

Deliverable Proof – Reports resulting from the finalisation of a project task, work package, project stage, project as a whole – EIT-BP2020

Name of KIC project the report results from that contributed to/ resulted in the deliverable	[Leuven – Deep demonstration of Healthy, Clean Cities]
Name of report	[Leuven D2 Engagement and Activation Overview]
Summary/brief description of report	This report gives an overview of engagement and activation including, but not limited to, climate in Leuven, one of the cities taking part in the Deep demonstration of Healthy, Clean Cities project.
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democratic
society



Leuven Engagement and Activation Overview

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2020



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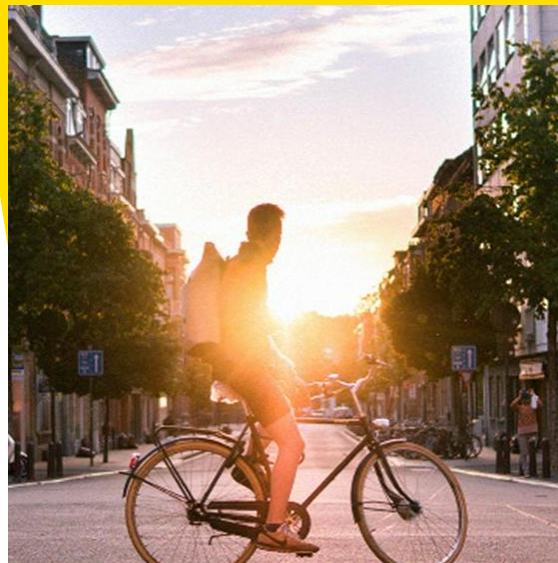
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Deliverable 2: Engagement and Activation Overview

a) About EIT Climate KIC Deep Demonstrations

EIT Climate KIC Healthy, Clean Cities Deep Demonstrations

EIT Climate-KIC is a European knowledge and innovation community, working towards a prosperous, inclusive, climate-resilient society founded on a circular, zero-carbon economy. Cities face an enormous challenge in becoming healthy places to live, while reaching net-zero emissions in a short period of time. Across the Healthy, Clean Cities Deep Demonstration, EIT Climate-KIC is working with ambitious mayors, municipalities and design partners to develop portfolios of innovations capable of unlocking transformation across city systems.



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About Democratic Society

Democratic Society works for greater participation and dialogue in democracy.

The Democratic Society AISBL (Demsoc) is an international non-profit organisation headquartered in Brussels, working across 20 European countries, with permanent staff in six countries. Since 2006, Demsoc has undertaken practical and research projects supporting more and better democracy, where people and institutions have the desire, opportunity and confidence to participate together.

We work to create opportunities for people to become involved in the decisions that affect their lives and for them to have the skills to do this effectively. We support governments, parliaments and any organisation that wants to involve citizens in decision-making to be transparent, open and welcoming of participation. We actively support spaces, places and processes to make this happen.

We achieve our aims by:

- Promoting a culture of openness and participation in public services
- Delivering practical, empowering participatory projects, products and services that enhance and support collaboration between citizens and public services
- Advocating for new and innovative methods of participation, the culture change that organisations need to make this happen and the skills citizens need to become active participants
- Promoting an evidence-based approach that demonstrates good practice, effective use and clear, strategic benefits
- Producing and publishing resources that support learning and effective participation
- Providing sectoral and thought leadership around democracy, democratic strengthening and effective participation.

Demsoc is a design partner in the EIT Climate-KIC Healthy, Clean Cities Deep Demonstrations, leading civic participation work with cities.

b) What do we mean when we say 'participation'?

Understanding participation

As Democratic Society, we ensure that people have a strong voice in shaping their clean, healthy futures, and that the choices we need to make to address the climate emergency are done with the community members' consent and support.

Participation and engagement of people are used often used interchangeably. While we acknowledge the nuances of the terms, broadly speaking we define both concepts as **the active involvement of people in decision-making processes**.

We recognize that participation context and connotations differ across countries and regions, and consequently that participatory approaches must be attentive to local context in order to become properly embed.

The spectrum of participation

The spectrum of participation highlights the different methods of participation. While the methods needed for participation activities depend on the questions at hand, existing participation activities and capabilities in cities tend to sit at the left end of the spectrum, and at project level.

Inform – Consult – Involve – Collaborate – Empower

Through experiments, we aim to shift cities' willingness and ability to deliver deeper, wider, more inclusive and ongoing participation.

Who is participating?

Often times participation is framed as citizen participation. However, who counts as a citizen is dependent on the national context and language, and needs to be considered. In some languages, the term "citizen" is associated with citizenship and voting rights and, by definition, excludes non-citizens. Resident is a person who lives and resides in a place, full- or part-time. This includes groups such as students or people who cannot vote. Our approach ensures that residents, regardless of their nationality, have a stake in their surroundings.

A democratic and inclusive approach to the climate emergency is crucial to avoid deepening of polarization, inequalities and social exclusion. Participation works to ensure that climate action improves the lives of people in Europe's increasingly unequal cities, and avoids negative ripple effects. The solutions to the climate emergency can only be sustainable if they benefit and empower communities, especially marginalised and vulnerable groups who bear the brunt of negative climate impacts.

c) Agents or objects

Democratic Society is committed to working across disciplines and sectors on our climate projects. We are also committed to valuing different types of knowledge, and shedding light on different understandings of change. In order to succeed in diversifying knowledge and contextualizing change, we start by looking at the status quo.

