprint was to give input to the youth housing policies of the municipality of Amsterdam. The Sprint started with a kick-off meeting in which the scope of the co-creation process (local housing policies that are relevant for young people) was defined. After that, barriers on the housing market from the perspective of the 'life world' of young people have been made visible, and priorities towards solving these barriers have been set (two inventory sessions were dedicated to this). Subsequently, possible policy solutions for removing the barriers were

explored and developed in two solution oriented sessions, followed by a reality check in which the proposed solutions have been presented to, and discussed with, professionals from the municipality and other relevant stakeholders.

During the whole co-creation process, policy-makers from the municipality were available through a so-called hotline, so that they could answer questions and provide information regarding the local housing market and local housing policies. Moreover, several informative presentations about the housing policies in Amsterdam have been given by employees of the municipality. After the reality check, the Youth Board prepared a manifesto for the municipality of Amsterdam (Uplift Youth Board Amsterdam, 2022). This manifesto contains a number of recommendations for the local government, as well as an underpinning of these recommendations. The recommendations can be found in Section 8.2 about the Reflexive Policy Agenda resulting from the co-creation process in Amsterdam.

On December 12, 2022, the manifesto was presented to, and discussed with the alderman of housing of the city of Amsterdam⁷ (see Figure 3). The alderman indicated that he will attempt to include the suggestions of the Youth Board into the new housing vision that the city is currently developing. This vision will be established in a bottom-up way, with a lot of participation of local residents and housing professionals⁸.

Figure 3: Youth Board members present their manifesto to the Amsterdam alderman for housing



⁷ <https://uplift-youth.eu/stories-0/news-blogs-videos/amsterdam-youth-board-advises-municipal-youth-housing-policy>

⁸ <https://aanpakvolkshuisvesting.amsterdam.nl/>

Overview of all meetings and activities for each Sprint

In Table 3 we have summarized all the meetings and activities that have been carried out within each of the Sprints. In this way, the table allows the reader to understand the depth of the work carried out by the Youth Board on their own, and the multiple occasions in which the Youth Board and the institutional stakeholders have interacted.

Table 3: Overview of all activities and meetings that took place during the Amsterdam co-creation process, in chronological order.

Sprint	Stage	Date	Activity/meeting	Participants	Objective/outcome
1	Inventory stage	19/10/2020	First introduction meeting	8 young people; 2 !WOON moderators	Getting acquainted. Online.
		22/10/2020	Second introduction meeting	13 young people; 2 !WOON moderators	Getting acquainted. Online.
		12/11/2020	Inventory Workshop	On site: 6 young people; 3 housing professionals from MRA; 1 !WOON representative; the Amsterdam housing alderman Online: 1800 participants	A digital meeting in which young people could debate with housing professionals to identify the problems surrounding youth housing. The kickoff of UPLIFT. Hybrid.
		30/11/2020	Third introduction meeting	13 young people; 2 !WOON moderators	Getting acquainted. Online.
		18/01/2021	Capacity building activity: lunch with stakeholders	3 housing policy advisors from the municipality, no young people	A lunchtime session to connect youth with housing professionals. Online.
		19/01/2021	Capacity building activity: presentation	5 young people; 1 professional from Lieven de Key, 1 !WOON moderator	Presentation on the housing market by Lieven de Key. Online.
		19/01/2021	Capacity building activity: lunch with stakeholders	2 professionals from Lieven de Key, 1 !WOON moderator, 4 young people	A lunchtime session to connect youth with housing professionals. Online.
		20/01/2021	Capacity building activity: presentation	1 TU Delft researcher; 1 !WOON moderator; 5 young people	Presentation on social housing in the Netherlands by TU Delft. Online.
		20/01/2021	Capacity building activity: lunch with stakeholders	2 housing policy advisors from the municipality; 1 TU Delft researcher, 3 young people	A lunchtime session to connect youth with housing professionals. Online.

		21/01/2021	Capacity building activity: lunch with stakeholders	1 professional from Lieven de Key; 1 executive from Lieven de Key, 1 executive from !WOON, 1 !WOON moderator, 5 young people	A lunchtime session to connect youth with housing professionals. Online.
		22/01/2021	Capacity building activity: lunch with stakeholders	2 professionals from Lieven de Key, 1 TU Delft researcher, no youngsters	A lunchtime session to connect youth with housing professionals. Online.
		25/01/2021	First inventory session: theme Temporality	11 young people; 2 !WOON moderators	Discussion about concerns, wishes, questions, stories around the theme of temporality. Online.
		03/02/2021	Second inventory session: theme Temporality	7 young people; 2 !WOON moderators	Discussion about concerns, wishes, questions, stories around the theme of temporality. Online.
		22/02/2021	Third inventory session: theme Temporality	9 young people; 2 !WOON moderators	Discussion about concerns, wishes, questions, stories around the theme of temporality. Online.
		03/03/2021	Fourth inventory session: theme Temporality, with Lieven de Key	6 young people; 2 professionals from Lieven de Key; 2 !WOON moderators	Discussion with Lieven de Key about concerns, wishes, questions, stories around the theme of temporality. Online.
	Solution-oriented stage	22/03/2021	First solution-oriented session: theme Temporality	5 young people; 2 !WOON moderators	Formulate concrete policy proposals, solutions and final products. Online.
		31/03/2021	Second solution-oriented session: theme Temporality	8 young people; 2 people from homeless project "Huishonger"; 2 !WOON moderators	Formulate concrete policy proposals, solutions and final products. Online.
		19/04/2021	Third solution-oriented session: theme Temporality	9 young people; 2 !WOON moderators	Formulate concrete policy proposals, solutions and final products. Online.
		29/04/2021	Fourth solution-oriented session: theme Temporality	6 young people; 2 !WOON moderators	Formulate concrete policy proposals, solutions and final products. Online.
	Feedback stage	10/05/2021	First feedback session: Theme Temporality	7 young people; 2 policy advisors from the municipality; 2 professionals from Lieven de Key; 1 TU Delft researcher; 2 !WOON moderators	Presentation of proposals and discussion between youth and housing professionals. Complement and improve the solution approaches. Testing for feasibility. Online.

		07/06/2021	First discussion session about platform	7 young people; 1 !WOON moderator	Elaborating on the platform proposal. In person.
		21/06/2021	Second discussion session about platform	9 young people; 2 !WOON moderators	Elaborating on the platform proposal. In person.
		28/06/2021	Second feedback session: theme Temporality	5 young people; 5 policy advisors from the municipality; 3 professionals from Lieven de Key; 3 executives from Lieven de Key; 2 executives from !WOON; 1 TU Delft researcher; 2 !WOON moderators	Presentation of proposals and discussion between youth and housing professionals. Online.
2	Inventory stage	09/09/2021	Youth Town Hall meeting: kick-off Sprint 2	19 young people; 4 professionals from Lieven de Key; 3 executives from Lieven de Key; 1 policy advisor from the municipality; 1 professional from Amsterdam social housing federation; 1 TU Delft researcher; 2 INBO moderators; 2 !WOON moderators	Introduce the participants to the topic, discussion on vulnerability, outline of upcoming co-creation process. In person.
		27/09/2021	Capacity building activity: visit to communal housing project	9 young people; 2 professionals from Lieven de Key; 2 INBO moderators; 2 !WOON moderators	Started with a tour at Riekerhaven a mixed housing concept with Dutch young people & young refugees. Then moved to Lieven, a housing complex with different accommodation types: Dutch single-living apartments; Dutch communal living apartments for 3-4 persons; international student studios; studio+workspace apartments for art students, etc. At Lieven the participants got to talk to a boardmember of the activity board about living together in such a complex.
		11/10/2021	Inventory session: theme Communal Housing Concept	10 young people; 2 INBO moderators; 2 !WOON moderators	Discussion about the perceived problems from both the visited examples and

3	Solution-oriented stage				personal experiences. In person.
		25/10/2021	First solution-oriented session: workshop about concept requirements	5 young people; 2 INBO moderators; 2 !WOON moderators	Formulation of program requirements: what content should our proposed housing concept include? In person.
		08/11/2021	Second solution-oriented session: model making workshop	5 young people; 2 INBO moderators; 2 !WOON moderators	Finishing the proposed concept and building models: what does the housing concept look like physically? In person.
		22/11/2021	Third solution-oriented session: presentation preparation and division of tasks	6 young people; 2 INBO moderators; 2 !WOON moderators	Divide tasks and discuss layout and content of presentation. Online.
		01/12/2021	Fourth solution-oriented session: final preparations	4 young people; 2 INBO moderators; 1 !WOON moderator	Divide tasks and discuss layout and content of presentation. Online.
	Feedback stage	10/01/2022	Feedback session: theme Communal Housing Concept	9 young people; 12 institutional stakeholders	Presentation of proposals and discussion between youth and housing professionals. Hybrid.
	Inventory stage	28/02/2022	Kick-off Sprint 3	10 young people; 6 policy advisors from the municipality; 2 managers from the municipality; housing alderman of Amsterdam; 2 professionals from Lieven de Key; 2 executives from Lieven de Key; 1 TU Delft researcher; 2 INBO moderators; 2 !WOON moderators	Introduction of the topic and goal of Sprint 3; explanation of the functionings of the municipality and their youth housing policy; first assessment of issues. Hybrid.
		14/03/2022	First inventory session: theme housing policy	16 young people; 3 policy advisors from the municipality; 2 !WOON moderators	Presentation by the municipality about collaborative commitments between the municipality and social housing associations; discussion about housing obstacles for youth. In person.
		28/03/2022	Second inventory session: theme housing policy	16 young people; 2 policy advisors from the municipality; 2 !WOON moderators	Presentation by the municipality about national vs local policy-making possibilities; discussion about

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	20/06/2022	Second feedback session: theme housing policy	10 young people; 1 policy advisor from the municipality; 2 !WOON moderators	Discussing and reprioritizing the outcomes of the first feedback session. Developing the final products. In person.
	27/06/2022	Local Policy Workshop	11 young people; 2 TU Delft researchers; 2 !Woon moderators, 2 professionals from Lieven de Key; 3 policy advisors from the municipality	Evaluation of the co-creation process (presentation of results of online survey) and discussion about future policy implementation possibilities. In person.
	29/09/2022	Consortium Meeting in Barakaldo	All the research consortium partners, representatives from Youth Boards of all the WP4 locations (3 youngsters from Amsterdam)	Presentation of the Amsterdam co-creation process from the perspective of young people; exchange of experiences with Youth Boards from other cities; discussion and cooperation with research and institutional partners, both from Amsterdam and from elsewhere. Time to explore the city and to take part in the activities of the European Youth Meeting in Bilbao. In person in Barakaldo.
	05/12/2022	Preparation of the presentation	5 Youth Board members; 1 !WOON moderator	Going through the manifesto; deciding the most important points to present to the Alderman; deciding who is presenting what, preparing the presentation.
	12/12/2022	Presentation of the Manifesto	5 Youth Board members; 2 !WOON moderators; from the municipality; 1 alderman (Reinier van Dantzig) 1 adjunct-director 'Grond & Ontwikkeling' (Martine Bos) 5 other officials and policy advisors	Relaying the core of the manifesto to the alderman in about 30 minutes. 1. Introduction 2. Presentation by Wouter & Mara 3. Reaction of alderman 4. Discussion & questions between alderman & youth board members 5. photo! 6. Drinks with the Youth Board members & !WOON to celebrate finalisation of the sprint and cocreation process.

6.3 Capacity building and enhancing creativity throughout the co-creation process

In this section we describe the activities we have used to enhance capacity building and creativity among the Youth Board members during the co-creation process.

