



Neighbourhood Plans in Reykjavik

**Citizen engagement till now
– and the way ahead**

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Summary

The following summarizes the main points of the report divided into three main sections, i.e.: An evaluation of citizen involvement till now, a theoretical perspective on Neighbourhood Plans and some advice on approaches and methods to develop and strengthen future involvement.

- **The evaluation** based on nine qualitative interviews: Citizen involvement in the Reykjavik neighbourhood is overall considered innovative, ambitious and thorough.
- Successful elements and methods are: The Planning for Real (PFR) method that has given voice to more citizens and created a less formal and less conflictual dialogue than traditional meetings. Other successful elements have been the collaboration with the local schools, which is also considered quite demanding. The age-segmented focus groups are considered to strengthen the legitimacy of the process by involving more differentiated groups than the meetings. Finally, outreach activities and visual presentation such as models and exhibitions are considered valuable.
- Weak points in the citizen engagement process are: Underrepresentation of some groups, particularly younger citizens, those with minority background and socially marginalized and 'vulnerable' citizens. Also, the 'conservatism' and conflict-avoiding approach in the dialogue is seen as a weak point as is the fact that citizen involvement has not been continuous but based on a few meetings. Finally, an organizational challenge in terms of internal coordination and collaboration is pinpointed.
- Ideas and advice from respondents include using a multiplicity of channels, including digital dialogue to achieve greater diversity in citizen participation. Strengthening the collaboration with schools and developing more initiatives for community building and collaboration. And finally, strengthening the internal coordination and collaboration across departments in the municipality of Reykjavik.
- **The theoretical perspective** presents two different approaches to Neighbourhood Planning, i.e. a traditional citizen involvement approach and co-productive approach. It concludes that the Neighbourhood Plans combine

elements from both mindsets. And asks how it will be possible to strengthen citizen involvement by drawing on inspiration from a co-productive mindset.

- **Advice on strengthening the involvement** of citizens and stakeholders in the Neighbourhood Plans focusses on two key ambitions: 1. Methods for including more voices: Local presence and outreach activities, applying methods from anthropology and design and community building through social and cultural activities. 2. Methods to strengthen collaboration and build social capital: Using temporality and pop-up activities, establishing working groups, facilitating collaboration and spanning boundaries and finally facilitating diversity and coping with conflicts.

Introduction

The purpose of this report is twofold: On the one hand to analyse the citizen methods of citizen involvement used in the Reykjavik Neighbourhood Planning initiative until now. And on the other hand, to give advice on how to strengthen and develop citizen involvement – based on theoretical and methodological reflections. The report is structured as follows:

Section 1 contains an evaluation of the citizen engagement process up until now based on nine interviews with representatives from key actors, i.e. employees from the planning department, external consultants and active citizens from the relevant district councils. It analyses the strengths and weaknesses of the citizen engagement process and sums up the respondents' suggestions and ideas for strengthening citizen engagement.

Section 2 offers a theoretical perspective on the Neighbourhood Plans in terms of citizen engagement and co-production. The section presents two ideal typical mindsets of planning, i.e. a traditional mindset and a co-productive mindset and elaborates on the different ambitions and roles inherent in the approaches.

Section 3 offers advice on the way ahead in citizen involvement. Based on the analysis and theoretical perspective in the previous sections, it describes a range of methods that may contribute to two central ambitions, i.e. including more voices and strengthening collaboration and building social capital in the neighbourhoods.

The analysis focusses on the citizen involvement aspects of the Neighbourhood Plans, i.e. Citizen participation and the dialogue between the municipality and the citizens/stakeholders. Other aspects such as the design of the final Neighbourhood Plans – and the political aspects in terms of the political discussions and decisions have not been an issue in this analysis.