Oftentimes, when we say, “We do public engagement on climate action,” our listeners assume that Democratic Society administers behaviour change campaigns. What common practices and understandings underline that assumption? Economists, for instance, say change in human populations occurs by incentivizing the rational mind or nudging the subconscious one. Under these models, people are individual objects of change to be shaped and shifted into a new framework. That shaping and shifting can be facilitated by providing information, telling new stories, or changing when people make a choice and the material consequences of it. Doing *to* not doing *with*. The behaviour change assumption emerges from these common practices and understandings.

It is, of course, true that people will behave differently in the clean, healthy cities of the future. However, it could be the case that those behaviours are different due to sustainable norms and practices, and not because individuals made a choice or were nudged. We ask: what is the collective infrastructure that shapes how people move, eat, work, and live in their cities?

At Democratic Society, we see people as agents not objects of change with agency that extends well beyond their personal and consumer choices into the realm of policy and governance. Residents can use their own knowledge, lived experience, and decision-making power – as guaranteed by democratic governance structures – to shape their cities. Residents’ behaviours change because they’ve gotten together with their neighbours to design and demand cities in which everyone moves and lives in a different way. The new frameworks that are a product of democratic design will be more equitable and meet the needs of diverse groups.

1. Executive Summary

Participation in general has long been on the backburner in Leuven and it is only over the past few years that it is becoming a priority and a 'Unique Selling Proposition'. As a result, there is a lot of capacity and ambition present in parts of the city, but this capacity and ambition is not mainstreamed across the city administration. This hinders the formation of a shared understanding regarding what capacity, both in terms of people and in terms of capital, is needed to organize participation in a strategic way. Building up capacity across the city administration, as well as strategically aligning participation activities and projects will be essential if the city wants to live up to the ambition level which has been set.

When it comes to engagement around climate-related activities, Leuven 2030 has bottom-up climate initiatives at its origin and involving stakeholders in its DNA. However, when in recent years it became clear that these types of interventions were not strategic nor systemic enough to bring about the impact needed, the focus has generally shifted to working with experts for the development of a roadmap and subsequently for the creation of a portfolio of experiments within the EIT Climate KIC Deep Demonstrations project. The result has been a view on participation which focuses on creating ownership, buy-in and behavioral change with limited recognition of other benefits that citizen engagement can bring. There is also a clear tension between the need to move at pace and the need to engage the wider citizenry in the climate plans. In conclusion, although there is an awareness that this is a potential pitfall, there is not yet a clear answer on how to unify both objectives.

As a result of the above-described evolutions, although there is a strong tradition of institutional participation and a part of the citizenry which is quite enthusiastic about contributing to climate action, the reach to the wider community when it comes to engagement around climate is still limited, either due to the level at which projects are being carried out or the limited knowledge about and visibility of Leuven 2030 as an organization. The manner in which Leuven 2030 is perceived externally is also a barrier, with more tangible projects or other contacts within the city seen as easier to approach when it comes to realizing climate-related ideas.

While the various projects currently being developed provide an opportunity to put in place stronger participation structures in general and concerning climate projects in particular, attention will need to be paid to assuring capacity within the city grows at an equal pace. In addition, it will be important to pay attention to 1) learnings from ongoing and planned participation projects and 2) start building a strategic approach to participation.

Furthermore, it will be important to carefully consider governance structures and clear decision lines, both within Leuven 2030 as well as between Leuven 2030 and the city of Leuven, as the current structure at times delays the progression of the experiments being implemented. This could also help clarify the relationship between the city and Leuven 2030 to outsiders.

2. About the Diagnostic

About Healthy, Clean City (HCC) Deep Demonstrations (DD)

Each Health, Clean Cities (HCC) Deep Demonstration (DD) partner city will work with EIT Climate-KIC and design partners to develop and carry out a portfolio of strategic experiments.

Demsoc has its own process (Fig 1), aligning with the HCC Cities Flow, to work with cities to uncover their strengths in civic participation and climate action, build on these through the development of the portfolio of strategic experiments, and involve the community in carrying out and governing the experiments.

This diagnostic report is the main deliverable from the Uncover stage, where we take an appreciative inquiry approach to uncover the civic participation and climate action assets of each city, and build consensus on the city's ambition towards civic participation on climate action.

Demsoc will prepare a diagnostic report for each of the participating cities. These reports will allow us to not only see the strengths of each city, but also to give us a baseline to learn more about what works in different types of cities and contexts.