6.3.1 Capacity building

Capacity building is a necessary step in order to allow the Youth Board members to have effective agency during the process and be able to fully understand the context and dynamics of the problem. As moderator and mediator, !WOON organized several capacity building activities, in coordination with TU Delft and the other institutional partners. These activities were more present during the first Sprint and gradually decreased as the process went by.

In particular, during the first Sprint the Youth Board members could choose from a “menu” of educational activities the ones that would most suit their needs. The provided activities ranged from a webinar by TU Delft about social housing in the Netherlands, informal one-on-one online lunch meetings with professionals from the municipality and Lieven de Key, mini internships, excursions and links to relevant webpages and documentaries.

Moreover, as part of the inventory stage of Sprint 1, the Youth Board members participated in the Youth Housing Summit organized by the Amsterdam alderman of housing in collaboration with !WOON. During the summit, the main housing problems that young people in Amsterdam struggle with were identified and discussed and the Uplift co-creation project was introduced to a broader audience.

During the second Sprint, the capacity building activities focused less on overall housing issues and more on the specific subject of communal housing. The Youth Board members visited two existing communal housing projects of housing association Lieven de Key. During these visits not only they had the chance to observe the common areas and living units, but they also talked to the community manager about community building and how to run such a housing complex.

Finally, in Sprint 3, the institutional stakeholders from the municipality set up a “hotline” where Youth Board members could contact them during the day if they needed information or explanations about housing policy. Furthermore, a general introduction into local municipal housing policy was provided in the inventory sessions (see also Table 3).

6.3.2 Enhancing creativity

Creative methods for the group sessions were necessary both to keep young people engaged and to foster new ideas to address the problems they were discussing. These methods ranged from group discussion techniques all the way to video and model making. Indeed, during the initial Sprint the young people produced short videos to communicate their housing needs.

and proposals to the new upcoming national government. During the second Sprint they also produced simple architectural models of the communal housing concepts they were developing, together with INBO. This served the purpose of visualizing the spatial meaning of their ideas.

During group discussions the challenges were mainly sharing ideas in a constructive and equal way while fostering creativity, and making decisions based on a common vision. For sharing ideas various methods have been used throughout the different Sprints. Brainstorm boards and wordclouds have been useful to collect information and thoughts about the focus topics. Both physical boards and online tools (such as Padlet and Wooclap) were used. For instance, in Sprint 1, Youth Board members used the Padlet online brainstorm board to inventarize problems and challenges that young people face in the housing market by collecting article snippets or writing their opinion. During Sprint 2 a physical post-it board was used during live sessions to sort out ideas about preferred living conditions, and Youth Board members also used an online brainstorm board as a 'living document' (a document that is accessible for the whole group) to share thoughts, pictures and links in-between sessions. In Sprint 3, the group used the wordcloud tool Wooclap to inventarize the important themes and obstacles in local housing policy. Once the main themes were selected, YB members used a shared online text (Google Doc) as a 'living document' to work out ideas for questions and advice to the municipality. Most of the work was done during the live or online sessions, and the "homework" was kept to a minimum in order not to overburden the young participants.

With regard to reaching consensus and agreeing on shared proposals, different group discussion and decision making methods were used – namely World Cafè and variations of the CONSENT⁹ and Deep Democracy methods. In particular, discussions using the World Cafè method happened in all the Sprints (both in person and online): the Youth Board would split up and separately develop a brainstorm board or discuss a topic, and then each group would report their conclusions back to the rest of the Youth Board. In addition to this, in Sprint 3 two other decision making methods were used in order to reach consensus over the Manifesto. An online polling tool specifically developed for this purpose¹⁰ was used to democratically vote on what advice and policy ideas to present and discuss with institutional stakeholders at the Feedback session. Moreover, the group used a variation of the CONSENT and Deep Democracy method of decision making developed by Anke Siegers (©Datishelder) in order to agree on what recommendations should be included in the Manifesto. In this method, each proposed recommendation was presented, discussed and voted, and all the recommendations that reached unanimous consensus made it to the final list. Since this method yielded a list that

⁹ The CONSENT discussion method is a group decision-making process that aims to ensure that all participants have an equal say in the decision-making process, and that everyone's opinions and concerns are taken into account.

¹⁰ !WOON used the Jotform app to design the polling tool.

was still too long, the online polling tool was once again used to make the final selection of recommendations for the Manifesto.

6.4 Interaction of the Youth Board with institutional stakeholders

At several phases in the co-creation process there has been interaction between the Youth Board and the institutional stakeholders. Depending on the phase, the interaction took a different form. At the beginning of the Sprints the meetings that involved also the stakeholders were dedicated to capacity building and learning about the problem at hand. In this sense, they were meetings in which the institutional stakeholders put their knowledge and expertise at the service of the Youth Board. Later on in the Sprints, during the feedback stage, the interaction between the Youth Board and the institutional stakeholders took a different shape. During the feedback sessions (*schuursessies* in Dutch), in which the policy solutions that the Youth Board proposed were discussed with the institutional stakeholders, the relationship was more equal, and the two groups interacted with a cooperation spirit in order to find workable solutions. Nonetheless, in these feedback sessions there was sometimes also some underlying tension due to the fact that the young people perceived the institutional actors as being the “judges” of their work. To some proposals they reacted by saying “We have tried this already and we are not going to try this again”. The empathetic moderation of !WOON was particularly useful in these sessions to decrease the distance between the two groups and improve their mutual understanding and collaboration. A more in-depth reflection on this interaction can be found in Section 7.

6.5 Role of the Youth Board in the implementation and evaluation process

According the principles of reflexive policy, the Youth Board is not only supposed to be active in the formulation phase of the co-creation process, but also in the subsequent phases of policy implementation and evaluation. However, the implementation of the policy proposals from the Youth Board turned out to be a long winded issue that follows its own dynamic and timeframe, also related to political cycles. While the co-creation process leads to results – namely policy recommendations and suggestions for implementation of new or improved tools – in a relatively short time span (4 to 9 months for a co-creation Sprint in the case of Amsterdam), the policy-making process, both of the municipality and of housing associations, takes a much longer time and has to pay attention to a host of competing interests.

Nonetheless, in Amsterdam the co-creation process has been so successful that there is the intention on the part of institutional stakeholders to use some of the Youth Board’s suggestions in the implementation of new policies in their organizations. The idea is that the Youth Board, are at least some of it members, remain involved in this. However, since the involvement and commitment of the current Youth Board members cannot be guaranteed

indefinitely, we hope that a more institutionalized and permanent youth panel will be put in place to oversee the implementation process and be able to give feedback and further input.

6.6 Ethics requirements

The consent form developed in Deliverable 7.3 was translated into Dutch and distributed to the Youth Board members. When they signed it, they also gave consent to photographs and use of images. The information collected throughout the process is stored on the protected project server and is accessible only to the project partners.

6.7 Risk management: influence of the Corona crisis

The Covid-19 pandemic upended our lives right at the beginning of the UPLIFT project and it heavily impacted the initial activities related to the co-creation process. The recruitment of young people had to happen online – via social media and !WOON’s website, but also via direct emails and phone calls to young people in the partners’ networks – and this had a consequence on what kind of people could be reached. Indeed, the Amsterdam Youth Board is relatively highly educated, which is due on one hand to the fact that in Amsterdam even those with a high education and good job experience housing problems, but on the other hand it probably also depended on the recruitment process. Since it was not possible to organize in person events or meetings in youth centres, vocational schools and social housing complexes, the people that were reached by the online recruitment strategy were probably more educated than those we could have reached in person. However, during the other Sprints, additional members were recruited with in-person methods, in order to try to correct this.

Also most of the activities in Sprint 1 had to be carried out online. This slowed down the bonding of the Youth Board members and made things a little awkward in the beginning, but thanks to the enthusiasm and engagement techniques used by !WOON, the group gradually came together and started a very fruitful work relationship (they even organized an outing together) that continued in person for the other two Sprints. At some point in time during the first Sprint, the Youth members got tired of online meetings in the evening, since they also worked or followed school in a largely online setting. Fortunately at that point in time, the end of the most rigid Covid restrictions came into sight.

Thus, although the Covid-19 situation has in many cases resulted in delays of the planned activities (particularly the bigger meetings), or in their fundamental change, we have at one point come to terms with the fact that this health emergency has become a part of our lives and we have developed strategies to work with it. Our timelines have adjusted, and we now know how to turn in-person events into hybrid or even fully online activities if need be.

7 Evaluation of the co-creation process

This Section contains an evaluation of the co-creation process. Based on a survey, our own impressions as well as on the bilateral inputs that we have received from the institutional stakeholders and young people involved, we reflect on the strong points of this process but also on the challenges/pitfalls that we have encountered.

7.1 Evaluation methods

The co-creation process had different objectives depending on the type of participants. For young people, the process was meant to provide the opportunity to gain knowledge of the housing context and policy process; to be taken seriously and be able to safely express their opinions; to influence local decisions about housing and to feel empowered – that is, to feel like they can make an active contribution to the institutional life of their city. For institutional partners, the aim was to increase their knowledge and understanding of youth housing problems and to create a channel of communication with a group that has specific needs and is not well represented in the current policy-making processes. Overall, we wanted UPLIFT to provide the opportunity for institutional actors to think together with young people, in order to develop policy solutions more attuned to their needs and to show that co-creation can be a sustainable and useful method for policy development.

In order to know if and to what extent these objectives had been achieved, we developed a survey that was distributed to all the people who participated in the co-creation process, in a slightly different version for the Youth Board and the institutional stakeholders. We asked questions with regard to four aspects: the overall success of the co-creation, the quality of the process, the value of co-creation, and the future of the Youth Board. The aim of the survey – together with the observations made during the process and the outcomes of the co-creation – was to assess the impact of the co-creation process as a whole on the Youth Board members, the institutional stakeholders, and the policy implementation possibilities. Overall, 16 people responded to the questionnaire, 7 from the Youth Board and 9 from the institutional partners (the municipality, Lieven de Key, !Woon and INBO). The full questionnaire with results can be found in the Appendix.

Young people's evaluation

The Youth Board members rated the overall co-creation process rather positively – with a score of 3.71 on a scale from 1 to 5 – and most of them reported to have enjoyed taking part in the co-creation activities – with a score of 4.29 on a scale from 1 to 5.

With regard to the quality of the process, young people were particularly happy with the moderation work done by !Woon in all the sprints, as it provided a safe space for them to freely express their opinions. The number of sessions for each sprint was considered sufficient, and for the most part Youth Board members thought there was enough time for discussion in

each meeting. Moreover, they felt that the time and effort that the co-creation process required of them was appropriate.

In relation to the added value of the co-creation process – whether it led to useful and constructive results in terms of content – the Youth Board overwhelmingly agreed that the topics that were being discussed were relevant to the young people of Amsterdam. When asked if they thought the proposed policy solutions were realistic, Youth Board members were very positive, while there was more disagreement about their level of innovation. This is in line with our observations with regard to Sprint 2, where the proposed housing concept was not as innovative as the institutional partners were expecting, but focused very much on the practical needs of communal living.

The most interesting results came from the questions related to the communication and relationship with the institutional stakeholders (see Figure 4). There were some mixed feelings among the Youth Board members about how their ideas and proposals were received by the municipality and Lieven de Key, and there was definitely some dissatisfaction because young people did not perceive that they were being taken seriously enough. Similarly, there were mixed feelings about whether the feedback that Lieven de Key and the municipality provided to the Youth Board's ideas and proposals was constructive or not.

When asked about whether they thought that their proposals will be in some way integrated in the policies of Lieven de Key and the municipality, the response of the Youth Board members was not very hopeful, but not negative either: judging by the majority of neutral answers, they are suspending their judgement for the time being. Indeed, it seems that they do not fully trust that implementation will take place, but after seeing the commitment of the institutional actors during the whole process, they are not completely sure that it will not happen either.