1. Citizen engagement till now: Strengths and weaknesses

The following evaluation of the citizen engagement initiatives in developing the Neighbourhood Plans is based on a total of nine semi-structured qualitative interviews conducted by phone/skype. The interviews have been conducted in Danish or English – and have all been translated into English for the purpose of this report. The interviews are anonymized and include the following respondents (list of interviewees attached as appendix):

- Five employees from the planning department of Reykjavik Municipality (Employee A, B, C, D, E)
- Two external consultants (Consultant A, B)
- Two citizens - members of district councils (District Council A, B)

The evaluation will answer the following question: What have been the strengths and weaknesses of the citizen engagement process up until now? It will conclude by summarizing the respondents' advice for strengthening engagement and participation in the Neighbourhood Plan process.

Overall, the citizen engagement process concerning Neighbourhood Plans is highlighted by the respondents as innovative and clearly more ambitious and thorough than traditional planning processes in the municipality of Reykjavik. Several interviewees point to the citizen engagement overall as characterized by innovative mobilization and communication that generally succeeded in making the participants feel listened to.

"I can tell you, that Ævar and his crew were very engaged in collaborating with the community. ..They made a big effort to hear everybody – it was exceptional how they

presented it verbally and visually - people still remember the participation” (District council A)

Also, the process is praised for giving the planners nuanced and thorough knowledge on the citizens’ use, need and preferences concerning their neighbourhood:

“ ..you sense what the inhabitants really appreciate – and it was positive to also hear from those that are conservative (concerning change), because they like the area as it is...I find it beautiful – to get people in a positive way to talk about what they appreciate in the area and what should be changed. I am used to the citizens being conservative, so I was surprised that some of them were open to changes” (Employee C)

In the following we will look closer at the elements and methods stressed as successful and those described as weaker or less successful.

Successful elements and methods

In the following we will focus on the elements that are seen as successful in the citizen involvement process.

The PFR method makes more voices heard

The Planning for Real (PFR) method, which is based on visualization and hands-on experience through model-building, has made a positive difference in the citizen engagement process. The ‘common third’ constituted by the model is highlighted by several interviewees for a positive effect on the citizen-dialogue in terms of broader mobilization of citizens and a tactile and simple way of communicating, that has a broad appeal. Finally, the discussion around the models and the method of collecting ideas and viewpoints through ‘notes’ is seen as a way of reducing possible conflicts and tensions among citizen groups.

The interviewees underline the following advantages of this method:

- Gives a voice to a broad range of citizens: The model is seen as having a great significance for the citizen’s understanding of the themes and plans at question. It helps make the plan tangible, thereby opening the dialogue for citizens who are less educated or literate. At the same time, it gives the children an opportunity for having a say on their neighbourhood

- Less conflict, more ideas: Choosing the local school as a venue and conducting the meeting as a brainstorm is seen as helpful in creating a less formal and less conflictual discussion than traditional planning meetings. Again, the result is more voices and more ideas

"This enabled more people to voice their opinion, because you did not have to do it publicly by standing up and speaking in a crowd – you could just put down a note. This way we got more ideas from more people. As opposed to traditional meetings where you always hear from the same 3-4 opinionated people" (Employee E)

"I think it is important that the kids are building (the models) – they talk to the parents about it. That creates a more positive approach – and you end up discussing in a context, that is very different from the traditional confrontation" (Employee A)

"The participation format is particularly suited to those who do not feel comfortable in traditional citizens meetings. The format leaves them time to figure it out. The tickets that we used – it is the interaction – and the setting, which is open and accessible – you can walk in and out and choose to engage if you want to" (Employee D)

"The participation through the schools has been crucial..it was really important for the involvement. In general, it can be difficult for people to participate as we tend to lack the time – here you could just show up, write down something really simple, and stick it on. People still remember this" (District Council A)

Several interviewees stress that the PFR methods were received very positively – and with some surprise – by the majority of citizens, who tend to remember the meetings in the schools even after a long time. Also, it made the citizens feel genuinely listened to:

"I think most people appreciated this method of consultation... and were happy with it - it gave them a feeling that someone wanted to hear what they had to say" (Employee E)

One of the external consultants describes the PFR process as time-consuming and thus costly – but also worth the expenses. According to this interviewee:

"The process has been very thorough and good, but maybe a bit time-costly for us as consultants, as we had to be there every time participation was going on. It has been expensive for Reykjavik holding long meetings in the evenings – but overall, it has improved the quality of the decisions. So, it has totally been worth it" (Consultant B)

Collaboration with the schools: Satisfying and challenging

An important element in the PFR process has consisted in collaborating with the local teachers and schools on educating the children on Neighbourhood Planning and making them build a model of the local area. The employees involved in the collaborations had different experiences. One found the collaboration smooth and satisfying, while others also had some satisfying experiences, but at the same time met some challenges in terms of teachers who were not ready to take responsibility for the collaboration and for guiding the children in the process:

"There were big differences in the collaboration with the schools. In one school the teachers just left me alone with the kids... in another each teacher just followed the class, meaning there was no one there with an overview – and I had to introduce each teacher to the project again and again.." (Employee B)

".. I realized that being a teacher is really difficult – gave me a whole new appreciation. It is mentally draining being in the classroom – very challenging because the kids being very energetic – demand a lot of you, ask questions, have no filter. It was unexpectedly difficult and challenging... the teachers are so important in this.." (Employee D)

The last paragraph will present the respondents' suggestions for 'streamlining' the collaboration with the schools.

Age-segmented focus-groups strengthens legitimacy

Other elements that are highlighted as strengths in the citizen engagement process are the age-segmented focus-groups with a random sample of citizens conducted by Gallup. The statements made by these groups are considered to hold a strong legitimacy. For example, the focus-group discussions are considered suitable for showing the different viewpoints and needs of different age-groups in the neighbourhood. While it was mostly elderly citizens being mobilized for the regular public meetings, the focus groups included more differentiated age groups and thus are seen as giving a more nuanced picture:

“During public meetings you rarely saw conflicts between groups in front of you... it was mostly through the format of Gallup Forum samples with different age groups that you noticed conflicts between groups – young people were open to changes, while the older citizens tended to be more conservative in all of these subjects”
(Employee D)

Likewise, a more or less unanimous message from the citizens across different focus groups on the issue of traffic (establishing a road underground) in one of the neighbourhoods gained a strong legitimacy:

“The meetings had an influence because you were getting peoples voices so clear – a big street that divides our area in two parts should be put in a tunnel underground. It became so clear from the focus groups. Even if different scenarios were explained, still people wanted the traffic underground – it was very clear (District Council A)

So, all in all, the focus groups are seen to play an important role for a broad mobilization of citizens and thus for the legitimacy of the citizen engagement process.

Getting in contact through outreach and visualization

Other aspects of the citizen engagement process mentioned as successful, are different kinds of outreach activities used in the process, i.e. dialogues with members of the district councils as well as presence in places, where people meet such as shopping centres and libraries.

Based on general experience one of the interviewees stresses outreach activities as central for getting in contact with other groups of citizens than ‘the usual suspects’, particularly those who are marginalized socially or ethnically:

“What works is reaching out and showing interest...In (another context) I chose to visit the mosque and talked to 60 men there. A woman colleague of mine showed up on a Saturday to have coffee and talk with the women... You must listen and follow through – try to do something about it..” (District Council B)

Yet another method underlined as successful by several interviewees was communicating the plan through a range of visual means such as posters, timelines etc. The combination of outreach and setting up an exhibition in the library worked really well:

“When the project was ready, it was advertised in the local library. We spend money to create a flashy show – that was very successful. I spent a lot of time in the library with good material – that really helps the participation part – the planning book, the guidelines, the planning portal, posters – it was a proper exhibition..” (Employee D)

Weak points in the citizen engagement process

In spite of the citizen engagement process being overall described as ambitious and thorough, a range of weak points were outlined by the interviewees.

Underrepresentation of some groups

Most importantly, many interviewees question the representativeness of the voices heard in the process. They point to the fact that several groups are lacking a voice in the meetings, i.e. younger citizens (under 50), citizens with minority background, socially marginalized citizens, handicapped people etc.