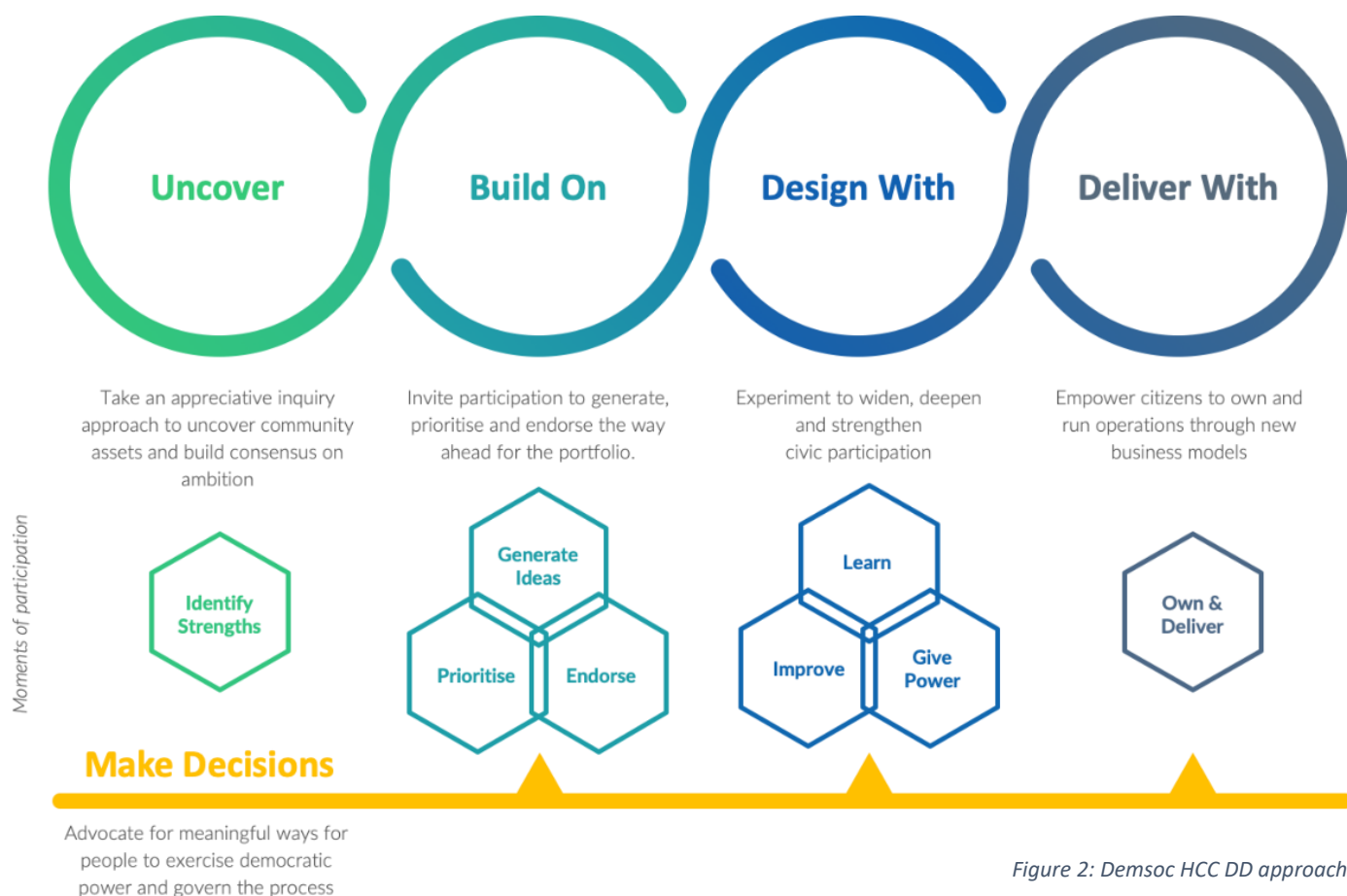


Figure 2: Demsoc HCC DD approach

What is the diagnostic?

The diagnostic is a way of understanding the current state of citizen engagement and climate action in a city, by looking at the existing range of initiatives, policies and practices. It helps us to identify the existing strengths, assets and capabilities that a city has in engaging citizens and climate action. The diagnostic is intended to be a living document that is updated as new information emerges.

The diagnostic is developed using a mixed methods approach. You can read more about the methodology on the following page.

What is the purpose of the diagnostic?

There are two important aims for the diagnostic:

1. Create a comparable overview of the 10 participating cities, allowing the identification of models and patterns for engagement and activation of communities at city level towards supporting and driving ambitious climate action goals. This will allow EIT Climate-KIC, Demsoc and other design partners to develop a common approach drawn from the learning in each city that can be replicated and scaled elsewhere on timescales that reflect the urgency of the climate challenge.
2. Allow Demsoc's Local Connector in each city, the city itself, and the wider team to develop a better understanding of local strengths and ambitions in relation to participation and climate action. This will provide a useful platform to further develop the portfolio of experiments and interventions to local needs and priorities.

The diagnostic is not intended as a definitive evaluation or audit of the activities in the city, but rather as a tool for understanding where the city is, its ambitions, and its strengths to build on to achieve them. Demsoc welcomes the opportunity to review the lessons and learnings from the diagnostic with the city to discuss how to take democratic climate action further within the city itself.

How will it be used?

- Understand where Leuven is on climate action and participation, its ambitions, and its existing strengths and assets to build on
- Identify suitable strategic experiments that align with its ambitions
- Understand Leuven's readiness and capability to conduct the portfolio of strategic experiments
- Identify the best way that design partners can support the city in the strategic experiments, including through developing new capabilities within Leuven, or providing expertise and advice.

Diagnostic methodology

We used a mixed methods approach to understand citizen participation and climate action in the city.

- We conducted desk research, including reviewing existing reports on climate action and citizen participation, as well as relevant city policies.
- We supplemented this with 16 semi-structured interviews with staff from various city departments and Leuven 2030, as well as representatives from a variety of

organizations and active citizens. We chose this sample based on relevance to research question (or 'lines of inquiry'), access and availability.

- We ran two workshops with participants from the city administration and Leuven 2030 to take stock of the current needs and opportunities for climate participation together.
- We were part of various meetings, workshops and conversations during the creation of the portfolio of experiments which contributed to our understanding of the lines of inquiry.

