



Deliverable 5.2

Training Material

On Reflexive Policy Making

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UPLIFT – Urban Policy Innovation to address inequality with and for Future generaTions



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1 INTRODUCTION

The main objective of this document is to **support the organisation of engaging training sessions** aimed at setting the stage to empower local stakeholders to be able to initiate and implement Reflexive Policy Making processes (that are co-creation methods with the involvement of the target group of public policies in policy creation, implementation and monitoring).

The primary target group of this document are those actors that can provide a specific training on the proper implementation of Reflexive Policy Making (RPM) processes. Through the training activities the secondary target groups are those practitioners, professionals, researchers, policy-makers, and NGOs, who are willing to engage in the initiation and implementation of a Reflexive Policy Making process.

The material aims to support and inspire the development of techniques, methods and activities for practicing and designing a co-creation process.

To this purpose, the training material uses a training of trainers approach, building on the Reflexive Policy

Making processes that took place in Amsterdam, Barakaldo, Sfântu Gheorghe and Tallinn through the course of the EU funded Horizon 2020 UPLIFT project (www.uplift-youth-eu).

Therefore, the document includes:

- **Chapter 2:** Introduction to the Reflexive Policy Making process, featuring basic information regarding the theory behind the approach and its milestones.
- **Chapter 3:** Step-by-step process on how to organize a training for those organizations, institutions, local governments, NGOs, who aspire to initiating a Reflexive Policy Making process.

The current document guide you through potential steps, approaches, exercises, main challenges of a Reflexive Policy Making process to enhance the ability and inspiration of actors who are open to launch a new, progressive, power balanced policy making, and governing process.



2 REFLEXIVE POLICY MAKING AS A PROCESS

Reflexive Policy Making (RPM) was developed within the framework of the UPLIFT project as a **social innovation** (Box 1) approach to bridge the gap between the “system world” of institutional stakeholders and the “life-world” of priority groups.

RPM refers to **innovative governance arrangements** in which institutions allow for a broad and deep participatory **reflexive adaptation** of policies that turn to be ineffective in mitigating socio-economic inequalities. The main objective of RPM is to create a durable institutional framework that empowers the target group of public policies to be able to contribute to the design and implementation of policies.²

In a dialectical process, RPM aims to create venues for collaboration between **research practitioners**, **priority target groups**, and **institutional stakeholders**. Fundamental attributes of reflexive governance are:³

- It involves actors from **various levels of governance** and/or various backgrounds and practical contexts;
- It engages in an **effort to reflect** on and possibly **adapt cognitive and normative beliefs**;
- It takes into account and acknowledge **alternative understandings of policy problems**;
- It integrates **multiple approaches to problem solutions**.

Box 1

A brief definition of Social Innovation¹

Social Innovation is defined as introducing a social practice, project, arrangement, or institution involving and affecting social relations that are new in a given social context by certain actors with the goal of better satisfying or answering needs and problems than is possible based on established practices.

The building blocks of Social Innovation:

- **Novelty, or a reconfiguration of existing elements;**
- **Intended better satisfaction of human needs;**
- **Transformation of social relations.**



Unsplash / Jason Goodman

1 Domanski, D., Howaldt, J., & Kaletka, C., 2020, A comprehensive concept of Social Innovation and its implications for the local context—on the growing importance of Social Innovation ecosystems and infrastructures. *European Planning Studies*, 28(3), 454-474.

2 Feindt, P. and Weiland, S., 2018, Reflexive governance: exploring the concept and assessing its critical potential for sustainable development. Introduction to the special issue. *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning*, 20(6): 661-674.

3 Knorr-Siedow, T., Katona N., Kerékgyártó, A., Gerőházi E., 2022, *Inventory of post-crisis policies against inequality*, Deliverable 2.3, UPLIFT project, Grant Agreement No. 870898.

Employing the classification of public participation by Arnstein (Figure 1),⁴ it can be argued that RPM goes beyond information and consultation of target groups to identify priorities for a policy agenda.

It proposes a **process** through which priority groups are enabled to actively collaborate in the set-up, design, implementation and evaluation of a policy agenda, which potentially results in a more effective and need-based policy solution. Enabling the priority group's capabilities contributes to their individual well-being.⁵ Through RPM, policies are made with the target group based on a deep understanding of their experiences, needs and strategies and for the target group. Eventually, the governance change, required by the process should result in the creation of new and durable collaborative institutional structures that are able to fuel a healthy feedback loop mechanisms of the whole policy process, based on co-created shared knowledge.

2.1 Policy Focus for Reflexive Policy Making

The emergence of a policy focus for Reflexive Policy Making is not the outcome of a linear deliberation. As the whole co-creation process, also the identification of a policy focus to start a RPM is the result of a collaborative process. It combines at least three complementary paths:

- **Research and academic led**
- **Policy led**
- **Civil-society bottom-up led**

4 Arnstein, S. R., 1969, A ladder of citizen participation, *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 85(1): 24–34.