“We may have involved more than usually by making them participate in the schools. But as always most of those who attended were 60 plus. They are always numerous, because they have the time and the energy to attend citizen meetings” (Employee A)

There were variations between the neighbourhood, but the overall picture was that these groups of citizens did either not show up for meetings – or were dominated by the loud voices of the elderly citizens. In one neighbourhood the timing of the meeting was a challenge:

“My impression was that very few very loud voices with a lot of power were heard. They belonged to the older group – neighbours complaining about ideas next to their house – not interested in looking at the whole of the neighbourhood. ...we hoped that children with their parents would show up - did not show up in the amount hoped for. Public meetings placed in the beginning of the summer – people had other plans (Consultant A)

One respondent finds it a shame that the voice of the younger segment of citizens, i.e. those between 20 and 45 years, were absent in the meetings, as they were the ones who mostly needed the neighbourhood to change. He argues, that more young voiced might have given the planners a fuller and more balanced picture of the different needs and views in the neighbourhood:

"It turned out as a typical Not in My Backyard-discussion with residents not happy with some of the changes that were proposed....This, I think, could have been balanced by hearing other voices. It should have been more online based – then it would probably have been easier to involve younger people" (Consultant A)

The underrepresentation of some citizen groups clearly challenges the legitimacy of the Neighbourhood Planning output:

"..you could see through the process that it was mainly the same people who came – mostly people of the age of 45 to 65 – sometimes also with children – after work. I think there are people who are the loudest. And you also note that when talking with the district committee, the majority of the people there were elderly men – they were only talking about traffic and parking spots" (Consultant B)

Several respondents call for more reach-out activities and active involvement of underrepresented groups such as the younger segments, citizens of foreign ethnicity etc. The respondents' suggestions on this theme will be presented in the last paragraph.

A conservative approach to planning

Several respondents point to the fact that the citizen involvement process seems to have lead to less radical changes in the neighbourhoods than initially envisioned by the planning professionals. This is seen as due on the one hand to the 'conservatism' of the citizens participating in the dialogue. And on the other hand, to the politicians wishing a 'smooth process' and avoiding possible conflicts.

Several respondents problematize this from a professional point of view pointing to a need for a bolder approach on the part of the municipality to ensure the necessary local development – and a need to handle possible conflicts:

"It is difficult to get started on local development. Often you meet a lot of opposition when wanting to implement change in the citizens 'own backyard'. It is a difficult tactic – and then we tend to back out – it will not hold in the long run" (Employee C)

"The politicians did not want to make difficult decisions there – as it was the first neighbourhood to be finished, they wanted a positive atmosphere around it. We had more ideas, but with those it will take a longer time to develop the area... so the decision was to have a conservative approach" (Consultant A)

One example of a conflict concerns a green plot of land where the planning department suggested to build apartment houses. Some of the local citizens got angry – and the planning department drew back the suggestion. One respondent finds this problematic, as the decisions taken in the neighbourhoods may affect planning decisions overall in the city:

“It can be dangerous to have dialogues locally – and make decisions on the basis of this dialogue, when you are supposed to be working with the city as a whole.... It means that decisions taken in the first suburban areas (that get a Neighbourhood Plan) should then trickle down on the whole of the city. This is important to be aware of – and it does not solve all the challenges in the city” (Employee C)

Collaboration – or just a meeting?

Another weak spot in the citizen engagement process stressed by some interviewees concerns keeping the dialogue running with the local citizens during a very long process. The Neighbourhood Planning process lasts several years from the first analysis is carried out until the final plan is presented.

This is pinpointed as a challenge for the citizen engagement. As a member of one of the local district council, this respondent underlines a need on the part of the citizens for not just one single meeting, but for a continuous dialogue and information through this year long process:

“..then afterwards you feel – where did the information go – and who is dealing with it? ... People lost the connection (with the planners from the municipality) It is important to inform people about what is going on – now the citizen meeting happened 2-3 years ago, and people are becoming frustrated, insecure. They have forgotten about what the meeting was and what was supposed to happen..” (District Council A)

Also, respondents among the professionals stress, that more meetings with the citizens in the process may have created a space for a dialogue with potential to solve conflicts and discuss common priorities for the neighbourhood:

“..if this was to be genuine co-production, there would be a need for more meetings and more ping-pong. That is not what we have practiced here. We had one meeting –

then presented the plan – afterwards we changed it a little and it was published”
(Employee C)

Another interviewee argues that more meetings might have made a difference in relation to the NIMBY challenge:

“...if we had time for more meetings with the public – only one big presentation – in the working phase – and then the final presentation. With more meetings and more focussed meetings with residents in smaller areas we could have gotten more results maybe. Like always it was a question of time and money”
(Consultant A)

An organizational challenge: Coordination

The last point raised by the interviewees concerns the challenge of collaboration and coordination across offices and sectors of the municipality, which is of importance in the citizen engagement process.

One of the professionals describes the challenge of internal participation and collaboration as a big task in the process:

“Keeping the people in the organisation and the politicians informed and getting the approval from them – that is a huge challenge. Elected officials put their name on this. Also, public servants from other departments such as health, utility etc. The internal participation has been very challenging – and time consuming. So, the participation is not just outwards – also inwards” (Employee D)

Another interviewee remarks, that he does not find professionals of the Municipality of Reykjavik very competent in collaborating across sectors:

“There are obstacles – we in Reykjavik Municipality are not very good at communication – it has to do with a deep cultural setting. The professionals do not see the value of designing from the point for the citizens – they need retraining”
(District Council B)

Internal coordination and streamlining across municipal sectors and initiatives is also considered important on the citizen side. An interviewee from a local neighbourhood council points to the challenge of involvement ‘overload’ seen from the perspective of the citizens:

“The city is loaded with projects and tasks – people feel they go to this meeting and put forward information – and then a few months later there will be another collection of ideas from Better Reykjavik. I don’t know if somehow the systems could talk together – and find a pathway to the people. It seems to be a problem of systems – different departments don’t talk to each other – and it is not clear in the minds of the people” (District Council B)

How to strengthen involvement: Ideas and advice

The following summarizes the ideas and advice given by the respondents for strengthening the involvement of citizens in Neighbourhood Planning.

- From the perspective of the respondents it is important to achieve greater diversity of citizens involved in the planning process – particularly with regards to younger citizens, citizens of another ethnic origin and the ‘vulnerable’ groups such as handicapped and socially marginalized groups. The respondents suggest using a multiplicity of channels, including old-fashioned leaflets and digital channels to engage the younger age groups and to collaborate with relevant civil society organizations to reach other ‘silent’ groups of citizens.
- Collaboration with the local schools may be strengthened by contacting the schools early, as they tend to operate with a long planning horizon. And also, by spending time in the initial phases, adjusting mutual expectations and clarifying the demands put on the teachers to succeed with the collaboration. One respondent suggests strengthening the educational value of the collaboration from the perspective of the schools by offering a predesigned ‘educational package’ for the schools.
- In line with this a couple of respondents underline the potential of the Neighbourhood Plans for building relations, creating mutual trust and ultimately strengthening the social capital in the neighbourhood through outreach, collaboration and temporal activities.
- Some respondents point to the internal coordination between departments of the municipality and advice to coordinate the different citizen-involvement activities better, i.e. by integrating Better Districts with the Neighbourhood Plans. Respondents also suggest training activities for employees in respecting and integrating the citizens’ perspective in planning.

- The respondents give the following suggestions for adjustments to improve the existing citizen involvement process: Divide the neighbourhood into smaller areas that the citizens can relate to. Arrange more meetings in each area to permit a continuous dialogue with the citizens. Focus on fewer potential development slots in each neighbourhood and work in depth with the possible developments and their consequences for the neighbours etc.

Now, we turn to some theoretical perspectives on Neighbourhood Plans – and how they might help in developing and strengthening the citizen involvement.

2. Neighbourhood Plans – theoretical perspectives

The aim of this report is to advise the municipality of Reykjavik on how to develop the citizen engagement process of the Neighbourhood Plans. Before turning to specific advice on methods, however, we will focus on the overall ambition of the citizen involvement process, as the methods applied should be closely linked to this ambition.