Limitations

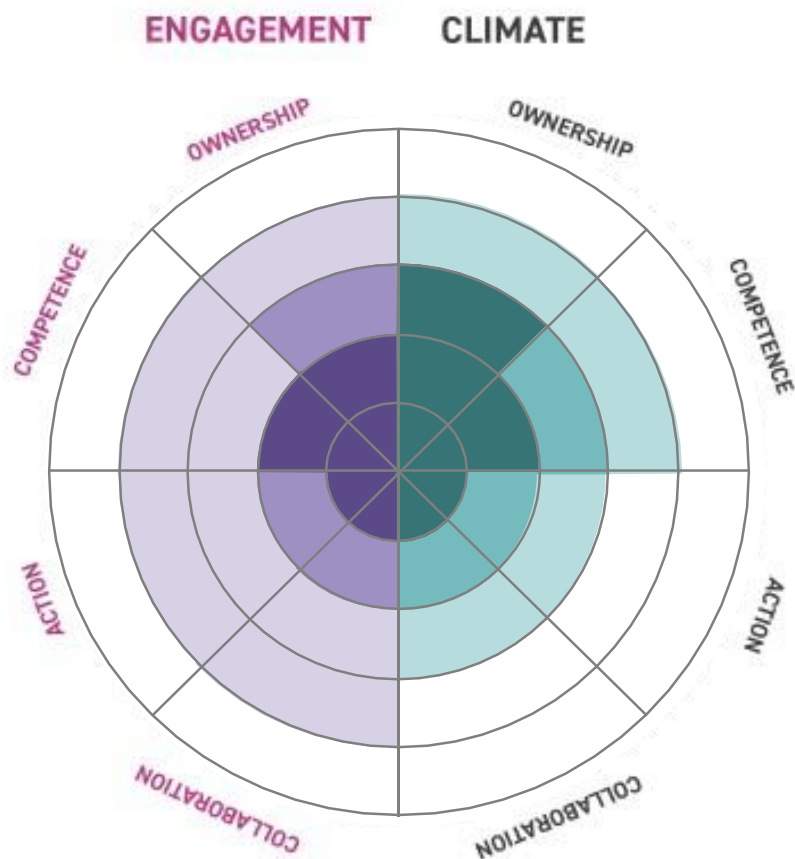
The Diagnostic should be understood as a document uncovering stories of participation and climate in Leuven, and not as a definitive evaluation or audit. This implies that it is not an exhaustive research and has limitations. Although we made a clear effort to include as many points of views as possible, a limited number of people were interviewed. The global situation regarding the Covid-19 pandemic had an impact on this research, as face-to-face meetings and conversations were not possible for most of the year.

3. Summary of Learnings

This section provides an overview of the findings from the diagnostic. The spider diagram below is accompanied with a short description on each of the engagement and climate components. It includes both a rating and a gradient. The rating ranges from 1 to 5, where 5 is state of the art and 1 is little to no evidence of competence in this element. In addition, a gradient system is used to indicate whether the rating holds true across all, some or just one area of the city. This section should be read in connection with the 'Detailed learnings' section.

We recognise that the sample of interviews is not extensive, that it is difficult to quantify these elements and that different parts of the city have different degrees of maturity in these elements. The spider diagram below is intended to give more of an indication than a quantification, and with an opportunity to differentiate between systematic, emerging, and novel practices

Spider Diagram: Leuven at a glance



Engagement	Systematic – Across city	Emerging – In some parts of city	Novel – In one part of city
Climate	Systematic – Across city	Emerging – In some parts of city	Novel – In one part of city

Description of the elements

The following table details what each element of the spider diagram means. This is followed by a brief description of the learnings and opportunities for both the topic of engagement and climate.

	Engagement	Climate
Ownership	Written commitments Political commitments Staff buy-in	Written commitments Political commitments Staff buy-in
Competence	Formal training and competence Networking and skills building Mainstreaming engagement competence	Formal training and competence Networking and skills building Mainstreaming climate competence
Action	Ongoing engagement Deliberative engagement Co-production	Climate impacts overall Climate behaviour change Climate work evaluation
Collaboration	Collaboration with stakeholders Collaboration with citizens Innovative engagement	Collaboration with business Collaboration with civil society Collaboration with citizens

Engagement

Engagement	Learnings	Opportunities
Ownership	Although engagement was not a priority for the previous government coalition, it has become a Unique Selling Proposition of the current one. As such, ownership over engagement is not yet an integral part of all city departments but it is gaining in importance.	Participation as a Unique Selling Proposition and increasingly visible participation projects are increasing awareness of the political weight given to participation, opening the door for increased ownership within the city departments. In addition, giving explicit authority, not only to city-services GGW but potentially also to other services, could create further space for participation within the city administration.
Competence	Significant competences are present within city-department GGW. Current, innovative participation projects are increasing these competences further. Capacity, however, is at times insufficiently available.	The conscious decision to avoid the creation of a participation department opens the door to ensure participation knowledge is present throughout the city and not concentrated within one city department. In order to enhance the spread of this knowledge, more strategic cooperation between department GGW and other city departments could be set up.

Action	There is strong engagement on an institutional level and citizen engagement is becoming increasingly prominent, although this change is not yet apparent to citizens.	New projects, including the Kessel-Lo Green District strategic experiment (p.24) are providing an opportunity for the city to continue growing its deliberative processes
Collaboration	Various connection channels exist between city departments, stakeholders and citizens, including projects such as Kom op voor je wijk (Stand up for your neighborhood, see p.17). Nevertheless, including hard-to-reach groups remains a challenge.	Successful collaboration structures such as 'Kom op voor je wijk' (Stand up for your neighborhood, see p.17) can be built upon for more innovative engagement practices. Experience around how to include hard to reach groups lives within certain city departments as well as with outside organizations.