5 Walker, M., 2018, Political Agency and Capabilities Formation Through Participatory Action Research. *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, 19(1): 53–69; Walker, M. and Loots, S., 2018, Transformative change in higher education through participatory action research: a capabilities analysis. *Educational Action Research*, 26(1): 166–181.

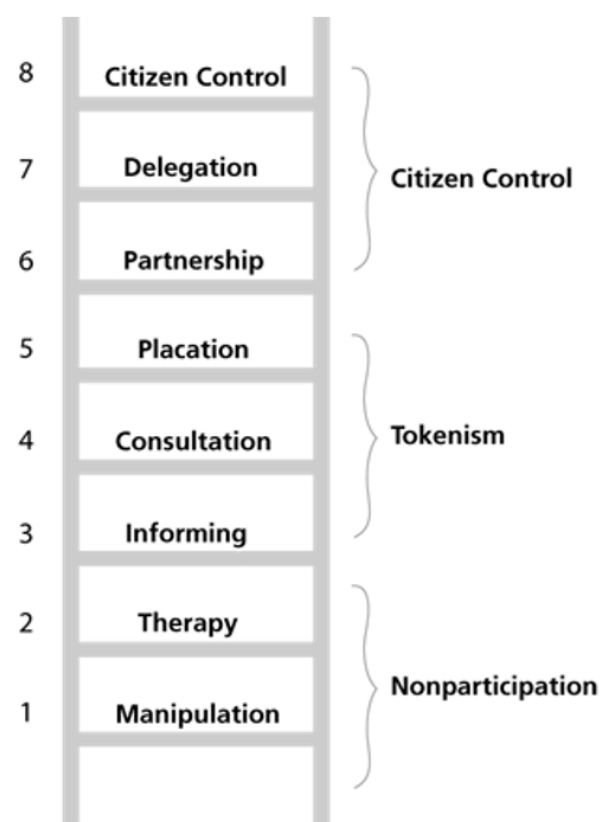
6 Gentili, M., Hoekstra, J., 2023, *Guidebook on co-creation and reflexive policy making*, Deliverable 4.8, UPLIFT, European Union's Horizon 2020, funded under grant agreement No 870898.

7 Ibid.

8 Gentili, M., Hoekstra, J., 2021, *Updated Action Plans for the co-creation process Looking back and looking forward*, Deliverable 4.2 UPLIFT, European Union's Horizon 2020 - grant agreement No 870898.

9 Amadora, Amsterdam, Barakaldo, Chemnitz, Corby, Pécs, Tallinn, Sfântu Gheorghe.

Figure 1
Arnstein's ladder of public participation



For instance, the focus of the experimental implementation of the RPM approach in **Amsterdam**, namely youth access to housing, was selected thanks to the steering and advocacy role of researchers and civil society organisations already working on the topic.⁶ Conversely, in the case of **Sfântu Gheorghe**, a stronger role was played by a coalition of institutional local and regional authorities that valued RPM as a possible approach to cope with inequalities in education.⁷

As the examples show, the identification of the policy focus should mirror the co-creation value of the whole proposed process. It is normally a concerted choice among actors, including priority groups. Learning from the consolidate practice of **Participatory Action Research**⁸, RPM empowers target groups as active agents of change asking them to critically reflect on the contradictions of the social world that shapes their life choices. In doing so, they collaboratively define a political agenda to work on.

Preliminary **qualitative and quantitative research** could inform the collaborative problem identification process. Within the UPLIFT project, eight Case Study Reports were produced in eight cities⁹ using an analytical framework

based on the capability approach. The delivered eight Case Study Reports, based on 40 deep interviews with local young people and expert interviews with local experts, analysed the interacting micro (e.g. individual characteristics such as ethnicity, gender, health, value and belief system), mezzo (e.g. socio-cultural norms, family) and macro (e.g. institutions, schools, municipality's administration, NGOs) level factors that contribute to produce and reproduce inequalities among young people in relation to three policy fields - **education, employment and housing**.

The results of the analysis are thought to inform the preliminary phase of RPM and the training session by identifying the space of manoeuvre of local stakeholders aware of the institutional and legal conditions in which a Reflexive Policy Making is possible to implement in one of the fields of education, employment or housing. More precisely, Chapter 6 of each Case Study Report highlights possible discussion points for a potential Reflexive Policy Agenda in the respective analysed location (Box 2).

Box 2

Links to the UPLIFT Case Study Reports

In order to prepare the training session, trainers can employ the insights proposed by the 8 Case Study Reports elaborated by partners of the UPLIFT project.