As testament to the value they placed in the co-creation process as a whole, young people overwhelmingly agreed that a Youth Board should be a permanent feature of the housing policymaking process in Amsterdam, and also that every Dutch municipality should have its own Youth Board.

With regard to participation and empowerment, most of the Youth Board members felt that the co-creation process they participated in should have continued for a longer period of time and confirmed that they would take part in a co-creation process again. But the most positive result is that all the Youth Board members reported feeling empowered by participating, and that UPLIFT contributed to their growth as both citizens and individuals.

In order to better understand what the Youth Board members considered the most valuable results of the co-creation experience, we specifically asked them what they gained from participating. The highest score was for network possibilities, together with feeling useful and heard, the second place was for knowledge of both the housing market and the policymaking process, followed by personal growth. Contact with other young people was ranked the lowest.

Overall, in terms of the objectives that we set in the beginning for young people participating in the co-creation process, we can be quite satisfied with the results of the survey with regard to the empowerment of the Youth Board members, the quality of the process and the value that young people attach to the co-creation process as a whole. What needs more work is the relationship between the Youth Board and the institutional stakeholders.

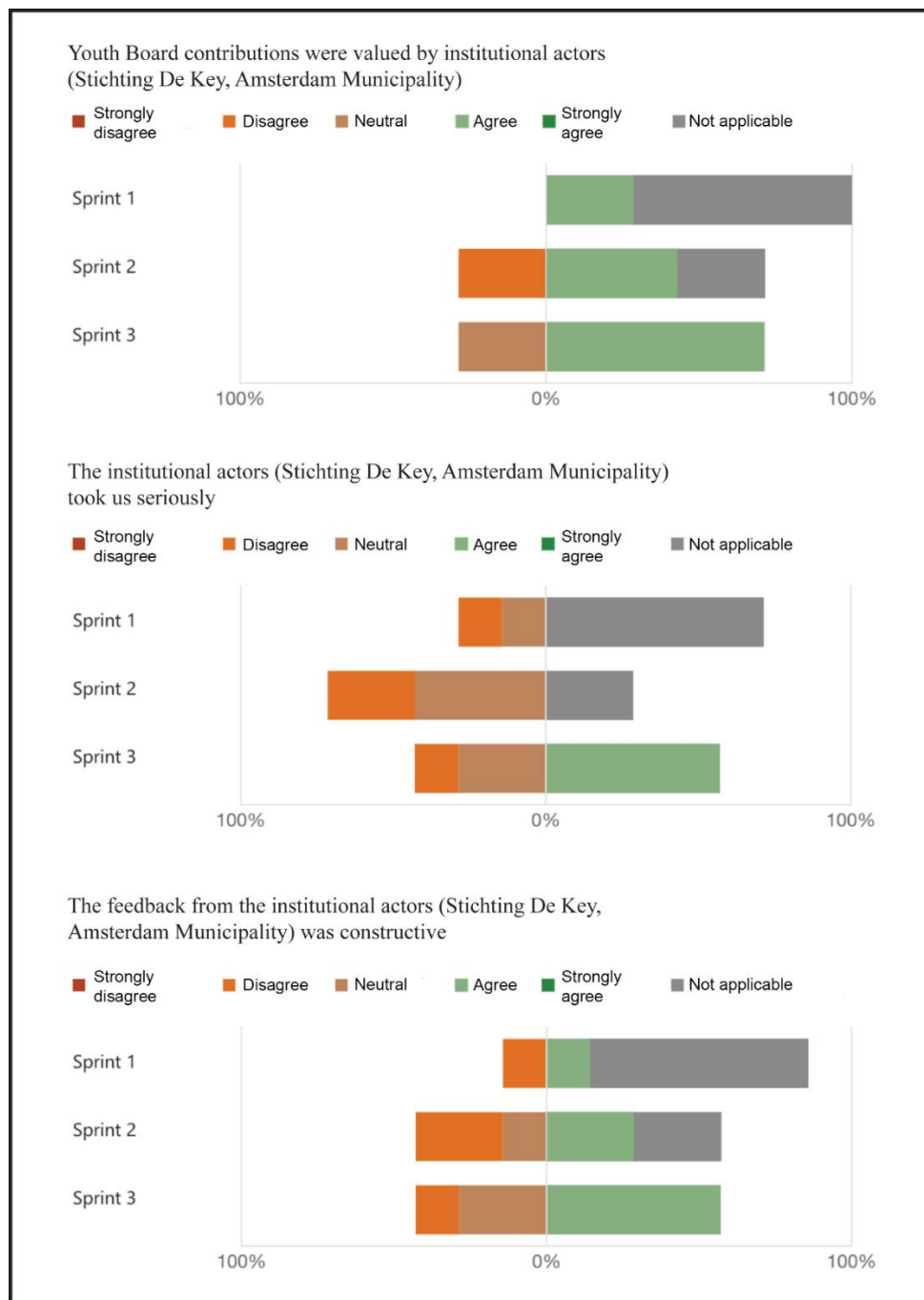


Figure 4: Excerpt of Youth Board survey results

Institutional partners' evaluation

For the institutional actors – Lieven de Key, the municipality, !Woon and INBO (although we differentiated the questions between the policymakers and the moderators) – the overall appreciation for the co-creation process is 3.9 on a 5 point scale. Moreover, they rated their interaction with each other, and with TU Delft, also at 3.9 on a scale from 1 to 5. Similarly to the young people, also the policymakers were happy with !Woon's organization and moderation.

In order to assess the quality of the co-creation process we provided some statements and asked institutional actors to what extent they agreed with them. All institutional participants overwhelmingly recognized that Youth Board members were involved and proactive, and also that they were aware of the limitations – both in terms of rules that come from different administrative levels and in terms of financing – that constrain policy action and the co-creation process in particular.

Youth Board members were mostly considered as equal partners by the policymaker actors – which contrasts a little with what young people reported about being taken seriously and their contributions being valued. Similarly, policymakers did not think that the inevitably unequal power relations affected the process in a negative way, while moderators were more sensitive to the impact of the imbalance of power (see Figure 5).

With regard to the added value of the co-creation process for their organization, all institutional actors recognized that for most of the sprints – particularly the first and the third, which are more generic and less "project-based" – the co-creation generated new insights on existing issues for their organization. Similarly, the knowledge that was generated in all three sprints was considered useful by all the institutional actors. This was evident also by discussions with stakeholders (both policymakers and moderators): they gained insight on specific aspects and specific problems of which they were not aware and they were able to expand their understanding. An example of this would be the municipality learning about the weight of service charges of some private rental youth housing complexes on the housing costs of young people. This is something which was not on the radar of the municipality, but that is now being looked into.

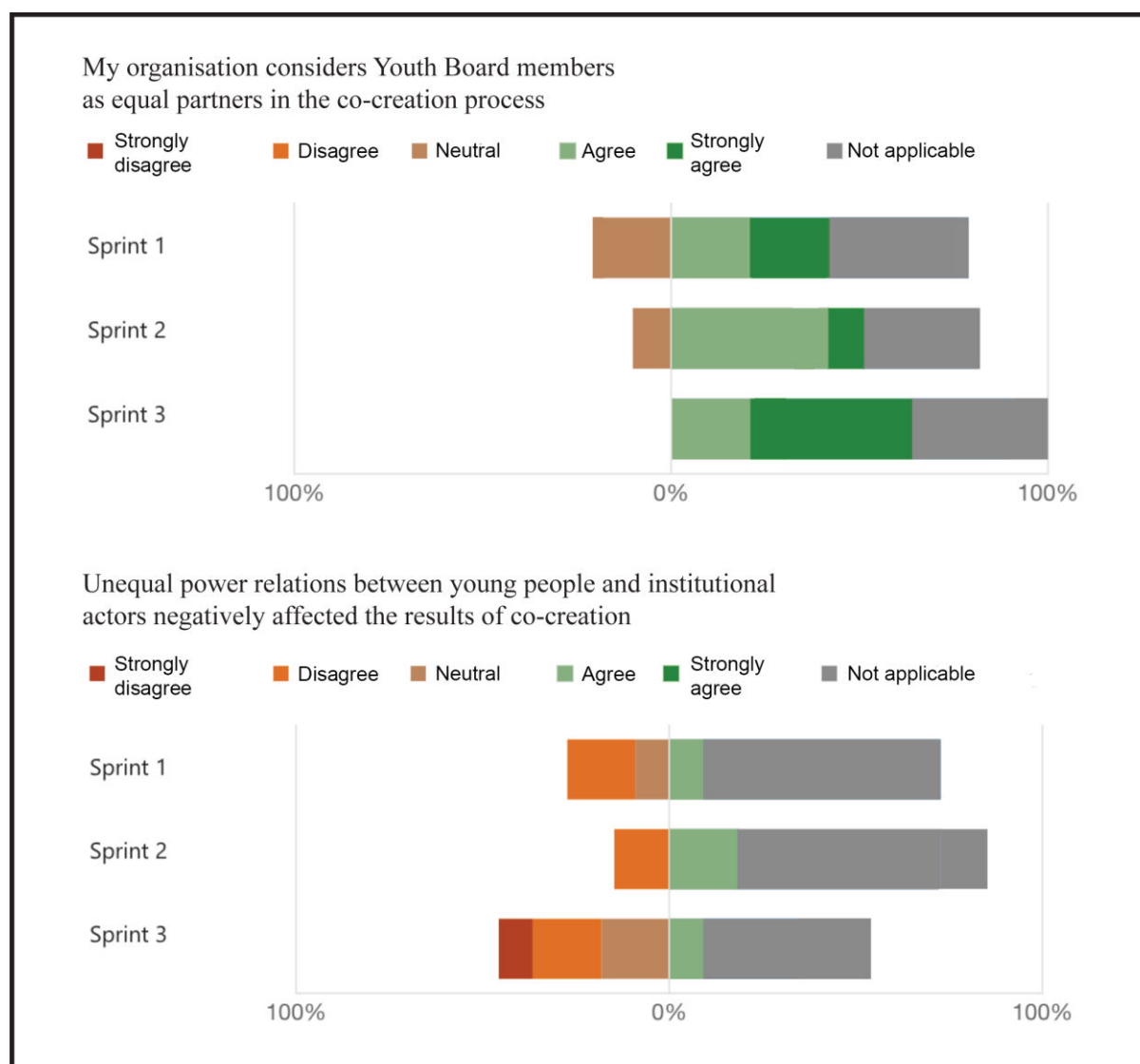


Figure 5: Excerpt of institutional partners survey results

Also in line with what young people reported, the proposed actions/solutions were not always considered very innovative, although they were considered reasonably realistic – this could signal that innovation is not a value per se and that young people can provide valuable policy input even without necessarily thinking “out of the box”.

With regard to the possibility to integrate the Youth Board’s ideas into future policy initiatives, the response was mixed, as there is much insecurity about what could happen in the future despite the good intentions. Moreover, the policymaker partners highlighted a need for more attention to the financial feasibility aspect for all the proposed ideas.

In terms of institutional participation, it can be said that Lieven de Key, !Woon and the municipality would also like to continue the process, just like the Youth Board, and this is a very positive outcome, together with the fact that they would also do it again, and, even more importantly, that there is overall support within the participating organizations to use co-creation as a way of working for the future. The creation of a permanent Youth Board as a body to work together with institutions on youth policy issues is also supported. However, it is necessary to think about the time and financial commitment required to take part in such co-creation efforts.

Judging by these results, the specific objectives of increasing institutional understanding of youth housing problems and creating a channel of communication with underrepresented young people have been achieved. However, the quality of the communication between institutional stakeholders and young people could be improved, also in view of increasing efforts towards the implementation of the suggested measures.