Climate

Climate	Learnings	Opportunities
Ownership	In addition to political commitments, ownership lies mainly with Leuven 2030. In the city it is an important ambition, but in the city administration it is still something that stands apart. Many still see this as too much of a technical issue, while it is also a social issue. Many departments are insufficiently aware of their role in this broader picture and as such, ownership is not consistent throughout the city administration.	Continued commitments and climate action plans create the opportunity for climate action to become integral for all city departments. Involving the different departments in a meaningful way within the strategic experiments could increase ownership amongst said departments.
Competence	Climate competence is highly present within Leuven 2030 and some city department, such as the department 'sustainability'. Other departments, which work directly around climate-related topics, are increasingly gaining competence in this field as well. There do, however, remain departments where work around the topic remains limited.	With climate increasingly becoming a priority, with the international recognition of the climate actions in Leuven and with the City of Leuven and Leuven 2030 already involved in or applying to a variety of projects and bids, the pressure on the one hand and the means on the other could be creating the right circumstances to enable increased competence building.
Action	The city is increasingly committing to reducing its own climate impact. City wide actions include a wide variety of projects which have overall not yet achieved the aimed impact.	The opportunity for increased competence building described above goes hand in hand with the opportunity for increased climate action to be taken in Leuven. Climate as a priority, together with increasing

		means and support, are slowly resulting in experimental actions being taken.
Collaboration	Leuven 2030 is a membership organization with over 600 members from five different stakeholder groups. These members have different levels of engagement and questions remain regarding how to move beyond the usual suspects.	Because stakeholder participation is part of the DNA of Leuven 2030, this could be an important starting point from where to collaborate more widely with citizens and other stakeholders.

Insight 1: Ambition for carrying out innovative and experimental engagement processes present within the city, but limited due to capacity

Participation has long been on the backburner in Leuven and it is only over the past few years that it is becoming a priority and a 'Unique Selling Proposition'. As a result, the more established and most successful engagement projects are often taking place at a neighborhood level, with a more strategic approach still being developed. In addition, there is a lot of capacity and ambition present in parts of the city, but this capacity and ambition is not mainstreamed across the city administration. This hinders the formation of a shared understanding regarding what capacity, both in terms of people and in terms of capital, is needed to organize participation in a strategic way, with projects building on each other rather than being one-off or overlapping in inefficient ways. Building up capacity across the city administration, as well as strategically aligning participation activities and projects will be essential if the city wants to live up to the ambition level which has been set.

Insight 2: Balancing act between engagement around climate related topics and the need for rapid action within Leuven 2030

Leuven 2030 is a membership organization with members from five different stakeholder groups. In addition, Leuven 2030 has bottom-up climate initiatives at its origin. However, when in recent years it became clear that these types of interventions were not strategic nor systemic enough to bring about the impact needed, the focus has generally shifted to working with experts for the development of a roadmap and subsequently for the creation of a portfolio of experiments within the EIT Climate KIC Deep Demonstrations project. The result has been a view on participation which focuses on creating ownership, buy-in and behavioral change with limited recognition of other benefits that citizen engagement can bring. There is also a clear tension between the need to move at pace and the need to engage the wider citizenry in the climate plans. In conclusion, although there is an awareness that this is a potential pitfall, there is not yet a clear answer on how to unify both objectives.

Insight 3: Strong supporters of the climate work present in the city, but limited reach to the wider community

In Leuven, there is a strong tradition of institutional participation, of which both Leuven 2030 and other partnerships such as Leuven Mindgate and C-Valley (See p.22) are interesting

examples. In addition, there is a part of the citizenry which is quite enthusiastic about contributing to climate action. Despite this strong core of supporters, the reach to the wider community is still limited, either due to the level at which projects are being carried out or the limited knowledge about and visibility of Leuven 2030 as an organization. The manner in which Leuven 2030 is perceived externally is also a barrier, with more tangible projects or other contacts within the city seen as easier to approach when it comes to realizing climate-related ideas.

4. Detailed Learnings

Insight 1: ambition for carrying out innovative and experimental engagement processes present within the city, but limited due to capacity

Participation historically not a political priority

For many years, ambitious participation has not been a political priority in Leuven. Consequently, engagement remained more focused on a neighborhood level, for example engagement around the redesigning of streets and squares. This has also influenced the perception of participation within the city, which is often described as too limited with no real room for influencing decision making.



Figure 3: Kom op voor je wijk brochure © Stad Leuven

This does however, not mean that no interesting participation projects have been taking place. One interesting example,

which is generally mentioned as a positive experience by city and citizens alike, is Kom op voor je wijk. This project, which provides support for citizens to implement projects in their neighborhood, is often mentioned as providing a space for collaboration between citizens and civil servants.

Kom op voor je wijk¹

Since 2000, the city has been supporting initiatives by local residents to make the living environment more pleasant. This involves both financial support (up to €18,600) and material and logistical support (advice, technical assistance, transport, etc.). All inhabitants of Leuven can submit project proposals for both visible physical improvements and socio-cultural activities. The most important conditions are that your proposal has to meet a need in the neighborhood and that the realization strengthens living together. The project idea must be put forward by at least 12 residents and/or members of local associations. Within this structure, a variety of sustainability-related topics, for example around sharing economy, come up regularly.