- [Amadora](#)
- [Amsterdam](#)
- [Barakaldo](#)
- [Sfântu Gheorghe](#)
- [Corby](#)
- [Pecs](#)
- [Tallinn](#)
- [Chemnitz](#)



2.2 The process of Reflexive Policy Making

Based on academic research and the results of experimentations on the field¹⁰, the UPLIFT project developed four key structural steps of the RPM process¹¹:

1. Preparatory phase -

Identifying the institutional arrangements.

In this step, the institutional and academic stakeholder network that organizes the co-creation process is set up. The objectives and the focus of the policy co-creation process are determined and the stakeholders involved make agreements on how they will collaborate.

2. Engagement phase -

Involving priority groups.

In the second step, decisions with regard to the recruitment of the priority groups are taken. At the end of this phase, a preliminary action plan for the implementation of the RPM process is co-designed with all stakeholders.

3. Co-creation phase -

Running the co-creation process.

For the actual co-creation process, decisions need to be taken with regard to the type and focus of the organized meetings and to the type of interaction between the target group and institutional stakeholders. Furthermore, strategies to keep priority groups engaged and committed, and make the co-creation process as inclusive as possible need to be developed.

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

A policy co-creation process is intended to have an impact at different levels. First, it is meant to empower the groups taking part. Second, it intends to change the mind-set of the institutions that are receiving the input from the impacted stakeholders. Third, it should strive for an outcome – what we call a Reflexive Policy Agenda – that has the potential to be implemented in practice. And last but not least, it should make an effort to ensure the continuity and durability of the collaborative framework over time.

For more information about the different phases check the

[Guidebook on co-creation and Reflexive Policy Agenda.](#)

What is Reflexive Policy Making - A Checklist

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ RPM requires a longer-term involvement of the target group of policies in policy creation, implementation and evaluation, thus it covers a whole feedback loop. ✓ It is a process that fosters social innovations, combines bottom-up and top down policy making. ✓ It is multi-actors. It involves researchers, public institutions, formal and informal civil society groups. ✓ It empowers local actors with agency for change, and it shares policy ownership. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ It is not a justification for the retrenchment of public institutions in providing services. ✗ It does not substitute specific policies to address social challenges. ✗ RPM is not equal to occasional consultation with affected target groups. |
|--|--|

¹⁰ Find more information on the process followed by the four experimentations on the ground look the Reflexive Policy Agendas published for each four cities (Amsterdam, Barakaldo, Sfântu Gheorghe, Tallinn) here: UPLIFT, n.d. *Research-policy*, UPLIFT, European Union's Horizon 2020, funded under grant agreement No 870898 (website), www.uplift-youth.eu/research-policy (last access March 23, 2023).

¹¹ Hoekstra, J. and Gentili, M., 2020, *Action plans on the co-creation process: A theoretical and methodological framework*, Deliverable 4.1 UPLIFT, European Union's Horizon 2020.

3 DESIGNING THE TRAINING ON RPM

This Chapter aims to support the organization of a training on how to design and implement Reflexive Policy Making processes.

The training should have two major aims:

1. To introduce the RPM approach to local stakeholders and inform them about the different steps and actions needed;
2. To set the stage for the creation of the necessary institutional arrangement to start the Reflexive Process locally.

In order to achieve an institutional setting for policy co-creation that has an added value for both priority groups and policy-makers, several actions are necessary. Using a train the trainer approach, this chapter introduces the steps towards organizing a training for local stakeholders in any urban settings and a possible agenda for the training to prepare and inspire local, regional, and national actors to use RPM.

The proposed training sessions are not to be considered frontal and unilateral presentations of the RPM approach. The value of reflexivity for policymaking but also for a training is to be conveyed through a learn-by-doing process. Therefore, training sessions are forward-looking engagement opportunities to critically discuss the RPM process and to start adapting it to the local context. To this purpose, it is advisable to consider the following tips when designing a training session.

3.1 Framework conditions for the training

3.1.1 When?

Both, timing the date of the training and the length of the training is crucial to involve all the potential actors who would be capable to initiate, organize and participate in a Reflexive Policy Making process. It is important to take into account the availability of all actors regarding their obligations in their work-life balance.

How long the training shall be

Book between half and a whole day for the training session. Consider that there should be time to:

1. Present the RPM approach,
2. Present case studies or examples of local participatory processes for which you might want to invite external, especially local partners for this in a form of online video call or for in person discussion,
3. Discuss with stakeholders about their role in such a process and ways forward, especially with regard to potential scopes for RPMs.

Moreover, consider that training sessions are also an opportunity to expand stakeholders' networks. Thus, networking activities and breaks are important to be planned.