7.2 Lessons learnt

The main takeaway from this co-creation experience is that the importance of this form of participation seems to be very clear to young people – not talking ABOUT young people but WITH young people about the issues that concern them. Similarly, the institutional actors also appreciated the value of the knowledge produced during the process, and the increased understanding of youth housing issues. In our view, the overall impact of the UPLIFT experiment was clearly successful in terms of changing the attitudes of both groups. However, the results also show clear pathways to improve the quality of co-creation processes in terms of communication between young people and policymakers, and in terms of building relations of trust based on a clear management of expectations. In this Section we will further reflect on the various phases of the process.

Preparing the co-creation process: institutional stakeholders, goals and organization of the process

Setting up a solid and fruitful collaboration between stakeholders is a time intensive and potentially complicated process. Honest discussions among stakeholders about objectives, roles, resources and capacity are necessary, and trust needs to grow between the people involved. In this regard, it is important that the roles and objectives of the different stakeholders are as clear as possible since the onset of the process. Consequently, it is advisable to agree on the scope, the focus and the expected outcomes of the co-creation before the process actually starts. Written agreements and plans, such as a clear action plan that is agreed upon early on, could be helpful in getting clarity this respect.

At the preparatory stage, it is crucial to discuss with policymakers about expectations management and communication with young people. Not only it needs to be clear what young people should expect from the institutional partners, but also – and perhaps more importantly

for the long term sustainability of co-creation processes – the other way round. The reasons behind participation in such processes for young people are about feeling heard and trying to come to a solution for their housing problems, not to satisfy a need for innovative ideas on the part of local institutions. Clarifying this from the beginning helps to build a relationship based on trust and not on extraction, which is the foundation for a successful and equal collaboration. With regard to this, we also noticed a difference in perception between the two groups, where the limits of action were clearer to the institutional actors, so they overall evaluated the interaction as more equal and useful than the young people did.

Setting up a Youth Board

When recruiting new Youth Board members, !WOON has purposively looked for youngsters that would contribute to the diversity within the Youth Board composition. However, despite efforts, it turned out to be difficult to reach the same rate of participation for the lower educated young people as for the higher educated young people. In hindsight, it would perhaps have been better if we would have developed a specific recruitment strategy aimed at reaching the former group. On the other hand, it is important to acknowledge that the housing crisis in Amsterdam affects youngsters from all education levels. Indeed, as far as housing is concerned, virtually all Youth Board members are in a vulnerable position, despite the fact that not all have experienced, or still experience, vulnerabilities in other domains. Thus, overall, we contend that the Youth Board offers a good representation of the young adults that experience housing problems at the Amsterdam housing market.

The co-creation process: capacity building and creativity, interaction between Youth Board and institutional stakeholders

First of all, we observe that there is a clear connection between the scope of the co-creation process (what are the topics that are dealt with?), the expected outcomes (fully developed new concepts or more general recommendations?), and the need for capacity building/community forming on the one hand, and the time that is required to successfully complete the process on the other. In our first Sprint, the scope of the co-creation process was fairly broad (temporary housing) and more than half of the meetings were devoted to the inventory stage, also because there was a real need to invest in capacity building and community forming within the Youth Board. The second Sprint on the other hand followed a much more compact process, and contained only 6 sessions. This could be achieved because the scope of this Sprint was rather narrow (the development of an inclusive communal housing concept for young people) and the expected outcomes (set of requirements and scale models) were clearly defined upfront. Moreover, because the Youth Board was already established (even though some new members joined), less time needed to be dedicated to community forming. The third Sprint had a similar number of meetings as the second Sprint, even though the topic to be addressed was much broader. However, compared to the first and second Sprint, the

expected outcomes of this Sprint were more general (policy recommendations rather than fully developed concepts).

Although the time-intensity of the co-creation process may differ, capacity building in the inventory phase seems to be of crucial importance for achieving fruitful outcomes. In order to be able to formulate policy solutions that can bridge the gap between the 'life world' of young people, and the 'system world' of professionals, policy-makers and institutions, it is important that the young people get some insight into the functioning of this system world (i.e. the policy and institutional context of the problem at hand). Webinars, excursions and mini internships can play an important role in this respect. At the other side of the gap, and in a similar vein, policy-makers and professionals need to change their mind-set and become more receptive to the opinions and ideas of the young people. They may need to learn to really 'listen' to the needs of their target group, rather than automatically approach problems and formulate solutions from their professional expertise.

A third important point for reflection is how to raise young people's creativity and keep them engaged. In our view, the key for achieving high levels of engagement is to incorporate group work and make discussions interactive. Within the group work, it is important that all participants get the possibility to express their opinion and actively contribute. This can for example be done by pairing people up in small groups or tandems and using live polling platforms as a starting point for discussion. Furthermore, a good moderation of the group sessions is crucial. It is important to observe the group dynamics during the meetings and make sure that very vocal or dominant participants do not take over the conversation. Particularly, sessions in which young people are mixed with institutional stakeholders may be threatening for the former and require a good preparation and management of expectations for both groups, as well as a strict but empathetic moderation.

In this regard, we noticed that during the process in Amsterdam there was a difference in perception, where the policymakers thought they were treating young people as equals, while Youth Board members did not always think that they were being taken seriously. This also boils down to honest disclosure of expectations on both parts and to appropriate and effective communication styles, especially with regard to giving feedback to people in a weaker power position. Training for the professionals involved may be a good solution for this, but the main role needs to be played by moderators during the interactions – by explaining reasons and motivations of both sides, by using clear language and by stimulating discussion on important issues.

Fourth, it should be realized that even though the Youth Board has a balanced composition (in terms of gender and ethnic background, see also Section 4.2), this does not automatically guarantee equal processes and solutions. Therefore, in the interactions during the meetings, the moderators have tried to be sensitive to potential differences between people of different genders and ethnic backgrounds in terms of attitude, tone of voice, and participation in

discussions. They have strived for a setting and atmosphere in which everyone feels safe and free to express its opinion.

Implementation, follow- up and Reflexive Policy Agenda

Overall, the impact that the Youth Board had on the empowerment of young people and the attitude and mind-set of the institutional stakeholders is quite satisfactory, whereas the impact in terms of policy implementation is difficult to assess so far. In our perception, timing plays an important role here. While the Youth Board managed to develop new housing concepts and/or recommendations in less than half year (the duration of a Sprint), decision-making about the implementation of these proposals, let alone the implementation itself, may take years. For example, Lieven de Key is currently preparing the decision-making for the new housing developments in Amsterdam West, of which the new communal housing concept that was developed by the Youth Board could potentially be part. However, it will take at least a few more years before the actual realization of these developments will take place (see Sections 8 and 9 about the implementation of the policy recommendations).

Furthermore, it is unlikely that all the input of the Youth Board will be adopted by the institutional stakeholders without further modification. When deciding about the implementation of this input, the interests of the young people will probably be traded off against other interests, such as the housing opportunities of other target groups and financial interests. Indeed, when he received the manifesto of the Amsterdam Youth Board, the alderman for housing already indicated that measures to improve the housing situation for young people in Amsterdam should not come at the expense of the housing opportunities for other target groups. Youth Board members seemed to be aware of this ambivalence with regard to their input, as there is a sort of suspended judgement on their part about how useful this process was in terms of future policy implementation.

In our view, the above nuances definitely do not imply that the Amsterdam Youth Board has no added value in the process of housing policy development. On the contrary; while many vested interests (homeowners, social rental tenants, students) have already organized themselves in interest groups that participate in housing policy decision making, young people (particularly the ones that are not studying and/or don't have a higher education) are so far underrepresented in this decision-making process. By expressing the needs, aspirations and interests of the former group, the Youth Board has the potential to fill this gap.

8 A Reflexive Policy Agenda

8.1 Towards a Reflexive Policy Agenda

The ultimate goal of the co-creation process was for young people to formulate suggestions and recommendations for new or existing policy measures and tools that the institutional partners could implement. The result of the work done in this regard by the Youth Board together with !WOON, INBO, TU Delft, Lieven de Key and the municipality is what we call a Reflexive Policy Agenda.

The first set of points in the Reflexive Policy Agenda elaborated in Amsterdam is about two rather focused initiatives that provide a clear and workable policy implementation path: the housing information platform and the communal housing concept. These emerged at the end of the first two co-creation Sprints. Nonetheless, although the institutional stakeholders have recognized the feasibility and value of these proposals, it is still difficult to implement them, as the timeframe of policy-making is longer than that of policy co-creation and policy-makers have to respond to multiple interests (see Section 7 for a reflection on this aspect).

The second set of points in the Reflexive Policy Agenda consists of recommendations of a more general nature, aimed at shaping the overarching approach of local actors – chiefly the municipality, but also housing providers – towards youth housing. These are the results of the last Sprint, where the discussion was broader, less focused on problem solving and more focused on making municipal policymakers understand what is important and/or problematic for young people in the Amsterdam housing market and what they would like the municipality to focus on in the coming years. As such, the road to implementation of these recommendations is longer and perhaps even more uncertain, although there is reason to believe that they will at least be taken into account in the development of the new municipal housing vision, given the effort that the municipality is putting into participation processes.

This section will provide an explanation of the two types of recommendations – the focused ones and the more general ones – and their potential for implementation, as well as an exploration of the agenda that aims at a continuation of the Youth Board and the process of reflexive policy making.

8.2 Reflexive policy agenda for the field of housing

This Section contains the policy agenda resulting from the co-creation process. For each policy recommendation, we tried to outline the reasoning behind it and the actions and actors that would be necessary to implement it.

General housing policy recommendations

- *Provide support to youngsters with a temporary rental contract that is (almost) ending and that have nowhere to go on the housing market.*

The expected effects of such a recommendation would be less housing insecurity and less young people moving back to their parental home. Although this is a general recommendation, in their manifesto the Youth Board has suggested what this support would entail in practice. As a starting point, they would like to see the municipality step up its efforts to provide guidance and create new housing options for young people who earn too much to qualify for social housing, but do not earn enough to afford the high rents and the income requirements in the private sector.

Secondly, there should be a “safety net” in place for all young people who have to move out of a temporary youth contract with no prospect of moving on to a new dwelling. To some extent, the municipality has already taken this recommendation into account because from mid-2023, these young people will temporarily get ‘priority points’ (*startpunten* in Dutch) in the social housing allocation system, which increases their chances of finding a new social rental dwelling. Although the Youth Board is really pleased that the municipality of Amsterdam participates in this experiment, they also observe that it is not a solution for young households whose temporary rental contracts expire before the mentioned date. Therefore, according to the Youth Board, these households should receive a one year extension of their temporary rental contract so that they can also take profit of the temporary reform of the social housing allocation system. The actors involved in this measure should be the municipality, but also all social housing providers.

- *Facilitate house sharing among young people and support young people that want to start a housing cooperative or a co-housing initiative.*

Currently, sharing a housing with peers (particularly if there are more than 2 people involved) is not an attractive option on the Amsterdam housing market. Regulations are complex and not well-known and there is a need for a better facilitation and information provision. Additionally, the manifesto indicates that housing cooperatives would be a very efficient way to allow young people to own their home in an affordable way and live collectively, but that they are not very well-known either. Thus, clearer guidance and simpler procedures should be provided to set up housing cooperatives.

The above recommendations could have a positive effect not only on young people, but on anyone who would like to live in shared accommodation, including the elderly. More collective and clustered living for the elderly could vacate the dwellings in which these households are currently living, thereby offering more housing options for the younger generations (the principle of circulation on the housing market).

The actors involved in the above measures should be the municipality, but also housing providers and perhaps the national government (they could for example make housing allowances available for people who share a house, which is currently not the case).

- *Build more large scale youth housing complexes at the edges of the city. Make sure that these complexes have sufficient facilities (supermarkets, cafes) and a good 24 hour public transport connection to the city centre.*

As the Youth Board highlighted, young people are very aware of the rules of the free market, and as such they do not expect to be able to live in the centre of Amsterdam, in high quality housing, for very cheap prices. Indeed, many Youth Board members are well-prepared to live in the peripheral parts of the city region and they see merit in the construction of large student and youth housing complexes at the edges of the urban area.