KOVJW is generally a positive experience. People get the chance to do something in their neighbourhood, get financial and other support for this but it also opens doors between citizens and the administration, which opens middle space

¹ <https://www.leuven.be/komopvoorjewijk>

where citizens and civil servants can talk to each other.

Generally speaking, KOVJW has three pillars: (1) a supply section with concrete, smaller projects and ideas (book exchange, neighbourhood vegetable garden), (2) a creation section, in which people can develop an idea themselves and (3) an experiment section for projects that are more difficult to realize and that can be tried out first. Over the last five years, there has been a significant increase in projects, with increasingly complex projects being developed as well. The budget for the current legislature has been increased to a total of 2 million euros.

Shift towards participation as Unique Selling Proposition

With recent political changes, participation has become more of a priority, or even a “unique selling proposition” to make the difference with the previous coalition, evidenced by the fact that it is now a competence of the mayor. This increased political legitimacy is opening the door for increasingly ambitious projects and moving away from more traditional, plenary information events. Recently, a city-wide project called Leuven Maak het Mee was carried out. Internally, there is the impression that LMHM has a big impact on the city-organization. More thought is given to the questions of citizens because they are really working on it now. They also feel the importance the college of aldermen attaches to it. In addition, a first sortition experiment was recently carried out for the redesign of the area around the end of the Canal, partially due to the need to reach a broader portion of the citizenry. Although the participation rate in Leuven is high,

there is a large silent majority, including low-income groups, that do not participate.

Leuven Maak het Mee²

Leuven Maak Het Mee (LMHM), which loosely translates to Leuven experience it or Leuven, co-create it, was a city-wide participation project where every Leuvenaar could post ideas on a website. Over 2000 ideas were submitted. Feedback was given on all these ideas and it is estimated that just under half of the ideas will be developed. Some of these ideas will be further elaborated through co-creation, while other ideas will be included in subsequent participation projects such as the Strategic Experiment in Kessel-Lo. Overall, it remains an internal search for how to best tackle this.

Participation within the city-services

It is undeniable that the city is building its internal knowledge and capacity and this mainly within the ‘Dienst Gebiedsgerichte Werking (GGW)’, which has a territorial focus but is also often responsible for either leading or supporting participation-related projects. This is not their official responsibility, but they see it as part of their responsibility, which de facto means they are often looked at when it comes to participation. Their focus is specifically on supporting active citizenship and policy participation, both of which are picked up by their neighborhood managers.

In addition, GGW also tries to support other services when they set up participatory processes. There is a clear choice to develop the participation-expertise within all city-departments in order to have it become an integral part of the city-administration. This, however, brings about risks related to sub-optimal participation

² <https://leuvenmaakhetmee.be/nl-BE/>

projects (resulting in a loss of trust by citizens) due to limited capacity in the respective city departments as well as a risk stemming from the need for a strategic approach to participation. After all, there needs to be an alignment between departments in order to assure that citizens are approached in an efficient and coherent way. Being aware of this, internal evaluation of projects is considered essential.

Nevertheless, risks are compounded by existing barriers, including insufficient internal understanding of what is needed to organize a proper participation process. This results in a lack of the right resources and a high workload. Regardless, the strategic experiment in Kessel-Lo which has been developed as part of the EIT Climate KIC Deep Demonstrations is currently being picked up by multiple city departments, especially GGW.

Insight 2: Balancing act between engagement around climate related topics and the need for rapid action within Leuven 2030

Leuven 2030: bottom-up action at its origin

At its origin, Leuven 2030 is an organization aimed at engaging citizens and other stakeholders around the topic of climate action. The non-profit membership organization operates on the principle of the quintuple helix, including residents of Leuven, companies, organizations, knowledge institutions and governments. Leuven 2030 originally aimed to stimulate actors to take climate action, implying that they do not themselves implement projects, but instead set the actors in motion.

Involving [different] stakeholders in the process is part of the DNA of [Leuven 2030]

This is evident when looking at the first projects Leuven 2030 was involved in. These were projects where initiative came from the bottom up: citizen, civil servant, somebody from a company or somebody who was motivated and took action. There are a variety of interesting and successful projects set up this way, including 'Straten Vol Leuven', which resulted in a circulation plan for the inner city and 'Transport by water', which brought together four partners to organize transport of building materials by water for a specific project.

Straten Vol Leuven³

One project which had a major impact was 'Straten Vol Leuven' (a wordplay on 'streets full of life'), set up by a group of active citizens with diverse backgrounds, including an urban planner, a participation expert, and a communication expert. This group of citizens managed to gain sufficient support for it so that it was finally taken over by politicians and a circulation plan was introduced for the city center



Figure 4: Straten Vol Leuven event in the city center © Straten Vol Leuven

A focus on strategic, systemic projects...

While considered successful, it soon became clear that this way of working had its limits, specifically the project-based approach and the limits to working with volunteers meant that work was not happening at the needed pace. The work was not deemed strategic enough.

A roadmap for action was ultimately created with the help of 70 experts. This roadmap includes 13 programs which need to be tackled in order to reach the goal of

³ <http://www.stratenvolleuven.be/>

becoming a climate neutral city, including one program which discusses the need to include everyone in the climate transition. These programs were then split up into 80 sub-programs. Although implementation was initially envisioned in a linear way, it soon became clear that such an approach was not feasible with the time and resources available and the strategic experiment were considered an additional, strategic and systemic layer the work.

Including everyone in the climate transition⁴

The Roadmap includes a program which focuses on including everyone in the climate transition. This includes topics such as strengthening partnerships and working in a participatory way, broad but differentiated awareness-raising, focusing on young people, and assuring social justice in climate action.