3.1.2 Where?

Venue

The location of the trainings should be selected in order to stimulate discussion and exchange. Rooms with movable furniture and accessible space for breaks and networking activities would be ideal. Moreover, the choice should be aware of the political meaning of some spaces and its affect in the dynamics between actors. For instance, selecting a town hall space for a preliminary meeting with priority groups could be intimidating and counterproductive to welcoming residents with limited institutional ties.

In the case of online meeting, consider using a video conference technology that allows for breakout rooms for little groups to discuss.

3.1.3 Who?

RPM aims to arrange a durable innovative institutional framework to address socio-economic inequalities that emerge as consequences of complex socio-economic dynamics. The training sessions represent a starting point to build the necessary momentum, awareness, and trust between multiple stakeholders to support the implementation of the RPM approach. The training will not include the target group of policies who are otherwise the most important stakeholders in the RPM process, but one of the goals of the training session is to identify these groups, consequently they cannot be invited prior to the training.

Box 3

Stakeholders mapping, engagement and, monitoring tool**MapStakes¹²**

MapStakes is a stakeholders mapping, engagement and monitoring tool that can be used in the course of the training. The tool aims to respond to complex challenges and facilitating a comprehensive and inclusive approach towards stakeholders engagement. It consists of five different phases.

1. Defining system boundaries

The first phase sees the users engaged in the understanding and the definition of the context and the environment they are working in. This means to understand the jurisdictional, institutional, spatial and sectoral boundaries of the system.

2. Identifying Stakeholders

During this phase, it is crucial to understand the different roles of the actors in the system and their relevance for the co-creation process that will ideally be established. In order to go beyond the involvement of usual participants, it could be relevant to implement alternative methods (e.g. snowball sampling or document review) and to engage in the identification of individuals with the different organizations that might be more open to collaboration and co-operation.

3. Mapping Stakeholders

The selection criteria for the mapping of the stakeholders and priority groups to be involved in the co-creation process, should be:

- the extent to which they are affected by the problems and the solutions;
- the extent to which they can influence the problems and the solutions;

4. Involving Stakeholders

At this stage, the users are asked to reflect on the expected level of engagement from each stakeholder or group of stakeholders. This is an ongoing phase, the level of engagement and commitment expected or required can vary based on the different stages of the co-creation process.¹³

5. Monitoring Involvement

Co-creation is often a resources intensive and challenging process. For this reason, the motivation and effort of the stakeholders might decrease through the process. A set of criteria- relevance, inclusion, learning, effectiveness, and credibility- can play a crucial role in motivating and monitoring the experience of participants to the co-creation process.

Get inspired by these additional stakeholder mapping practical tools:

- **Sociogram**. A sociogram allows you to design a chart representing the intensity and quality of social relationships between actors of a social setup.
- **Stakeholder Analysis Template** and **Stakeholders Map Template**. Together, these online graphic tools allow you to depict social relations between actors and to identify their interests, resources, and policy agency.

¹² Barquet, K., Segnestam, L., & Dickin, S., 2022, *MapStakes: a tool for mapping, involving and monitoring stakeholders in co-creation processes*, Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), Stockholm.

¹³ Ensor, J., & Harvey, B., 2015, Social learning and climate change adaptation: Evidence for international development practice. *WIREs Climate Change*, 6(5), 509–522.

Networking potential

In the Agenda of the training, dedicate time for instance in coffee breaks or lunch breaks to networking. Local stakeholders from different fields, different governance levels, different organizations might not know not only each other but the exact responsibilities and daily tasks of each other. Providing space to let them communicate might enhance cooperations between organizations.

Gender mainstreaming

Following the principles of Gender Mainstreaming and the Gender Impact Assessment, the engagement needs to reflect gender and minority ethnic issues in their objectives, in the composition of the stakeholders involved, in the day-to-day interaction between these stakeholders, in the policy co-creation process and outcomes (conceptualisation of gender specific solutions) and, last but not least, in the language that is used throughout the process. Despite the difficulties, it

is important to start considering gender mainstreaming also in the organization of training sessions. How to integrate gender mainstreaming in your process? Check this out: [Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit](#).

3.1.4 How?

Engagement in person

Plan icebreaking activities and breaks within the agenda, and organized networking and feedback moments. It is important to design training sessions that can motivate and stimulate participants.

In order to make discussions interactive, several methods can be used such as the Open Fishbowl method, where people constantly change between listener and speaker, or the World café, where discussions in small groups are combined with plenary discussion. The box below list some examples you can get inspiration from (Box 4).

Box 4

Methods and activities for stakeholders engagement in trainings

You can also check these further ideas:

- **Empathy Map**: a collaborative representation of a user's particular needs, behaviours and attitudes. It can help in assuming another person's perspective, alongside personal goals and challenges.
- **Peel the Onion**: the tool helps in identifying a person's positions, interests and needs.
- **Open Fish Bowl**: the tool helps in one-conversation on controversial topics and for users to share their expertise.
- **World Café**: methodology ideal for hosting small groups discussions about different topics and through different rounds.
- **Democracy Fitness**: a 30 minutes exercise to strengthen users' democracy muscles, such as disagreement, active listening, empathy and compromising.