However, such complexes will only be attractive if they have access to adequate services and facilities, such as public transportation (preferable also during the night), supermarkets and socialization opportunities (e.g. cafes).

These are general urban planning recommendations that could be implemented by the municipalities that collaborate in the Amsterdam Metropolitan Region.

- *Counter empty buildings with a good registration system and a clear regulation. Start a project that invites people to develop creative and innovative solutions for empty buildings.*

Amsterdam has relatively high real estate vacancy rates, partially due to dwellings being bought as investment and not let out, and partially due to large (office) buildings being unused. To operationalize this recommendation, the Youth Board suggests to launch a specific hotline to report real estate vacancy, accompanied by a campaign to encourage people to report such vacancies. These reports could be collected in an online accessible database, so that citizens could submit projects to fill those vacant spaces with (youth) housing or other uses. They suggest that such a task could be coordinated and managed by a university or similar institution with relevant expertise, in order to minimize the workload for the municipality.

- *Involve and inform young people*

Many young people in Amsterdam lack knowledge about their options, rights and duties on the housing market. Consequently, they don't really know what they can do to improve their position. However, they do know what their problems and desires are. Therefore, they should not only be informed but also involved.

Obviously, the continuation of the youth panel so that young people get a permanent voice in the housing policy development process in the city of Amsterdam is one of the main ways in which this involvement can be secured and facilitated. As outlined already in Section 8, the

co-creation process showed the importance of creating shared spaces where policy recipients and policy makers can meet and discuss problems and proposals in order to align new and existing policies to the needs of the people they are meant to support. In particular, Youth Board members have come to value the experience and believe in its results so much that they decided to recommend to have a permanent institutionalized space at the municipal level where young people can express their voice with regard to youth policy, in particular for housing. In this regard, they also recommended to involve a permanent Youth Board in the lobbying process towards the national government. Section 8.3 will further address the policy agenda to make a Youth Board a permanent feature of the Amsterdam policy-making landscape.

With regard to information provision, the Youth Board advises to send all young people a 'Amsterdam housing market information package', when they turn 16 or 18, or when they move to the city of Amsterdam. This package should contain information about rights, duties and possibilities and refer to relevant institutions such as the local housing associations and !WOON. It could be linked to the virtual housing information platform that is further discussed below.

- *Lobby towards the national government for the reform of national policies that hamper the housing opportunities of young people.*

One of the biggest obstacles encountered by the Youth Board in drafting their manifesto was that many of the issues they wanted to raise are not easily tackled at the municipal level, because they rely primarily on national laws and regulations. Therefore, they proposed seven potential policy actions that the municipality should lobby for with the national government:

- The national government is currently preparing a new law (the so-called 'Good Landlord Act') that should protect tenants from abusive and exploitative behaviour of landlords. According to the Youth Board, this law should explicitly address the malpractices in the housing market that often harm young people. Among other things, it should include fines for overcharging in the social sector and punishment for unreasonable service charges and harassment. Young people should be included in the further development of the law, as well as in upcoming information campaigns about it.
- Extend the regulation of the rental prices to the more expensive rental segment by increasing the liberalization threshold to at least €1100 (see Section 2.2 for an explanation of how this system currently works).
- Reform the rent allowance so that it better supports young people (particularly those between 18 and 23 who currently only have a limited eligibility for rental allowances). Make the rent allowance also available for people (not being part of the same household) who share rental accommodation or live in a rental dwelling with a rent level above the current 'liberalization limit'.
- Make bidding procedures for homes for sale more transparent.

- Make sure that elderly people are not cut from their state pension, rent allowance, etc. when house sharing. Given the current housing crisis, house sharing (between individuals that are not part of the same household) should be stimulated and not 'punished'.

Recommendations for specific policy tools

- *Virtual platform to provide correct information to young people looking for affordable and adequate housing in the city of Amsterdam.*

One of the main results of the discussions between the Youth Board and the institutional actors was that the housing market in Amsterdam is complicated and information about renting and buying a home is scarce, not up-to-date, sometimes conflicting and difficult to find. For this reason the Youth Board suggested to develop a platform entirely dedicated to providing clear, up-to-date and easily accessible information on housing rights and housing opportunities for young people who have to navigate the city's housing market. This is also in line with one of the general suggestions included in the manifesto, which proposed to inform young people about the complicated Amsterdam housing market by sending them an information package once they turn 16 or 18.

The basic idea behind the information platform is that it is run by the young people. They should decide on its structure and content. According to the advice of the Youth Board, sharing personal experiences, and looking for connections (for example someone to share a house with), should be key elements of the platform. Thus, the platform should depart from the 'life world' of young people, and not from the 'system world' of institutional actors, also in terms of language and communication means that are used.

Nevertheless, in order for the platform to be feasible, input (policies, regulations, housing options) and funding from the system world are heavily needed as well. Discussions about how to further develop the platform idea are currently taking place between the Youth Board, !WOON, the municipality and the Amsterdam housing associations.

- *Communal housing concept*

This specific set of recommendations is meant for housing association Lieven de Key, but it could also be useful for other (social) housing providers that build inclusive and communal youth housing complexes. The concept and report that the Youth Board presented together with INBO (INBO and Amsterdam Youth Board, 2022) have been received by the project leader of the location that Lieven de Key is aiming to develop (Meer en Vaart). In the coming years, the Youth Board is likely to remain involved in the further location development.

8.3 Policy agenda to give the youth a permanent voice in policy-making

As already mentioned above (general policy recommendations), the advice is to continue with the Amsterdam Youth Board and the process of reflexive policy-making in the field of housing. !WOON has already followed up to this recommendation by starting with a co-creation Sprint (Sprint 4) on housing cooperatives for young people. In the first half of 2023, the local co-creation team (with !WOON as a front-runner) will try to secure a more long term future for the Youth Board. On April 17, !WOON and TU Delft will organize a conference where they will present the added value of the co-creation process to local and national stakeholders. The general idea is to come to a consortium of local stakeholders (consisting of the municipality, local housing associations, !WOON and other interested stakeholders) that will support and fund the continuation of the Amsterdam Youth Board and the development of the virtual housing platform for young people.

9 Implementation and follow-up of the co-creation process

This Section describes the (potential) implementation of co-creation outcomes and the follow-up of the co-creation process and the Reflexive Policy Agenda.

Section 6 and Section 8 have shown that all three sprints in the Amsterdam co-creation process have resulted in some clear new concepts and suggestions for a Reflexive Policy Agenda. From Sprint 1, the proposal to establish a virtual housing platform for young people was the idea that showed most potential. As a follow-up to this sprint, representatives of the Youth Board and !WOON have been in contact with representatives from the municipality to see if they could integrate the platform idea into plans that are currently being developed for the Amsterdam South East area. Unfortunately, these talks have been unsuccessful, as there seems to be too much divergence between the vision of the Youth Board and the vision of the municipality. Nevertheless, the awareness of the importance of clear and objective information provision for young people has clearly been raised among local housing stakeholders. Therefore, together with the Youth Board, the local co-creation team will continue to look for possibilities to put the platform idea into practice. For this purpose, the umbrella organization of Amsterdam housing associations, the local housing associations and the relevant municipalities will be approached in the beginning of 2023.

With regard to the issue of temporary contracts, Lieven de Key has gained useful insights from discussing with young adults who are confronted with having such a contract themselves, but also those who do not have any independent housing yet and still live with their parents. They aim to follow up and use this insight in 2023 when discussing temporary contracts in the framework of the new agreement ("samenwerkingsafspraken") between the municipality and all social housing companies in Amsterdam.

Sprint 2 resulted in a proposal for an inclusive communal youth housing concept for housing association Lieven de Key. The executives of Lieven de Key are positive about this concept and intend to implement it into their housing redevelopment plans for the Amsterdam Nieuw West area. Furthermore, specific elements of the proposal will be incorporated in other communal youth housing complexes that Lieven de Key is currently developing.

The real policy impact of Sprint 3 will only become visible in 2023, when the new housing vision of the municipality of Amsterdam will be established. However, some of the suggestions of the Youth Board have already been incorporated in the draft version of this plan. This draft plan was presented in February 2023¹¹, and will be further discussed in the upcoming months. First of all, the draft plan mentions the term 'youngsters' no less than 36 times. Furthermore,

¹¹ <https://www.amsterdam.nl/wonen-leefomgeving/wonen/inspraak-aanpak-volkshuisvesting/>

the ideas that are developed for actively combatting empty buildings are largely aligned with those of the Amsterdam Youth Board. Also in line with the suggestions of the Youth Board (although specified in a different way) is that house sharing will be made easier, and that there are plans to improve the information provision to tenants. For the latter purpose, a platform where the offer of all available rental dwellings will become visible is planned to be set up. The municipality of Amsterdam also intends start a lobby towards the national government to get rid of temporary rental contracts in the private rental sector. In short, we conclude that the proposals of the Youth Board are quite well incorporated in the draft plan, although sometimes in a somewhat different way than they envisaged.

Taking into account the positive off-spin of the local co-creation process, we feel that there is a strong case for continuation of the Amsterdam Youth Board after the UPLIFT funding has ended. Against this background, !WOON has recently decided that they will continue with the Youth Board. Indeed, a fourth co-creation sprint, that focuses on collaborative housing for young people, has kicked off on January 30, 2023. On April 17, !WOON and TU Delft will organize a local and national policy conference, where they will present the added value of the co-creation process in general, and the virtual housing platform idea in particular, to local and national stakeholder networks. Hopefully, this will be a first step towards a structural embedding of the UPLIFT approach of Reflexive Policy making with young people within the Amsterdam housing policy system.

10 Recommendations for a successful co-creation process with young people

10.1 Recommendations

In this Section, we outline our recommendations for institutions that want to embark on a similar co-creation endeavour. This is a follow-up to Section 7.3, where we have put forward some critical reflections on the lessons we have learned from the Amsterdam experience. Based on these critical reflections, we are able to outline some recommendations for each phase of the co-creation process. Even though these conditions are based on one particular case, with a very specific context, we hypothesize that most of them will have a more general applicability.

10.2 Preparation of the co-creation process

In the preparation of the co-creation process the steps to consider are problem definition, setting up clear goals, engaging institutional stakeholders, and organizing the process. For each step we suggest the following recommendations:

1. Take sufficient time for setting up a relevant institutional stakeholder network.
2. Prepare an elaborate action plan before the co-creation process starts. This action plan should provide clarity about the roles, objectives and capacities of the different stakeholders, as well as about the scope and the focus of the actual co-creation process. Written agreements can help, as they can be returned to in times of doubt.
3. Establish a 'local co-creation team' with representatives of all the stakeholders involved and plan regular meetings of this team in order to be able to keep track of the process and adapt to unforeseen circumstances. Depending on the context, it may be worthwhile to also include Youth Board members in this local co-creation team.

10.3 Setting up a Youth Board

In setting up a Youth Board the elements to consider are recruitment, composition, inclusiveness, and gender sensitivity. For each element we suggest the following recommendations:

1. Involve gatekeeper organizations to recruit the Youth Board members, as they may have access to vulnerable groups and groups that are not usually reached by traditional policy action. The more varied the recruiting organizations the more heterogeneous the group will be. Tailor made strategies may need to be set up in order to reach specific demographics, or groups that fall out of the reach of institutional stakeholders and/or NHO's.

