



Designing a new approach to

# Youth participation in the energy transition

Master thesis | Design for Interaction & Strategic Product Design



Eva Peet  
01-04-2022

# Youth participation in the energy transition

Master thesis | Design for Interaction & Strategic Product Design

*Faculty of Industrial Design Engineering  
Delft University of Technology*

April 2022

## Author

Eva Peet

## Graduation committee

Dr. I.J. Mulder | Chair  
*Department of Human-Centered Design  
Faculty of Industrial Design Engineering  
Delft University of Technology*

Ir. S.S. Mulder | Mentor  
*Department of Design, Organisation and Strategy  
Faculty of Industrial Design Engineering  
Delft University of Technology*

## In collaboration with

Citizens  
MSc D.J. Jacobs | Company Mentor  
*Citizens & Necker van Naem  
Goeman Borgesiuslaan 77  
3515 ET Utrecht*

Participatory City Making Lab  
*Delft Design Labs  
Faculty of Industrial Design Engineering  
Landbergstraat 15  
2628 CE Delft  
(Delft University of Technology)*





# Preface

*Dear reader,*

*After 7 months of hard work, I am excited to present my graduation project to you. Because so many people contributed to my project, I would like to express my gratitude to them before introducing you to the contents of this report.*

*First of all, I want to thank all people who participated in one or multiple creative sessions throughout the project: the visitors of the Necker Parade, the Youth Council of the municipality of Altena, the civil servants from the municipality of Alphen aan den Rijn, the students from Mbo Rijnland Leiden and their teachers, wvo 5 from CSG Willem de Zwijger and their teacher, and the Necker employees.*

*Secondly, I would like to thank all the experts on youth participation, the municipal organisation and the energy transition who took the time to share their expertise with me.*

*I want to thank the Citisens team for always making me feel welcome and part of the team, and trusting me to take on this project for them. Your enthusiasm and contribution to my project in 3(!) creative sessions and a pilot session were invaluable for the project.*

*Fourth, I would like to thank my fellow (graduation) students who helped me facilitate or participated in a creative session. Exchanging views with you, sharing our struggles and successes, was always uplifting and put things in perspective.*

*Last, but certainly not least, I want to thank my supervisors Daan, Ingrid and Sander. Your feedback and support always challenged me to go one step further and take my project to the next level.*

*With pride I'd like to present to you my graduation project on youth participation in the energy transition.*

*All the best,  
Eva*

# Executive summary

In 2015, due to decentralisations in the social domain, municipalities became the key public authorities for youth participation in the Netherlands (RAND Europe, 2021). One year later 66% had made youth participation a policy goal, while 18% was planning to. At that time most municipalities involved young people to some extent in their policy-making, but were dissatisfied with the results and expressed a need for tools (Mak, Gilsing & Wróblewska, 2016). In 2020, despite considerable effort, the dissatisfaction had not changed (Movisie, 2020).

This thesis aims to design a new approach that allows youngsters aged 14-17 to structurally participate in municipal policy- and decision-making, in the context of the energy transition. The energy transition, which refers to the transfer from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources with the aim of reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the Netherlands with 95-100% in 2050 (RIVM, n.d.), is seen as the largest strategic challenge for municipalities and one of the main societal challenge of our time (Ebskamp & Verbraak, 2019). Municipalities ask Citisens, an organisation specialised in reaching and involving (adult) citizens and this project's

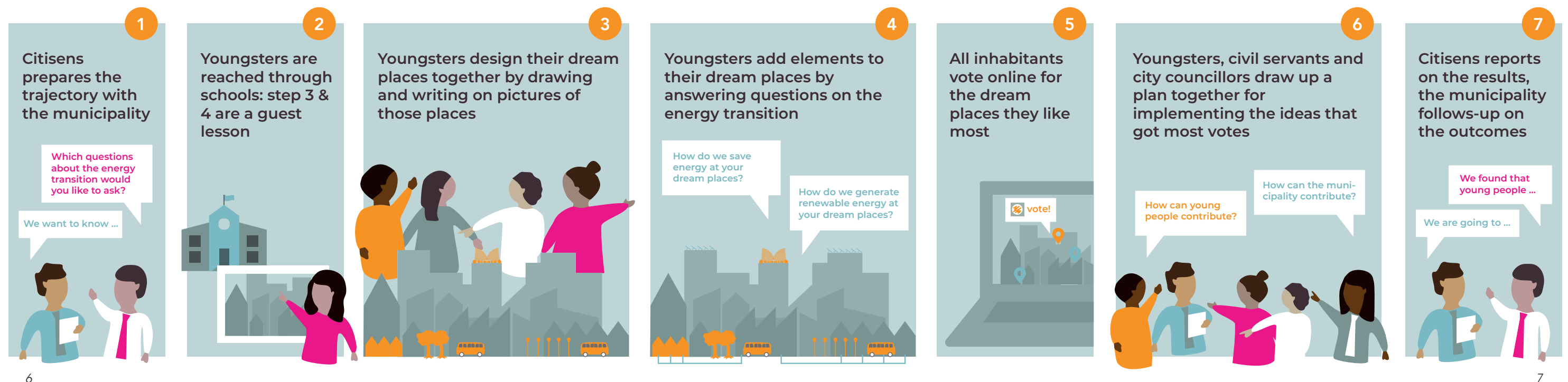
client, ever more frequently if they can support them in involving young people in shaping this transition. This project is their first step in exploring this new market.