From a theoretical perspective, governance and planning initiatives like the Neighbourhood Plans in Reykjavik may be approached from two different points of view or mindsets i.e.:

- As a traditional planning initiative including a citizen engagement process. This involves engaging the local citizens in the role of consultants
- As an initiative aiming at developing social capital in the local area by co-producing changes in collaboration with the relevant local actors

The co-production approach to planning and public governance has been on the rise for some years in Western public organisations. Researchers (Nabatchi, Sancino, & Sicilia, 2017; Pestoff, 2012) view the turn towards co-production and network governance as an answer to a number of societal developments, i.e.:

- Complex societal challenges that call for collaboration across sectors
- A public sector under economic pressure, thus wanting to mobilize the resources of other actors, i.e. civil society, business actors etc.

- Declining support for political systems among citizens creating a need to build trust and give citizens an active, co-creative role in the welfare systems

Research shows, that a co-production approach to public governance and planning may create public value in terms of both democracy (trust, empowerment, social capital), efficiency (quality of welfare) and innovation (new ideas and mutual learning (Agger, Tortzen, & Rosenberg, 2018; Tortzen, 2019). It also shows that working with a co-production mindset generally is time consuming and tends to challenge the traditional roles and logics of all actors involved, including politicians (Tortzen, 2017, 2019)

Neighbourhood Plans – citizen involvement or co-production?

Whether a planning initiative such as the Neighbourhood Plans in Reykjavik is approached by the municipality from a traditional or a co-productive mindset has consequences in terms of the aim of involvement, the role of the different actors and the methods used.

The **traditional approach** to involving local citizens in planning focusses on the physical aspects such as buildings, roads and squares as well as green spaces, which is also the main subject of the mapping. The aim of involving local citizens is to listen to their needs and ideas and gain legitimacy for political decisions concerning the neighbourhood. Relevant actors are primarily the local inhabitants, and they are invited to participate in the role of consultants, i.e. communicating their views and ideas to the planners. The role of the planners is on the one hand, to act as experts on physical planning and on the other hand, to facilitate the dialogue with the citizens. Methods used are different forms of citizen dialogues and meetings.

The **co-productive approach** to planning focusses on the physical as well as the social aspects of the neighbourhood, and the mapping includes both physical and social aspects such as the culture, actors and local resources. The aim of involvement is to build social capital and empower the local actors to collaborate in developing the neighbourhood. All local resources are invited to participate, - apart from the local inhabitants also including local public institutions such as schools, kindergartens etc., businesses and civil society organizations. The local stakeholders are seen as co-producers of neighbourhood development, and the planners take a role as facilitators and boundary spanners in this multiparty collaboration process. The methods aim at

facilitating network building and collaboration through working groups, activities and temporality.

The basic differences between these two approaches to planning initiatives are illustrated in the table below.

Neighbourhood Plans – two mindsets

	Traditional citizen involvement	Co-production with stakeholders
Governance approach	Planning, project implementation	Network governance
Ambition	Physical development of neighbourhood	Physical and social development of neighbourhood
Mapping Focus	Physical – focussing on physical challenges and potentials	Physical and social – focussing on resources, culture and actors
What is the aim of involvement?	Listening to local needs and wishes: Legitimacy	Creating social capital: Empowerment
Who should be involved?	Local citizens, neighbourhood committees	All local stakeholders: Citizens, public institutions, civil society organizations etc.
Role of citizens/stakeholders	Consultants	Co-producers
Role of planners/employees	Experts and facilitator	Facilitator, boundary spanner
Methods	Dialogue: Citizen’s meetings, citizen panels, online dialogue etc.	Collaboration: Working groups, networks and activities, temporality etc.