2. Strive for a Youth Board of not too many people (around 8-10) in order to foster an easy cooperation among Board members and allow space and time for all participants to express their opinions.
3. Inclusivity in terms of race, class and gender should be taken into account in the recruitment phase, in order to include as many different points of view as possible.
4. It is good to have long-term commitment from Youth Board members in order to have continuity in the co-creation. However, since the process is long and time intensive, it is advised to allow Youth Board members to be flexible in their participation, and devise a strategy to replace members who drop out.

10.4 Managing the co-creation process

With regard to the management of the co-creation process, the recommendations below will address capacity building and enhancement of creativity of young people, interaction between Youth Board and institutional stakeholders, management of expectations and evaluation of the process.

1. Clearly define the scope and objectives of the co-creation process (preferably in consultation with the Youth Board). The problem statement needs to be as specific as possible in order to generate workable policy suggestions.
2. Clearly define the expected outcomes of the co-creation process (preferably in consultation with the Youth Board) before this process actually starts. Make it explicit what the Youth Board can have influence on and what it cannot, introduce them in the scope of action of the involved institutional actors, and inform them about the decision making process that can take up to years. Well-managed expectations lead to more productive and less frustrating interaction.
3. Dedicate sufficient time and effort to trust building and capacity building in the initial stage: immerse the young people in the policy and institutional context ('system world') of the problem at hand. This will increase the chances of developing feasible policy suggestions as well as prove valuable for Youth Board members beyond their participation in the project. Moreover, spending time together in the initial stage of the process may also enhance trust and social cohesion among Youth Board members.
4. Provide training to both Youth Board members and institutional stakeholders in order to align their expectations and ensure effective and equal communication. Communication styles can be different, and it is important to be prepared for this.. Youth Board members may have to learn to clearly express their ideas in a professional environment, whereas institutional stakeholders may have to learn to really listen before coming to a professional judgement. Furthermore, an empathetic and focused moderation can increase understanding among the two groups.

5. Institutional stakeholders and organizations may need to change their culture/mind-set so that they become more receptive for the inputs of the young people.
6. Create a safe space for young people to express themselves, both in their own separate space and in the moments of interaction with institutional stakeholders. Use moderation and group techniques that stimulate creativity and interaction and that allow all Youth Board members to express their voice.
7. Create an attractive atmosphere around the co-creation sessions and consider to reward Youth Board members that spend a lot of time on the project.
8. Devise ways to evaluate the various aspects of the process, both during and after the co-creation. Anonymity, for example in questionnaires, and separate sessions for young people and institutional members can help obtain more honest answers.

10.5 Towards a reflexive policy agenda and follow-up of reflexive policy-making

Finally, for the implementation and follow-up phase of the co-creation process, the following recommendations should be considered.

1. A prerequisite for a successful policy co-creation and implementation is that the Youth Board is at least partially aligned with the target group of the policy that needs to be amended or formulated: young people with housing problems in the case of youth housing policy, (single) parents in the case of childcare policy and so on.
2. Be sensitive to differences in time horizon between co-creation processes and decision-making, and communicate them clearly to the Youth Board.
3. Make an effort to bring the positive impact of the co-creation process under the attention of relevant decision makers, at various levels of governance.

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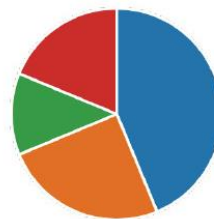
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Appendix

Evaluation questionnaire

- What is your role in the Uplift project?



Youth Board answers

- Which Sprints did you take part in?



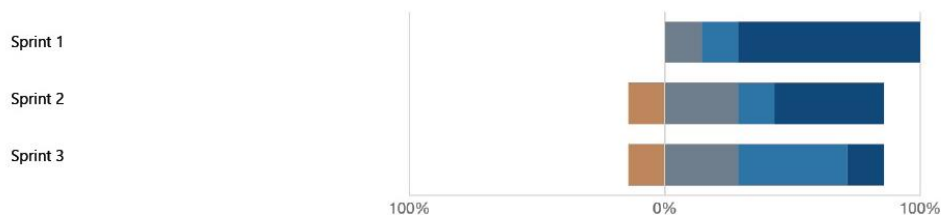
- Overall, how do you rate the UPLIFT co-creation process?

7
Responses

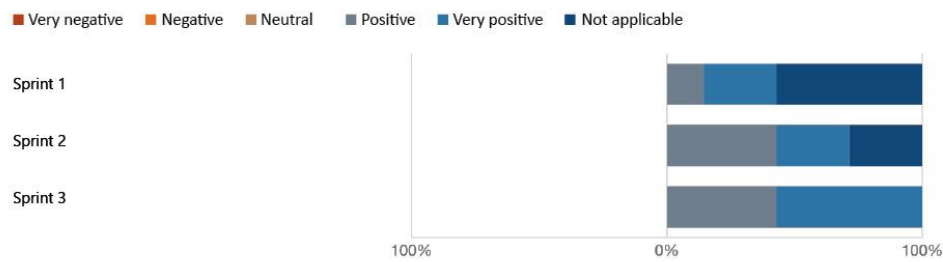
3.71
Average number

- How do you rate the interaction among Youth Board members?

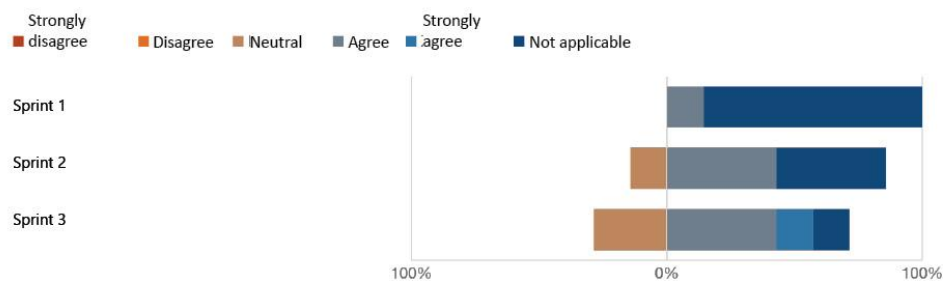
■ Very negative ■ Negative ■ Neutral ■ Positive ■ Very positive ■ Not applicable



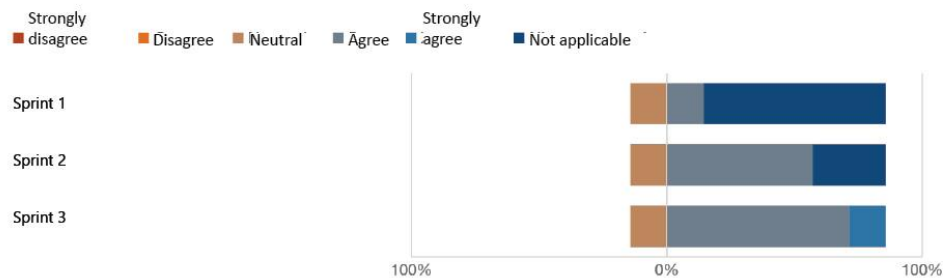
- How do you rate the way !WOON organised and moderated the co-creation process?



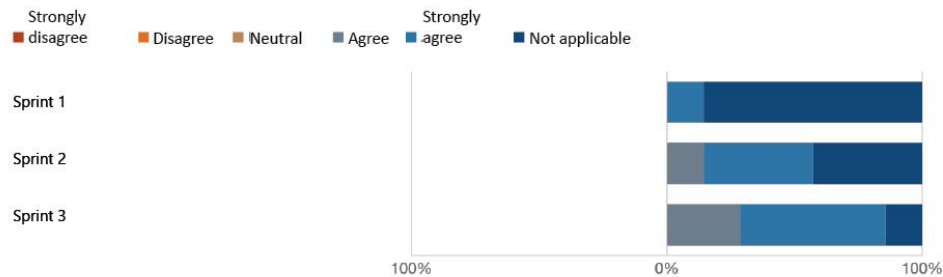
- The number of co-creation sessions was sufficient to achieve good results.



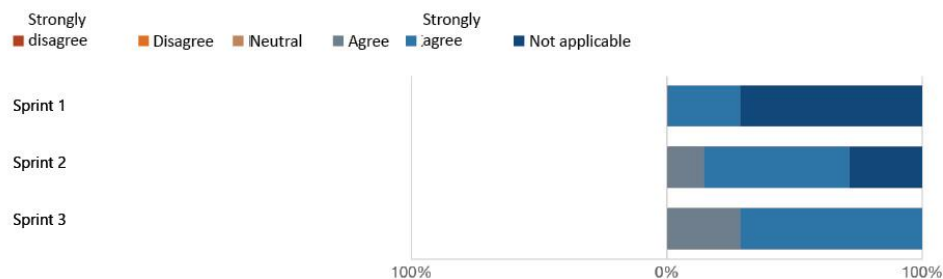
- During the co-creation sessions there was enough time for discussion.



- I felt safe during the co-creation sessions.



- I was able to speak freely and express my opinions during the co-creation sessions.

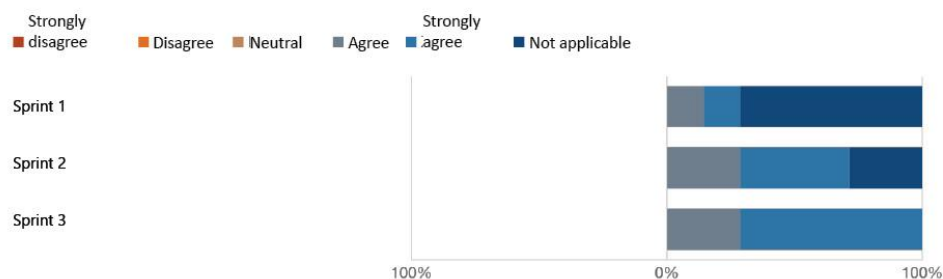


- I enjoyed being part of the co-creation process.

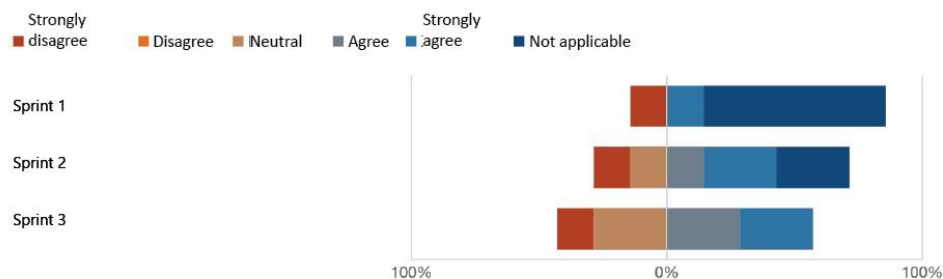
7
Responses

4.29
Average number

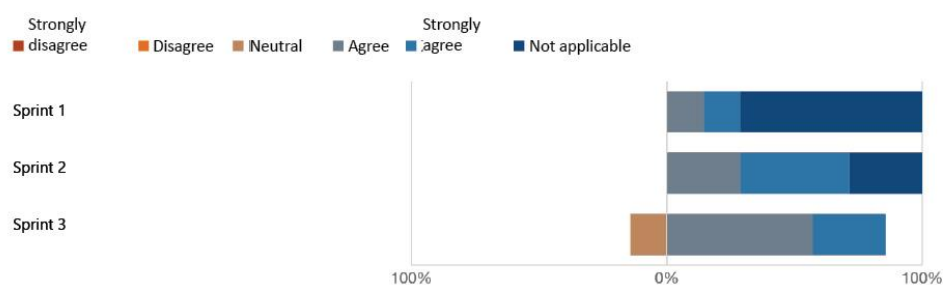
- The issues we discussed are relevant to young people in Amsterdam.