Three methods characterize the project approach. Frame creation, a method well-suited for the open, networked, complex and dynamic problems of today, provides the main structure to the project (Dorst, 2015, p. 73). Within the structure of Frame creation, the project adopts a participatory approach, involving 163 stakeholders and experts in 15 co-creation sessions throughout the project. Besides bringing in new perspectives, giving stakeholders a voice in the design and building stakeholder support (Boeijen et al., 2020, p. 61), these co-creation sessions all generate insights on collaborating with the stakeholders in a Research through Design approach. While most co-creation sessions use prototypes or artefacts to generate new knowledge, the sessions themselves can also be seen as prototypes for collaboration (Stappers & Giaccardi, 2017).

Following an in-depth analysis of the challenge, this thesis creates an overview of frontrunners that have a new and promising approach to (youth) participation and/or involving people in climate issues. Looking at common factors of these frontrunners, four themes emerge: equity, ownership, collaboration and action. Based on these themes, several new frames to approach youth participation are developed. The final design, Design your dream places, is based on the frame Holacracy.

Design your dream places, shown in Figure A, involves all youngsters through guest lessons at schools and facilitates them to create their own, sustainable dream places in the municipality. It allows everyone in the municipality to vote on their favourite place, and encourages the municipality and youngsters to collaborate on next steps. The final design was tested and evaluated during a pilot session with key stakeholders, yielding encouraging results while showing the importance of testing it in a real-life setting with actual follow-up. Finally, an implementation and integration plan was created to envision next steps for the project.

Figure A: Proposed youth participation process



# Table of contents

<b>Preface</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART 1   INTRODUCTION</b>	
<b>1. Project background</b>	<b>12</b>
1.1 Project initiation	14
1.2 Organisational context	16
<b>2. Method</b>	<b>18</b>
2.1 Project approach	20
2.2 Project structure	22
<b>PART 2   ANALYSING THE CHALLENGE</b>	
<b>3. The municipality</b>	<b>32</b>
3.1 The municipal organisation	36
3.2 Municipal decision-making	39
3.3 Municipalities and the energy transition	43
<b>4. Youth participation</b>	<b>50</b>
4.1 Framing youth participation	54
4.2 Current approach youth participation	57
4.3 Key elements of youth participation	67
<b>5. Citisens</b>	<b>72</b>
5.1 Introduction to Citisens	76
5.2 The Citisens approach	78
5.3 Citisens' strategy	83
<b>6. Paradox</b>	<b>86</b>
6.1 Climate activism, but energy transition apathy?	92
6.2 Fresh perspective or part of the system?	94
6.3 Genuinely involving youngsters, but doubting them?	96
6.4 Participation decreases inclusivity of policy-making?	98
6.5 A narrow transition aiming for holistic goals?	100

<b>7. Context</b>	<b>104</b>
7.1 Drivers of youngsters	110
7.2 Drivers of the city council and mayor & aldermen	111
7.3 Drivers of the civil service	112
7.4 Drivers of Citisens	113
7.5 Comparing drivers	114
<b>8. Field</b>	<b>116</b>
8.1 Initiatives in the field	120
8.2 Patterns and underlying values	123
<b>9. Themes</b>	<b>124</b>
9.1 Equity	130
9.2 Collaboration	132
9.3 Ownership	134
9.4 Action	136
9.5 The themes combined	138
<b>PART 3   TOWARDS NEW SOLUTIONS</b>	
<b>10. Frames</b>	<b>140</b>
10.1 Holacracy	146
10.2 Crowdfunding	148
10.3 Burning Man	150
<b>11. Futures</b>	<b>154</b>
11.1 Concept 1: Your dream municipality	158
11.2 Concept 2: Hack your municipality	159
11.3 Concept 3: Design for your neighbourhood	160
11.4 Evaluating the concepts	161
<b>12. Transformation</b>	<b>166</b>
12.1 Iteration 1: Step 3-5 & 7 with mbo students	172
12.2 Iteration 2: Step 3-5 & 7 with vwo 5 students	174
12.3 Iteration 3: Step 1, 3, 4 & 7 with politicians	176
12.4 Iteration 4: Step 1 & 3-7 with civil servants	178
12.5 Iteration 5: Step 2-4 & 7 with mbo students	180
12.6 Final design	182
12.7 Pilot	197
<b>13. Implementation &amp; integration</b>	<b>208</b>
13.1 Implementation	212
13.2 Integration	219
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>226</b>
<b>Discussion</b>	<b>229</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>232</b>