Neighbourhood Plans – two mindsets

It is important to note, that these two mindsets are ideal types – clarifying some basic differences in approaches to planning. In practice, the Neighbourhood Plans in Reykjavik are combining elements of both these mindsets. Based on a traditional planning approach the initiative adds several elements of a co-productive mindset, i.e.:

- Mapping physical as well as social aspects of the neighbourhood such as 'community' - and focussing on the quality of life in the neighbourhood
- Collaborating with the local schools on educating children, building models and discussing the children's needs and ideas for developing their neighbourhood
- Introducing a 'common third' in the dialogue with the local citizens by using the models and other visual means as outset for discussing and generating ideas

A central question here is: How will it be possible to strengthen the Reykjavik Neighbourhood Plans by drawing inspiration from a co-production mindset? We now turn to presenting a range of specific methods that may be used in strengthening some of the weak elements of the citizen engagement process.

3. Citizen involvement in Neighbourhood Plans – the way ahead

The aim of this section is to give advice on approaches and specific methods for developing and strengthening the involvement of citizens and stakeholders in the Neighbourhood Plans.

The following advice will be divided according to two different ambitions, i.e. including more voices and strengthening collaboration and social capital. The methods described have all been applied in a Danish context, mainly in relation to development of 'vulnerable' neighbourhoods (in Danish: Områdefornyelse, kvarterløft). Links and references are provided for in depth information on the methods.

Methods for including more voices – and strengthen legitimacy

The evaluation points to a challenge concerning the representativeness of the voices heard in the citizen involvement process around the Neighbourhood Plans. Voices missing are those of the younger generations, citizens with other ethnic origin and groups of citizens that are relatively 'vulnerable' such as handicapped and socially marginalized citizens.

So, what kinds of methods may be used to include more voices and specially the voices of marginalized and vulnerable groups? Danish experiences suggest that a range of methods may be applied to include more voices:

- **Local presence and outreach activities**

Groups of 'silent' citizens who are not prone to attend citizen meetings may be contacted and asked for their opinion and needs through different kinds of outreach activities. One method is by setting up an informal mobile meeting point (i.e. in the form of a shed cart) in the neighbourhood, inviting inhabitants in for talk and coffee (Aarhus Kommune, 2018; Agger & Andersen, 2018, p. 87).

Seeking out the missing voices through individual interviews and talks is another possibility. These 'silent' voices may be integrated into the citizen meetings by for instance writing down citations to exhibit in the meetings (Agger & Andersen, 2018, p. 89). In working with complex issues, Swedish Municipalities have developed a method of gathering perspectives 360 degrees to ensure that all relevant perspectives are included (SKL, 2019).

It is important to note that the frontline people that reach out to citizens should have good communication- and social skills and not act as 'traditional experts'. Danish experiences show that making artists or anthropologists reach out and conduct interviews may be a good idea when dealing with citizens that have very little trust in public authorities (Aarhus Kommune, 2018). The initiatives conducted by the Danish artist, Kenneth Balfelt is an example of this (www.kennethbalfelt.org/).

Yet another way of getting access to 'the tacit voices' is by collaborating with key actors, such as 'gatekeepers' and representatives of relevant organizations, i.e. for homeless people, for Polish immigrants etc. The people who are in frequent contact with the 'tacit groups' may either reach out to them or be able to represent their views and needs in the dialogue (Agger & Andersen, 2018, p. 90; Agger & Hoffmann, 2008, p. 148).

- **Applying methods from anthropology and design**

Another way of getting to know more about the 'silent citizens' (and other inhabitants) and their needs and preferences is to use anthropological methods, exploring the everyday life and movements of these groups through field work, i.e. observations and on-the-spot exploration. Also, these methods can be combined with design-thinking, aiming at creating change based on deep insight into the challenges and motivations of the citizens involved. This way of working is practiced by the Danish architecture company, Gehl Architects (www.gehlpeople.com/approach/) in observing and measuring the movements of inhabitants in an area as a starting point for development. Other examples of this approach may be found in the work of Hillary Cottam (2018), using methods such as storytelling, games etc.