When the training is online, to make the session more engaging, consider using the following tools:

- **Mirò** allows for the co-creation of canvas, and working sessions in pre-organized template.
- **Mentimeter** integrates slides presentation and surveys or poll.
- **Slide** allows moderator to launch live polls, Q&A, quizzes and word clouds.

Organise a training – A Checklist

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Objectives of the training as well as expectations of participants are transparent. ✓ The training is organised to stimulate knowledge transfer, networking and co-creation of solutions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ The training sessions do not reproduce patterns of exclusion in the deliberative process specifically in terms of gender, ethnicity and socio-economic inequalities. ✗ The training does not become a frontal presentation of the RPM approach. |
|--|--|

3.2 Potential agenda for the training

In this chapter we describe a potential agenda for an approximately one-day long training session guiding you through the most important steps of the process. The order of points and the proposed steps to address can vary according to the need, according to the openness and the experiences on participatory policy making processes of the participants.

The final result of the training should be an Action Plan on the potential Reflexive Policy Making process. All the activities of the training aim to empower the participants to be able to initiate and implement an RPM: at the end of the training all actors should agree on the scope, the focus, and the expectations of the RPM process. As discussed before, transparency over responsibilities as well as trust among stakeholders are key elements for the success of co-creation processes implementation. The Action Plan developed finally should include the following key elements:

- Defining problems, objective and expected outcomes of a potential RPM
- Set up an initiation team: how to invite members, how to set the roles
- Involving stakeholders to a stakeholder group
- Methods for co-creation
- Sustainability, institutionalization of the process including evaluation
- Financial matters and time frames

3.2.1 Problem definition, objectives and expected outcome

All stakeholders in the training should agree on the topic for a potential RPM. To this purpose, a map of multi-level policies or services and of the institutional structure can help. When defined the topic, stakeholders will agree on the expected outcome from the co-creation process. Clearly, the framing of the goals of policy co-creation can vary according to the actors' position. To avoid conflicts, objectives can be divided in:

- Societal objectives,
- Institutional objectives
- Policy oriented objectives
- Academic objectives

Topics to address in the training

- Define the frames: the intention is to set viable goals without the ambition to change the existing system.
- Inventory of topics – ideas from previous research endeavours and results.

Tip: choose one topic within the training, this will help going through the next steps with a clear goal in mind.

3.2.2 Initiation team: how to invite members, how to set the roles

It is important to first map and include those organizations who would take the leading roles of a co-creation process. Then responsibilities of the RPM process need to be shared and agreed prior to kicking off the process. For further details see the Guidebook Chapter 5.1.¹⁴

Topics to address in the training

- Which local stakeholders e.g. local administrators, research institutes, service providers or community organizations should be among the organizers?
- What roles and responsibilities e.g. research, implementations are needed to be taken care of?
- Which organizations will take the different roles?
- What skills are needed for facilitating and moderating the whole process?

¹⁴ Gentili, M., Hoekstra, J., 2023, *Guidebook on co-creation and reflexive policy making*, Deliverable 4.8, UPLIFT, European Union's Horizon 2020, funded under grant agreement No 870898.

3.2.3 Involving external stakeholders to the institutional stakeholder group

The goal of RPM is to broaden the policy subsystem and to welcome too often excluded communities or socio-economic groups with the aim to inform the policy process. To be able to optimally fulfil this role, it is essential that principles of diversity are respected in mapping possible participants. Moreover, it is of crucial importance that implementers are sensitive to differences within stakeholders and priority groups, with regard to gender, ethnicity or religious background. It is extremely relevant to assess in advance how marginalization factors and intersectionality aspects could influence both the process and the outcomes of the co-creation process.

Unfortunately, a balanced composition of the targeted group does not automatically translate into inclusive and equal processes and solutions. Additional efforts are needed from the process planning and facilitation side to enhance power balance while acknowledging the roles of different actors in the process. Also, in the day-to-day interaction between stakeholders it is necessary to be sensitive to the different marginalization factors and their intersectionality, facilitating representation and participation and choosing correct and adequate terminologies.

RPM operates on the grounds of clarity and trust. It is important in the beginning to be clear and explicit about

the reasons why involving all actors within the process. The box below investigates different roles and objectives of multiple actors participating in a RPM (Box 5). It can be used by the trainer both to better frame a convincing first contact with stakeholders and later to discuss with them their expectations in terms of efforts and return.