...put engagement on the backburner

Citizen participation has been on the backburner during this process, but the aim is to include citizens in two ways when it comes to the implementation of the roadmap. On the one hand, the program facilitators, who are in charge of one or more of the roadmap's programs should identify when and where links should be made to citizens. On the other hand, they need to identify how Leuven 2030 can link up to initiatives which are already happening? There is also the ambition to increase the involvements of citizens within the strategic experiments that will be conducted.

View on Participation

Despite this ambition to step up participation efforts, participation is at times treated somewhat narrow. For example, it has been mentioned that the priorities need to be set, then opportunities for participation need to be determined, implying a limited scope for participation. In addition, the focus often revolves around participation as a means of creating buy-in and behavioral change. It has also been mentioned that participative processes do not necessarily lead to different content than when only experts are included. It does, however, create engagement and feelings of ownership, which Leuven 2030 considers to be a good base to build from.

In addition, there is a clear tension between the need to move at pace and the need to engage the wider citizenry in the climate plans. It is difficult to balance the need for quick action with what is perceived as a slower, participatory process. As such, the organization needs to be careful that it does not dismiss the participatory process in the quest for quicker action, which has occurred in the past. As such, participative processes are included when there is a clear added value to the realization of the project. There is an awareness within the organization that they need to be careful with this, but it remains a complicated exercise.

⁴ <https://roadmap.leuven2030.be/iedereen-betrekken-in-klimaattransitie>

Insight 3: strong supporters of the climate work present in the city, but limited reach to the wider community

Strong institutional participation

Knowledge of what is happening around climate action in Leuven is not equally distributed. On the one hand, institutional communication and participation is strong. It has been mentioned many times that both in general, in addition to the topic of climate, lines between the city and key anchor institutions are short.

[There is a] of broad stakeholder involvement. There are short lines between knowledge institutions, companies, the city.

There is also solid communication with professor from the university, business leaders and other people who play an active role in Leuven. As one respondent put it,

there is broad communication there, these people are already up to date.

There is the impression that there exists a critical mass in Leuven that never thinks it's good enough, which has resulted in a self-perpetuating system. In addition, Leuven is strong in stakeholder networks, with networks and organizations such as Leuven Mindgate and C-Valley, there are many opportunities and they play an important role in international recognition. Further cooperation around climate could help reach a wider network due to their reach, communication and mobilization power. The relationships and synergies have not all been crystalized to the degree needed and there is room for growth.

Leuven Mindgate⁵

In many ways similar to Leuven 2030, Leuven Mindgate is a partnership of local government, knowledge institutions and companies from the region. Leuven Mindgate is a connector. Doing a lot of events, bringing people together. Facilitate collaboration, including cross-sector collaboration. which aims to 1) make Leuven more known internationally and 2) further strengthen what is already present in the city.

C-Valley⁶

C-Valley Leuven is the umbrella business park association of the research park in Haasrode. The mission of C-Valley is to develop an active community in which policymakers enter into dialogue with the companies and schools present in the business park. C-Valley Leuven is the link to connect all these parties so that joint and concrete actions can be developed in the areas of mobility, energy, sustainability, sports, human resources, welfare and the bundling of goods flows.

Network of strong supporters

In addition, there is a part of the population that is very committed. Parts of the citizenry are either members of Leuven 2030 or volunteer for the organization. There is the perspective that the population in Leuven, which is generally quite highly educated in comparison to other places, is more susceptible to supporting and taking part in climate action.

⁵ <https://www.leuvenmindgate.be/>

⁶ <https://www.c-valleyleuven.be/>

Wider community not being reached

Nevertheless, when it comes to involving the wider community, there is very little reach beyond the usual suspects. Efforts have already been made to make Leuven 2030 more approachable, such as a rebranding and name change to move away from the more technical communication which was used in the early years of Leuven 2030. They are regularly present at events, but

Today it [...] does not necessarily penetrate the wider society. Programs that fundamentally work in the neighborhood etc. are needed. People see that there are initiatives, but it is mainly on the level of communication, not participation.

Although no research has been done regarding the wider awareness of the existence of Leuven 2030, many respondents agreed that although there is a lot of publicity around the organization, it remains rather unknown. In addition, often people who do know the organization, often do not know how to contribute to it.

It remains abstract, even if people want to participate it is difficult

Limited visibility and accessibility for citizens

The above is confirmed by a variety of citizen groups and organizations, who are often uncertain about which projects have been completed or what the impact is of those projects. One respondent mentioned a project where citizens could invest to place solar panels on a variety of rooftops in Leuven but could not judge how substantial the impact of this would be. They also struggle with the commitment needed to engage actively around climate.

Another interviewee mentioned that they were a member of Leuven 2030 and used to attend meetings, but that after a while they felt as if it no longer concerned them and had no relation with their reality and actions.

In addition, interviewees mentioned that they would not be certain how to contact Leuven 2030 when they have ideas themselves. Mostly, there are contacts with specific people either in specific city administration departments or through social cohesion managers and community workers, but this way of working is plagued by clear bottlenecks due to limited capacity. KOVJW (p.17) is seen as an easier vehicle to realize climate-related projects.

Leuven 2030, [...] unless it is not meant for ordinary inhabitants, I do not have the impression that it would be easy for me to approach them [with an idea].