- **Community building through social and cultural activities**

Community building is a strategy that works well in terms of building trust and mobilizing 'vulnerable groups' of citizens to take part in developing their area. Community building activities typically focus on bringing inhabitants together around a 'common third' such as taking care of a communal garden, preparing and eating a meal together, playing a football game or going for a walk in the area to point out favourite places etc. This informal and activity-based way of being together has potential for inclusion and relations-building, which may – in the longer run - help empower and activate the 'vulnerable groups' as well as strengthening social capital in the neighbourhood (Agger & Andersen, 2018, p. 105; Agger & Hoffmann, 2008, p. 146) Also, initiatives focussing on art and culture have this potential. One example is an art-project in the 'vulnerable' neighbourhood, Værebroparken, near Copenhagen that has been supported by Realdania (see www.realdania.dk/nyheder/2018/08/statenskunstfondudsatteboligomr%C3%A5der-230818)

Methods for strengthening collaboration and building social capital

As noticed, the Neighbourhood Plan initiative combines a co-productive and a traditional planning mindset. If the ambition is to strengthen the co-production dimension of the initiative, the advice will be: Focus on collaboration and on building social capital. How may this be achieved? The following methods represent possible directions:

- **Using temporality and pop-up activities**

In line with the community building initiatives already mentioned, temporality and pop-up activities may be other productive ways of 'disturbing' and engaging local actors and making them collaborate. In physical planning, temporal activities and installations in physical space may serve as a way of experimenting with specific ideas to see how they will work out in real life. Examples from a Danish context may be found in the project from Vordingborg, 'De røde løbere', where youngsters were invited to design temporal 'furniture' for the new city center (Vordingborg Kommune, 2015). Other Danish examples include empty buildings being temporarily handed over to local citizens and civil society organizations to use for activities and community building – an example of this being a derelict factory, Polymeren (see www.polymeren.com/). More examples of temporal and pop-up activities are described in the 'Stedsans' report (Agger & Andersen, 2018, p. 92 ff).

- **Establishing working groups**

Strengthening collaboration with the local actors may also mean involving them more closely in developing specific solutions and activities. Working groups bringing different actors together working on a common task is one way to obtain this (Agger & Andersen, 2018, p. 100). To tackle power asymmetries and conflicts this kind of collaboration needs to be guided by a skilled facilitator. An example of this kind of collaboration on developing a local area, is the project named 'De røde løbere' in the municipality of Vordingborg, where a working group (Bycenterforeningen) consisting of a multitude of actors with interests in the city center worked together and agreed on a development plan for the city center (Vordingborg Kommune, 2015).

- **Facilitating collaboration and spanning boundaries**

Conducting a Neighbourhood Planning process from a co-productive mindset means taking into account not only the local inhabitants, but also other stakeholders such as public institutions, local businesses and civil society organizations. Methods that have proven effective in supporting this mindset is a mapping of 'stakeholders', 'resources' or 'networks' that provide an overview of stakeholders and their resources and activities (Center for Boligsocial Udvikling, 2017).

Working with a co-productive mindset implies that the municipality will actively take on a role as mobilizer of resources for the common good - and as facilitator of collaboration. The collaboration established with the local schools in the Neighbourhood Plans is a good example of the win-win potential in this: The schools get 'education for free' and the municipality/Neighbourhood Plan gets 'labour for free',

i.e. the model building and access to families and to an informal venue for the citizen meetings.

A similar approach may be applied to other local stakeholders through developing partnerships with local businesses, organisations etc. The important thing to keep in mind here, is that the partnership should be equal and build on a win-win approach of mutual interests. Examples from a Danish context is partnerships with local civil society organizations committing to arrange activities for the local children or with investors building new residential buildings committing to invest in green areas (Agger & Hoffmann, 2008, p. 142).

- **Facilitating diversity and coping with conflicts**

Facilitating dialog and collaboration among actors with a multitude of different viewpoints and interests calls for specialized competences and methods. Here, methods for supporting a diversity of actors in collaborating in an equal, respectful and constructive way are needed. Useful methods for this is making the participants develop common ground rules for the collaboration arena, enhancing mutual understanding by 'swapping perspectives' and applying an appreciative approach (Agger & Andersen, 2018, p. 104 ff). Other methods to support multiparty collaboration consist in process facilitation tools for getting all perspectives on the table and working with group dynamics (Tortzen, 2019, p. 184 ff).

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Appendix: List of respondents

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