Topics to address in the training

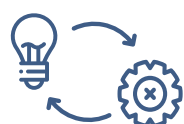
- Clarifying expectations of participating stakeholders.
- Definition of topic dependent composition of involved stakeholders from all governance layers and complementary responsibility positions.
- Mobilization of stakeholders: defining the added value of reflexive policy making, how does it serve the institutions (responsibilities, efficiency).
- Navigate through conflicts of interest, facilitating counteracting interests towards cooperation.



Box 5

Actors' potential role and objectives

Local political representatives. Local institutions with the power to pursue policy change are necessary partners in order for the process to be effective in the creation of realistic outcomes. There is a mutually beneficial relationship between RPM and the local political leadership. While the political system benefits in terms of legitimacy, accountability and institutional trust, RPM needs sound political support to be effective and to meaningfully empower new actors in the agenda setting.



Public institutions, authorities administrative representative. RPM deeply investigates the delivery of services and the implementation of thematic policies. Therefore, it implies the engagement of practitioners who have the experience to navigate technical issues and solutions. As a result, service providers and implementers will gain bottom-up knowledge to design more effective tailored-made territorial solutions.



Knowledge institutions - Universities and Research Institutions. RPM is an iterative learning process. Researchers are key participants as brokers of knowledge between stakeholders. Moreover, as third parties within the policymaking processes, they often took the moderation role. Research oriented partners usually have an interest in the approach itself, and are mostly invested in completing the process in an ethically responsible way, whatever the outcome. Furthermore, among the academic aims there was also the production of local knowledge with regard to the chosen policy field and specific focus of the process.



Civil society organizations. RPM empowers priority target groups, formal civil society organisations, and informal groups to be active agents in the policymaking process. While through RPM NGOs institutionalize their position within the policy feedback loop mechanisms, they cover a key role as gatekeepers and mediators between institutional actors and targeted priority groups. In the implementation of UPLIFT experimentations, they were fundamental to secure and maintain contact with young people (or any other target group), and to establish a relationship of trust.



Individuals from related interest-groups. By joining a RPM process, individuals are empowered to voice their problems to local institutions and have a chance to influence local policies that affect them. Moreover, through the process they enhance their capabilities and their networking skills. Nonetheless, co-creation is a long process that requires a substantial commitment in terms of time and effort.

3.2.4 Involving the target group

In recruiting target groups, the role of gatekeeper organizations is tremendously important. These are people or organizations or community groups and NGOs – that already operate on the ground and have an existing relationship with the target group based on the provision of support, information, or services. Without gatekeepers, it is hard for institutions and research groups to reach often excluded group). As such, it is very important to choose gatekeepers carefully, as they usually provide access to specific groups of young people, depending on the focus of their activities. For further details see Chapter 6 of the [Guidebook](#).¹⁵

Topics to address in the training

- How to recruit the target group: definition of potential gatekeeper organizations.
- Designing the composition of the Board (how many young people you would like to involve and what 'quotas' to use) to represent the priority group.
- Defining the ways of mobilization of target group.
- Predicting challenges: how to involve vulnerable groups.

3.2.5 Methods for co-creation

In this section, partners operationalize the agreed level of participation of priority groups in the co-creation process. It is important that they agree on:

- Efficient communication methods that answer the question of how stakeholders will communicate among each other. In the UPLIFT four implementation locations different methods were identified ranging from a common chat, the composition of a representative steering group, etc.
- The institutional rules governing the innovative governance structure. For instance, in the UPLIFT four implementation locations partners agreed on building a youth board.

- All stakeholders should agree on the actions and a timeline to achieve the expected outcomes. At this point, it is important to plan how knowledge is co-created and installed into the institutional feedback loop mechanism.

For instance, in the UPLIFT project, partners in the four locations in which RPM was tested used an Action Plan in order to clearly outline the strategy, the actions and the partners' responsibilities for the co-creation process. Moreover, the Action Plans also outlined a timeline and a plan to manage the whole process. These were living documents that were updated while the activities progressed: while the initial objectives remained the same, the strategies to achieve them, the timelines as well as some key actions or events could change to better adapt to evolving circumstances. In addition to that, UPLIFT's experimentation locations, actors designed a capacity building process parallel to the co-creation one.

After all, reflexive policy making is a process and, by definition, it has to be able to face change. Box 6 shows two different methodologies that might be helpful for implementers of the RPM process.

Box 6

Methods for action-plans co-creation

Do you need inspirations and examples of exercises to ease the co-creation process? Check these out!

- **Tomorrow's Narrative:** is an envisioning technique that based on the idea of writing fictional articles simulating an ideal situation (e.g., equitable conditions in housing, employment and education of youngsters). Brainstorming different ideas with the different priority groups included in the co-creation process might help in the development of a common vision.
- **Interactive Backcasting:** is an envisioning technique where users are challenged to think backwards from a desirable future scenario and map possible actions that foster the achievement of the goal.

For further information and more insights about the process, check out [chapter 7 of the Guidebook](#).