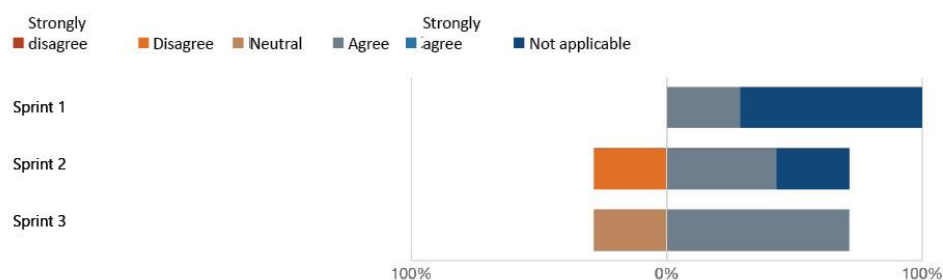
- The solutions/proposals formulated by the Youth Board are innovative.



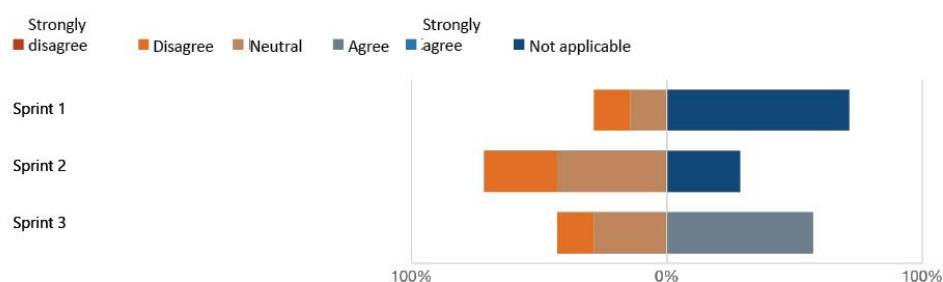
- The solutions/proposals formulated by the Youth Board are realistic.



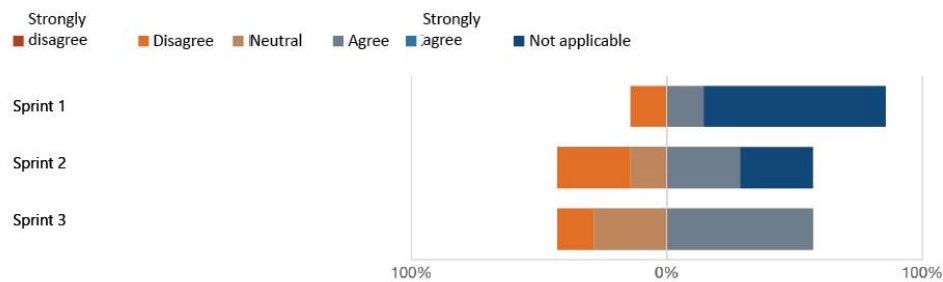
- The contributions of the Youth Board were appreciated by the institutional actors (De Key, Amsterdam municipality).



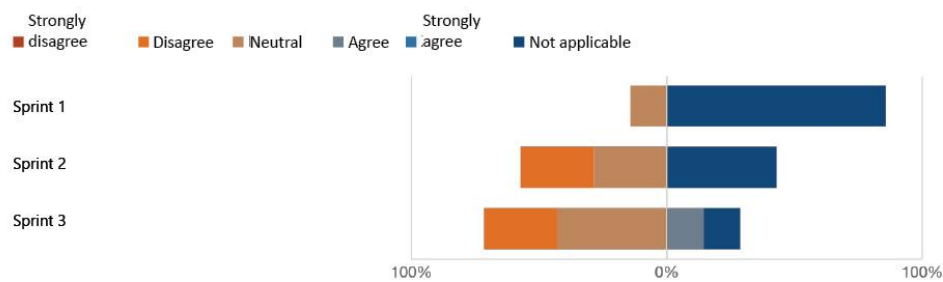
- The institutional actors (De Key, Amsterdam municipality) took us seriously.



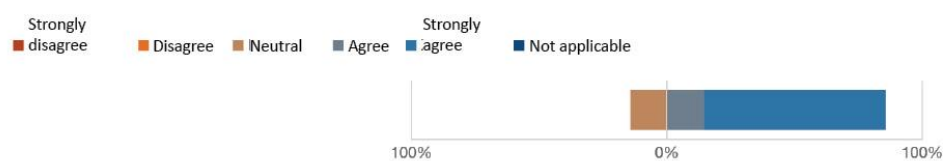
- Feedback from institutional actors (De Key, Amsterdam municipality) was constructive.



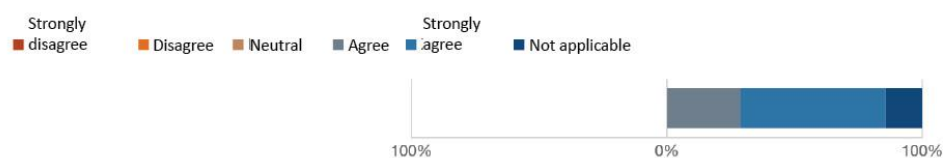
- The Youth Board's proposals will be incorporated into the policies of institutional actors (De Key, Amsterdam municipality).



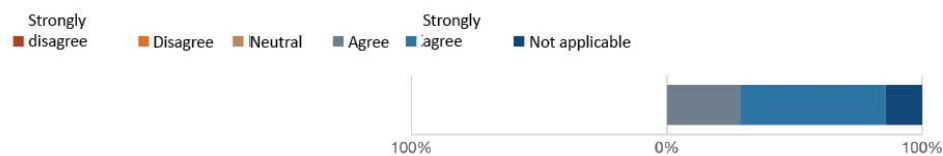
- The current UPLIFT co-creation process should continue for a longer period of time.



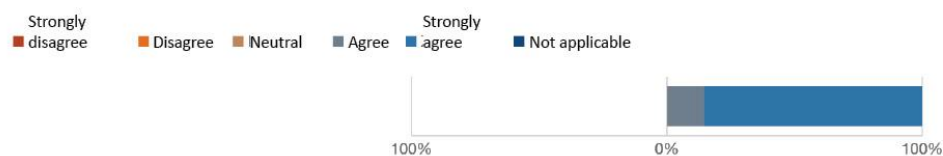
- I would participate again in the UPLIFT co-creation process.



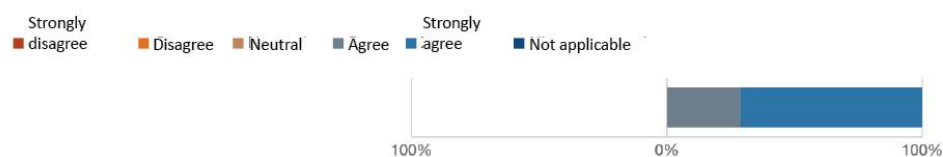
- The participation in UPLIFT was an enriching experience and contributed to my personal development.



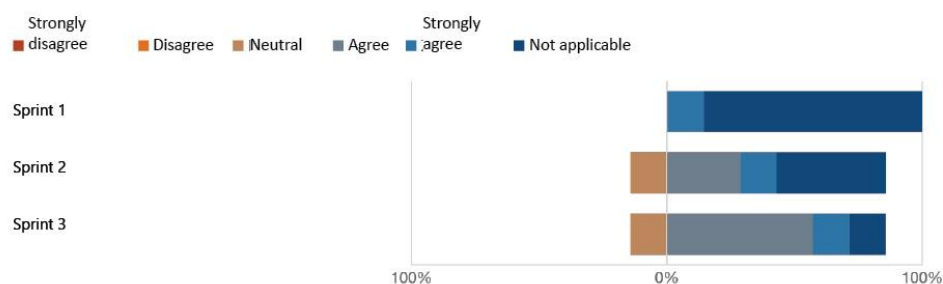
- The Youth Board should have a permanent place within housing policy in Amsterdam.



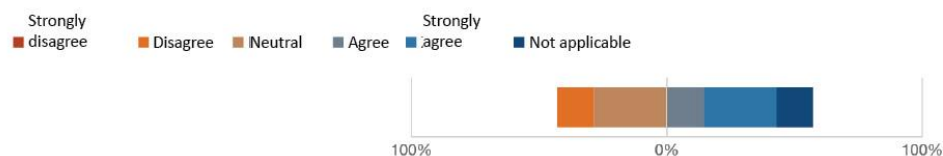
- Every Dutch municipality should have a Youth Board.



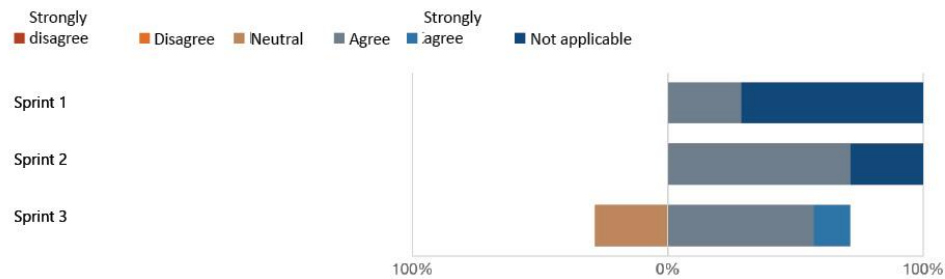
- I felt connected to the other member of the Youth Board.



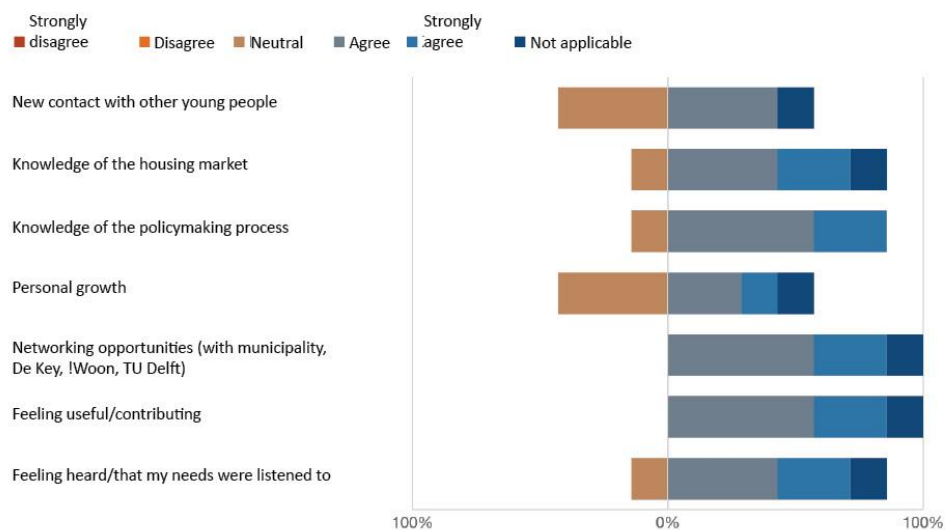
- I will keep in touch with (some of) the Youth Board members after UPLIFT.



- The time commitment required of me was appropriate.

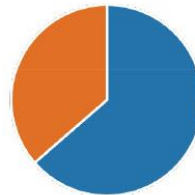


- Overall, what did you get out of your participation in UPLIFT?

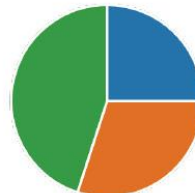
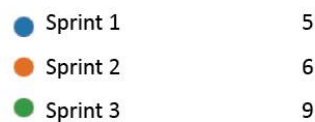


Institutional stakeholder answers

- Are you part of the UPLIFT steering group?



- Which Sprints did you take part in?



- Overall, how do you rate the UPLIFT co-creation process?