A woman with curly brown hair and glasses, wearing a plaid shirt and jeans, stands in a modern office. She is smiling and looking to her left. A name tag on her shirt reads "Eva". In the background, there is a large window, a flag, and some office furniture. A semi-transparent blue circle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text "Part 1 Introduction".

# Part 1

## Introduction



# 1. Project background

*This chapter sets the stage, by providing the background information and context of this project. The first subsection elaborates on the project initiation. It shows the relevance of the project and presents the design brief and a definition of success. The second subsection provides information on the two organisations that are closely involved in this project: Citizens and the Participatory City Making Lab.*





# 1.1 Project initiation

*This section introduces the project. It elaborates on the context and the design challenge, and concludes with a short introduction to the project approach.*

## The context

The importance of youth participation is widely recognized by European organisations as an essential ingredient for more prosperous, inclusive and democratic societies. It can have a variety of rationales and goals, ranging from influencing policy-making, to education, to human rights promotion (Crowley & Moxon, 2017).

*“The active participation of young people in decisions and actions at local and regional level is essential if we are to build more democratic, inclusive and prosperous societies.”*

Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, 2015

In the Netherlands, municipalities are key public authorities in youth participation since the decentralisations in the social domain in 2015 (RAND Europe, 2021). In 2016, most municipalities had made or were planning on making youth participation a policy goal. While 73% of municipalities were involving young people in their policy-making in some way, most municipalities were dissatisfied with current strategies, and expressed a need for tools to shape their approach to youth participation (Mak, Gilsing & Wróblewska, 2016). Several years later, the dissatisfaction and need for tools had not changed, despite municipalities’ considerable efforts on the topic (Movisie, 2020).

At the same time, municipalities are facing a major strategic challenge: the energy transition (Ebskamp & Verbraak, 2019), which partially originates from the 2015 Paris agreement (De Vries et al., 2019). To meet the goals in that agreement, the Netherlands need to make the transfer from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources. The “Klimaatakkoord” (climate agreement) contains the measures and agreements for this transition, with the aim of reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the Netherlands with 49% in 2030 and with 95-100% in 2050 (RIVM, n.d.).

Since youth participation and the energy transition are both major challenges for municipalities, it can hardly surprise that involving young people in the energy transition has proven to be an even greater challenge (IM2, 2021; IY1, 2021).

## The challenge

This project’s client, Citisens, frequently comes across municipalities that want to involve youngsters in the energy transition, but do not know how. Citisens currently only supports municipalities in adult participation and recognizes that youth participation requires a different approach, specifically tailored to youngsters. This resulted in the following design brief:

*Design a framework that allows youngsters aged 14-17 to structurally participate in municipal policy- and decision-making. This participation framework will be applied in the context of the energy transition, resulting in concrete tools (services/products) to facilitate youth participation and a complementary strategy for municipalities to use these tools, to translate input to policy level and to visualise how input has been used.*

The design brief describes that the end-product should not only allow youngsters to participate, but also find a way to embed the outcomes of participation in the municipality and provide feedback to participants. The complete project brief can be found in appendix A.

## The approach

The project approach consists of three main elements: Frame creation, co-creation and Research through Design.

Frame creation, which is used to structure the project, has been developed in the practices of expert designers who have been known for solving unsolvable problems (Dorst, 2015, p. xv). Central to the approach is creating a new frame for the problem situation (Dorst, 2015, p. 73).

Co-creation is the joint process of creating new value with external experts and stakeholders (Veenhoff & Pater, 2021, p. 16). It provides designers with the new perspectives to create better solutions, makes the design process more ethical by involving those who will be affected by the design and builds stakeholder support (Boeijen et al., 2020, p. 61). Co-creation is implemented in the project in the shape of 15 co-creation sessions with in total 163 participants such as young people, politicians, civil servants and Citisens employees.

This project’s aim is to create a new approach to participation, therefore not just the artefacts and prototypes used in the co-creation sessions, but the sessions themselves can be seen as small prototypes for collaborating with the different stakeholders using a Research through Design approach. Research through Design refers to “design activities that play a formative role in the generation of knowledge ” (Stappers & Giaccardi, 2017).