¹⁵ Gentili, M., Hoekstra, J., 2023, *Guidebook on co-creation and reflexive policy making*, Deliverable 4.8, UPLIFT, European Union's Horizon 2020, funded under grant agreement No 870898.

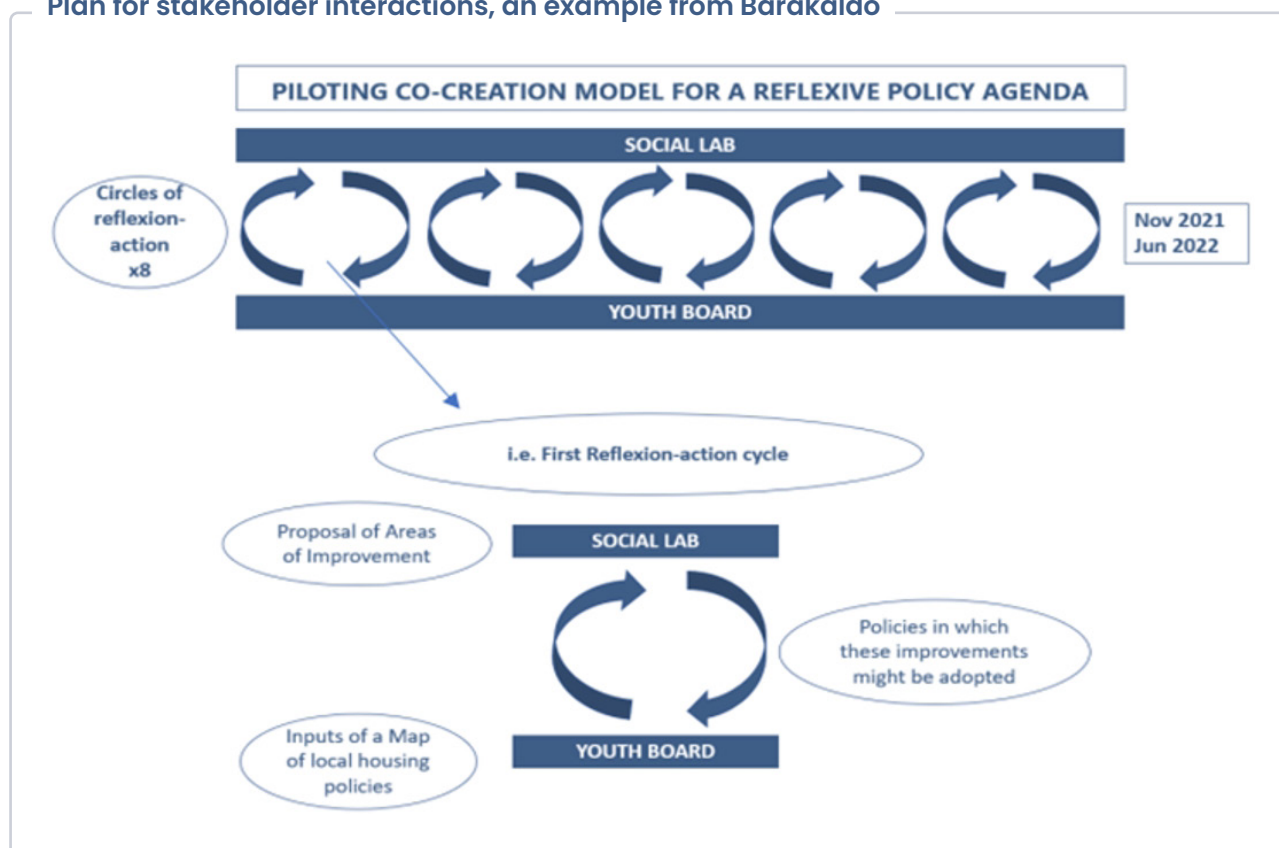
Box 7

Continuous knowledge exchange, examples from Barakaldo and Amsterdam

RPM is an opportunity for all involved stakeholders to build their capacities. To facilitate the emersion of bottom-up knowledge, it is important to coordinate capacity building strategies with key milestones of the co-creation process. In the four UPLIFT experimentations, the strategy for a capacity building process was presented in the first iteration of the Action Plan.¹⁶

The implementation of RPM in Barakaldo was anticipated by a careful design phase of the interaction and the knowledge transfer between stakeholders. Implementers decided to structure what they called “Social Lab”, a board that gathered institutional stakeholders, to facilitate the communication and interaction with the youth board, the governance tool used by all experimentation locations to institutionalise youth participation. A step-by-step cyclical model was designed to exchange information and check the advancement of the RPM process between the two institutional bodies (Figure 2).