9
Responses

3.91
Average number

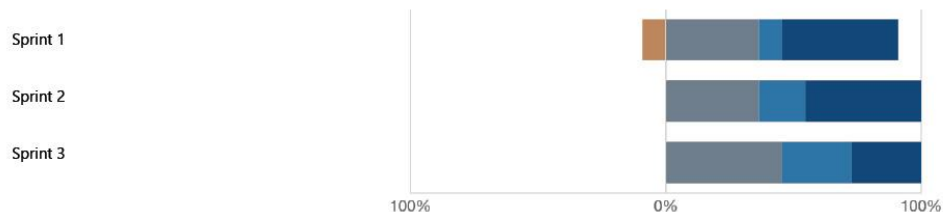
- How do you rate the interaction between institutional actors (Municipality, De Key, !Woon, Inbo, TUDelft)?

9
Responses

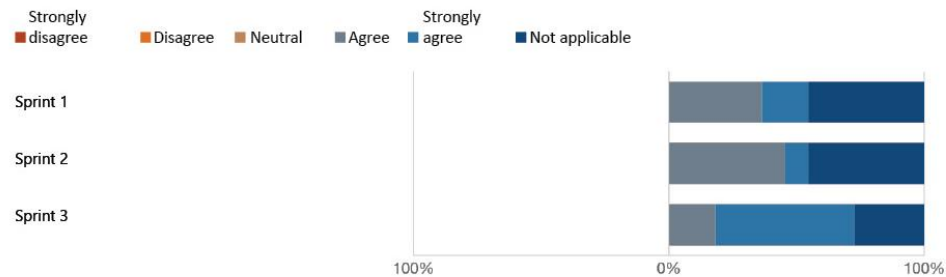
3.91
Average number

- How do you rate the way !WOON organised and moderated the co-creation process?

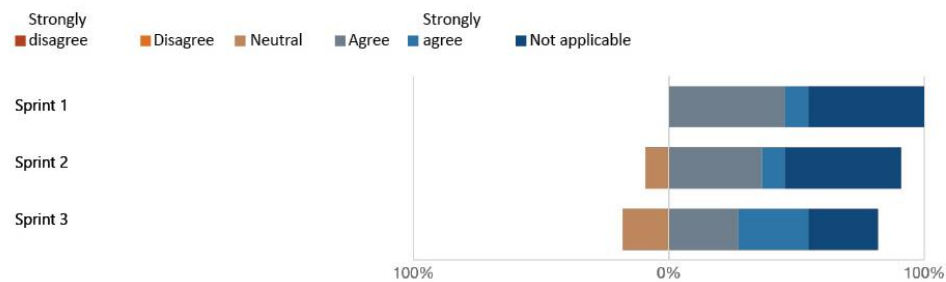
■ Very negative
 ■ Negative
 ■ Neutral
 ■ Positive
 ■ Very positive
 ■ Not applicable



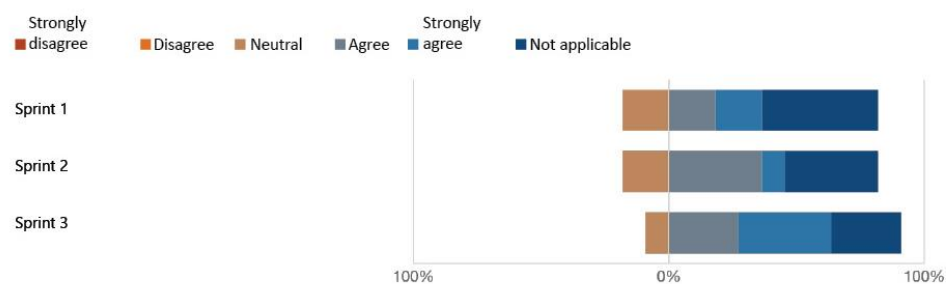
- The young people were engaged and proactive.



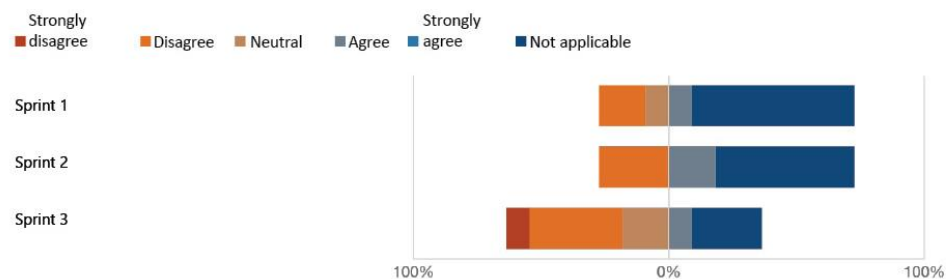
- The young people knew and understood the limits (rules, finances) within which we operate.



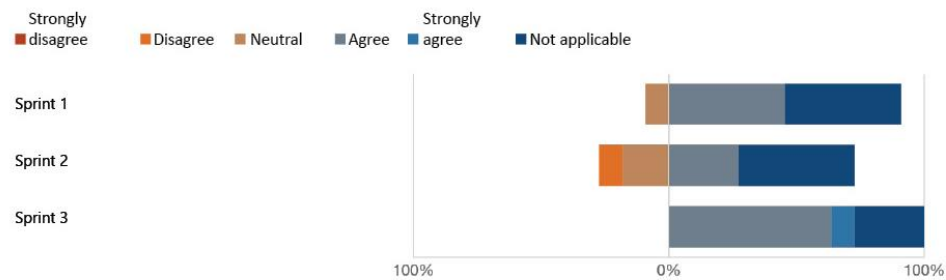
- My organisation regards young people as equal partners in the co-creation process.



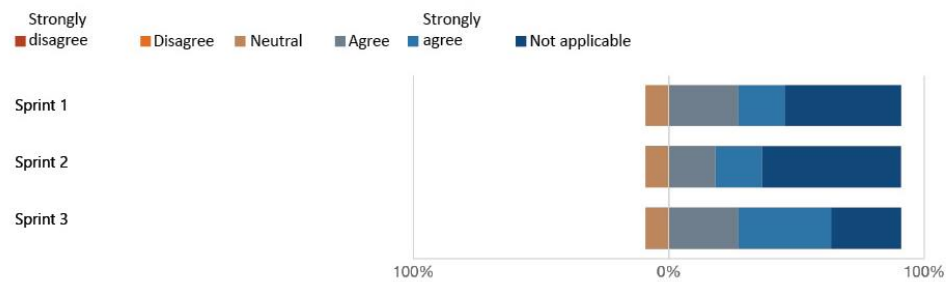
- Unequal power relations between young people and institutional actors negatively affected the co-creation outcomes.



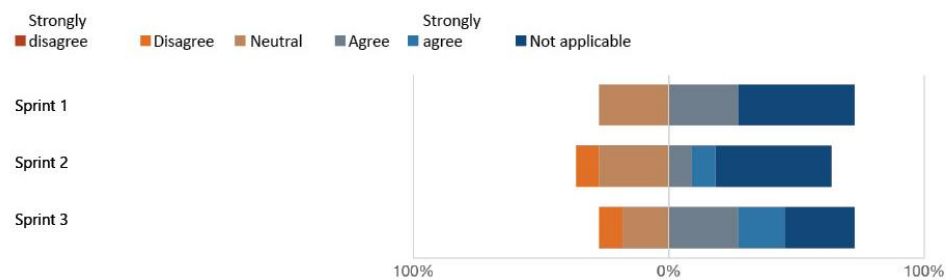
- The co-creation process provided new insights on existing problems.



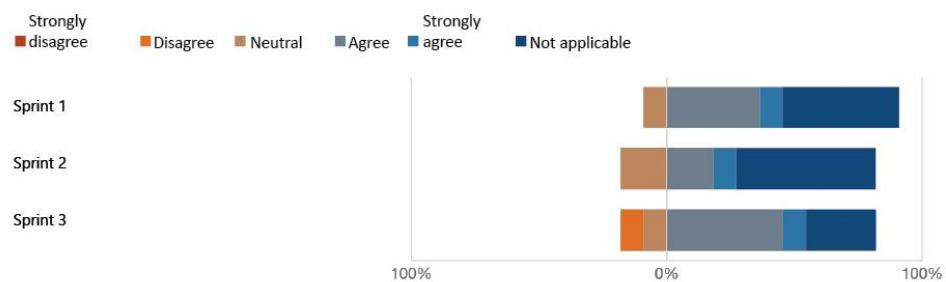
- The co-creation process provided useful knowledge for my organisation.



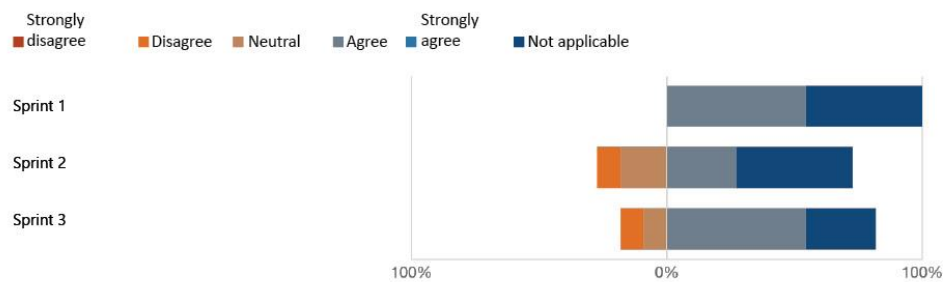
- The co-creation process produced innovative policy solutions.



- The co-creation process produced realistic policy proposals.



- The proposed solutions/initiatives can be integrated into my organisation's future policy-making.



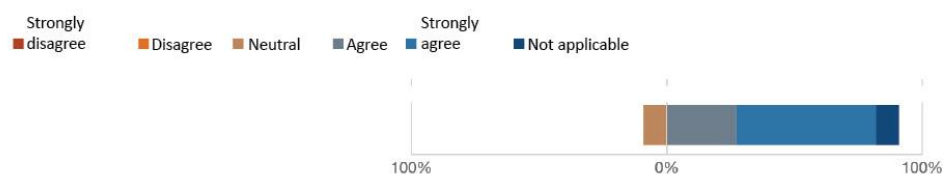
- Which policy suggestions have the most potential to be implemented?

5
Responses

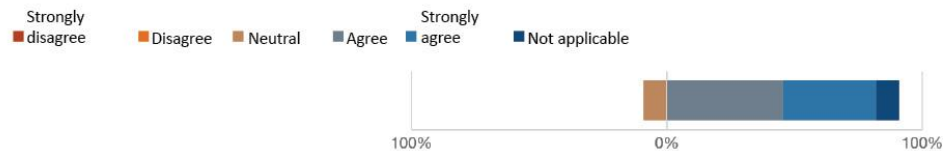
- To what extent and how is your organisation already implementing the Youth Board's policy suggestions?

7
Responses

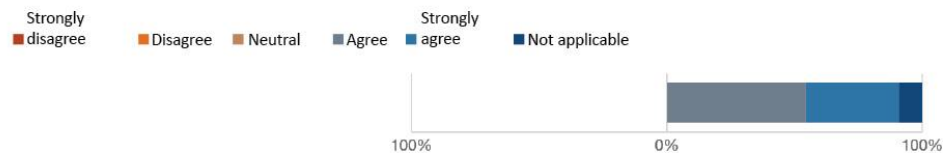
- My organisation would like to see the current co-creation process continue for a longer period.



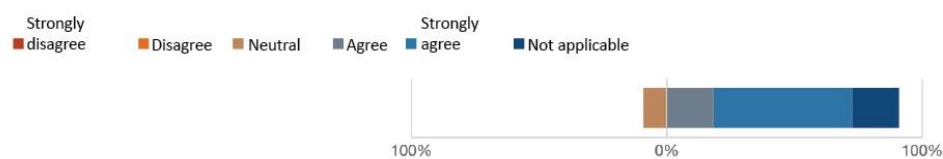
- My organisation would participate again in a co-creation process.



- I feel support within my organisation for co-creation as a way of working.



- I feel support within my organisation for the establishment of a permanent Youth Board.



- The commitment in terms of time and money required from my organisation was appropriate.