One strategy which is currently being developed to step up awareness of climate work being done in Leuven is Growth Hacking. In addition, citizen participation is firmly anchored in two of the three strategic experiments in the portfolio of experiments, while the third one focuses on including businesses in the climate transition. The strategic experiment 'Green District Kessel-Lo' is currently being kicked off, with an ambitious and comprehensive participation process as a first part to be implemented.

Growth Hacking the Transition

One of the strands currently being developed by Leuven 2030 is 'Growth Hacking the Transition'. By combining 1) data & testing 2) Creative marketing 3) Automation & coding and 4) insights from behavioral psychology, Leuven 2030 wants to recruit new members, activate current members and recruit volunteers in order to build on their 'Snowflake Model' (Figure 2)

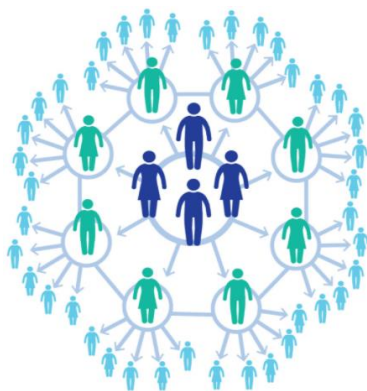


Figure 5: Snowflake Model

Strategic Experiment Green District Kessel-Lo

Designed as part of the portfolio of experiments within the EIT Climate KIC Deep Demonstrations project, the experiment in Kessel-Lo consists of 5 components: 1) Green District Contract, 2) Citizen participation & civic experimentation, 3) Climate Transition Financing, 4) Data-driven contracting models and 5) Governance and Regulatory sandbox. Component 2, citizen participation & civic experimentation, is an ambitious engagement process aimed at engaging all inhabitants of Kessel-Lo around the topic of Quality of Life, with a focus on mobility, climate robustness and encounters in the public domain. It will consist of three main components, being a broad set of participation activities to involve the population and source information, a randomly selected Citizens' Council which will set visions and priorities for the above mentioned topics and civic labs where we will create a space for citizens to experiment with ideas that are in line with the outcomes of the Citizens' Council.

5. Recommendations and Next Steps

Both the city of Leuven and Leuven 2030 are increasingly ambitious when it comes to stepping up innovation around both climate action and citizen participation. This is evidenced by the number of European Bids on innovation that Leuven is involved in, as well as the type of strategic experiments which have been developed during the HCC DD project. While the various projects currently being developed provide an opportunity to put in place stronger participation structures, attention will need to be paid to assuring capacity grows at an equal pace. Current circumstances appear to be favorable to further develop this capacity in the city departments. In addition, it will be important to pay attention to–

- 1) learnings from ongoing and planned participation projects and
- 2) start building a strategic approach to participation.

While the growth in both the number of projects as well as the ambition of those projects is promising, it will be imperative to approach the variety of projects happening in a strategic way, to assure they all contribute to the broader picture and are not stand-alone or one-off engagement activities.

In order to achieve this, it will be important to carefully consider governance structures and clear decision lines, both within Leuven 2030 as well as between Leuven 2030 and the city of Leuven, as the current structure at times delays the progression of the experiments being implemented. This could also help clarify the relationship between the city and Leuven 2030 to outsiders.

References

- <https://www.leuvenmindgate.be/>
- <https://www.c-valleyleuven.be/>
- <https://roadmap.leuven2030.be>
- <http://www.stratenvolleuven.be/>

Annexes

Annex 1: Demsoc's contributions to the climate work in Leuven in 2020

Workshops to uncover need for and potential of citizen participation in climate action.	In February 2020, Demsoc organized two workshops with participants from Leuven 2030 and the city administration focusing on the topics of mobility and retrofitting. During these workshops, participation in the context of both topics was discussed in order to scope potential future opportunities where citizens could be involved in these topics. One of the opportunities discussed was the broadening of the topic of mobility in Kessel-Lo to a 'quality of life' narrative, which eventually culminated in the strategic experiment 'Green District Kessel-Lo'.
Portfolio of experiments	During the first half of 2020, Demsoc actively worked with Leuven 2030 and Design Partners during the formulation of the portfolio of experiments.
Co-designing the participation project in Kessel-Lo with city department 'Gebiedsgerichte Werking'	Since the first half of 2020, Demsoc has been working with the city-department Gebiedsgerichte Werking to 1) further scope the opportunity for an ambitious participatory trajectory in the district of Kessel-Lo and 2) subsequently co-design this process. We have been actively working to design this process in such a way that it will create the opportunity to have complex, activating discussions with citizens. While specific to the context of Kessel-Lo, the overall process has significant capacity for scaling as it is likely to be replicated in the other districts of Leuven, where a mobility plan will also be developed over the next few years. As such, the process is designed to be flexible enough to adapt and scale to other settings or cities. See Annex 2 for an initial version of this participation process.
Strengthen connections with KU Leuven	Over the course of 2020, we worked with Leuven 2030 in order to organize workshops to strengthen connections and opportunities with KU Leuven, the local university. During two workshops, a variety of professors and PhD students from a variety of faculties were brought together to discuss potential opportunities for research around the roadmap and the portfolio of experiments.
Contributing to bids	Demsoc has worked with Leuven 2030 and the city of Leuven to bid for both LIFE and Horizon 2020 funding, in addition to providing support for the application for a Europe for Citizens bid.

Annex 2: Citizens' Council (Burgerpanel) Kessel-Lo - Draft Proposal (09/06/2020)

The first draft proposal for the Citizens' Council is included in this annex. Although various elements in this draft proposal are still included in the current design, many changes have been made as well over the past six months