Figure 2

Plan for stakeholder interactions, an example from Barakaldo

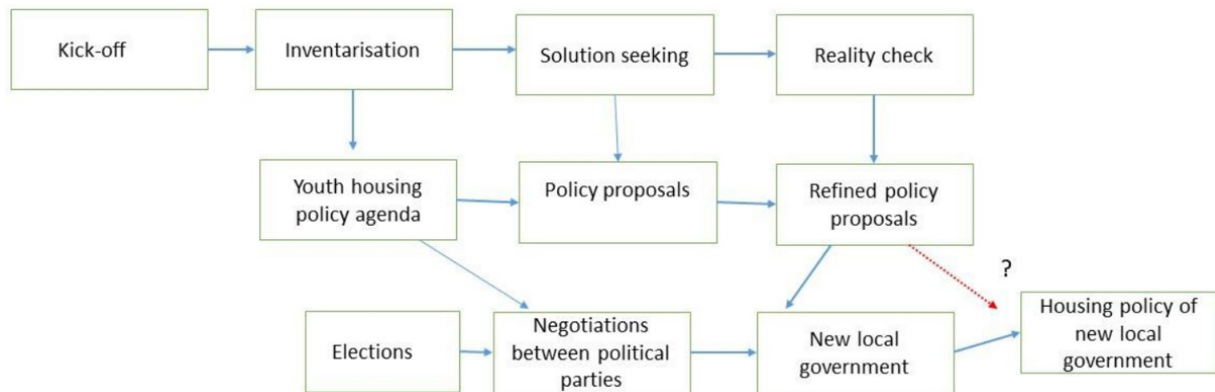
Amsterdam

The first Action Plan in Amsterdam envisioned three different stages or “sprints”. “The sprints start with a problem inventory phase, followed by a solution oriented phase. In the final phase, the solutions that the Youth Board proposes are discussed with relevant policy makers and options for policy implementation are being explored”.

¹⁶ Hoekstra, J. and Gentili, M., 2021, *Updated Action Plans for the co-creation process Looking back and looking forward*, Deliverable 4.2 UPLIFT, European Union's Horizon 2020 - grant agreement No 870898.

The first phase, or “inventory phase” allowed for the planning of educational activities. Stakeholders took the opportunity to gain knowledge about the discussed topic and about experiences of peers. The second phase was planned to be the “co-creation phase”. During this phase, Youth Board together with institutional stakeholders were asked to develop a new housing concept. Eventually, during the third sprint, stakeholders were involved in the discussion of more strategic and functional solutions starting from the collectively developed new housing concept (Figure 3).

Figure 3
Co-creation process in Amsterdam



Action-Plan Co-creation – A Checklist

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The co-creation process allows for negotiations and iterative communication among the different stakeholders. ✓ Stakeholders are engaged in the development of a common vision. ✓ The Action-Plan includes manageable and achievable co-developed actions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ The co-creation process is not a one-time event. ✗ The Action Plan cannot promise unmanageable actions and unreachable goals. |
|--|--|

Topics to address in the training

- Methods: how groups will work separately and together.
- How young people have to be empowered before having common sessions with institutional stakeholders?
- How to ensure power balanced, equalized, cooperating discussions between participating stakeholders and young people.

3.2.6 Sustainability, institutionalization of the process including evaluation

Continuous evaluation of the process by all participants highly contributes to understanding how efficiently the RPM is implemented and what are the main challenges of the process, which require to change the process to reach to better results. This evaluation also helps to find how such a pilot RPM can be locally implemented: on what level, on what topics, how is it possible to have a stable Youth Board in policy making. What role such a board can fill in on a longer term? Addressing these questions especially before kicking off an RPM can prepare the local administration or the potential organizations the help with whom local policy making practice could be reformed towards a Reflexive Policy Making way.

Topics to address in the training

- Defining potential ways of institutionalization of the Board in the local, regional or national context.
- Defining potential ways to institutionalize the policy making process in the local regional or national context.

3.2.7 Financial and time frames

Setting the frame is obviously the most important step before initiating a process. Discover what the costs of an RPM are and map the potential resources from international, national, regional and local level possibilities.

Regarding the time frame of an RPM, it depends on several factors such as:

- The depth of involvement of target groups and stakeholders: in which phases do you consider involving them?
- The vulnerability level of the target group (how much empowerment they need),
- Consider how much time is needed for preparation: enhancing creativity, group cohesion, capacity building and commitment for the whole project,
- What is the method of co-creation, how many policy/product goals are there? How many times and how often groups will meet?

Topics to address in the training

- Discover what resources are available on a local, regional, national and EU level?
- Speculate on what is a viable timeframe of a Reflexive Policy Making process taking into account the cyclical nature of welfare policies and local and national political regimes?
- Count what are the costs of such a process e.g. paying for the involved organizer institutions, facilitators and organizations, paying for fees for venues, and catering, implementation of the potential product of the RPM.



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