## 1.2 Organisational context

*Two organisations are strongly involved in this project: Citisens, as the project's client, and the Participatory City Making Lab, for supervision and support.*

### **Citisens**

This project's client is Citisens, an organisation that aims to bridge the gap between citizens and municipalities and improve decision-making and democracy through citizen participation. They offer municipalities data insights on citizen participation preferences, help municipalities to get insight into the opinions of their citizens through questionnaires, but can also support and guide municipalities throughout an entire participation process. While they are definitely participation experts when it comes to adults, they are not very experienced in facilitating youth participation. Dutch municipalities, their clients, ask ever more frequently whether Citisens can support them in involving youngsters in the energy transition. This project could help them develop a value proposition to enter this new market.

### **Participatory City Making Lab**

The Participatory City Making (PCM) Lab is one of the Delft Design Labs. In the Delft Design Labs students and staff members from the Faculty of Industrial Design Engineering of the Delft University of Technology work together with external partners on knowledge development and design innovation. The PCM Lab applies participatory principles and design methods to research inclusiveness and participation in the context of the sustainable development goals, using the city as a transition space to experiment in (Participatory City Making Lab, n.d.).





## 2. Method

*This chapter elaborates on this project's method. This chapter's first subsection explores the three main elements of the approach: Frame creation, Co-Creation and Research through Design. The second subsection describes the project structure, providing an overview of the approach, research questions and research activities.*



## 2.1 Project approach

*This section elaborates on the project approach by diving into its three main elements: Frame creation, Co-Creation and Research through Design*

### Frame Creation

The project is structured using the Frame creation method. This approach was developed originally in the practices of expert designers who have been known for solving unsolvable problems (Dorst, 2015, p. xv). Frame creation is especially well-suited for the open, networked, complex and dynamic problems of today, because it helps designers to ‘develop the problem situation, consider a broader context, build a deeper understanding of the underlying factors behind a problem, and most importantly to then create a new approach or frame to the problem situation’ (Dorst, 2015, p. 73). As the following chapters will illustrate, youth participation in the energy transition is indeed (Dorst, 2015, p. 9-11):

- Open: many stakeholders are involved in (policy making for) the energy transition, and at a first glance it is difficult to say which stakeholders can safely be excluded and which cannot.
- Complex: the system consist of many different interconnected elements, as the energy transition impacts many aspects of society.
- Dynamic: the energy transition is currently taking place and municipalities’ approach to youth participation is constantly developing. Both are therefore changing over time.
- Networked: (policy-making for) the energy transition, is influenced by a wide range of other developments in society that constantly influence each other.

### Co-Creation

Another approach that is central to the project is co-creation: 163 key stakeholders and experts were involved in 15 co-creation sessions throughout the project. According to Veenhoff & Pater, co-creation is the joint process of creating new value with external experts and stakeholders. They believe the diverse perspectives co-creation can bring into the design process are invaluable to solving the challenges of this time (2021, p. 16). In line with

this, Boeijen et al. state that involving users through co-creation provides the designer with the knowledge to create better solutions. Furthermore, they mention an ethical argument for involving stakeholders, namely that they will be affected by the design when it is implemented. The final reason Boeijen et al. report for using co-creation is building stakeholder support (2020, p. 61).

The main approach and structure of the co-creation sessions is based on Veenhoff & Pater (2021, p. 105-123):

1. Introduction (goals, agenda and way of working & ice-breaker)
2. Sharing & discussing the challenge or preliminary insights
3. Individual brainstorm to generate ideas
4. Clustering two ideas per participant on a Rapid Map
5. Voting on clusters
6. Detail the clusters with most votes in smaller groups
7. Present results back to the group
8. Last word of advice (from participants)

One co-creation session (CY2) involves some **context mapping** activities, to learn more about young people’s dreams for a (sustainable) future (Sanders & Stappers, 2012, p. 14). In two sessions (CC1 & CY1), the **Ikigai framework** is used to learn more about the purpose, capabilities and the needs that Citisens/a youth council fulfil (Hogenhuis, 2018). Finally, **co-reflection** is used in several sessions (CM2, CY4, CC2 & CC3) to collaboratively reflect on the design direction with stakeholders (Tomico et al., 2011).

### Research through design

Since this project aim is to design a new approach to youth participation, ensuring the project itself has a participatory nature can be seen as a way of “practicing what you preach”. Every single co-creation session can even be seen as a small prototype for collaborating and co-creating with the stakeholders that are involved, generating learnings beyond just the outcomes of the session. From that viewpoint, all co-creation activities can be seen as part of a Research through Design (RtD) approach.

*‘When we talk about RtD, we indicate design activities that play a formative role in the generation of knowledge, typically actions that we’d recognize as design activities from one of the design professions, that depend on the professional skills of designers such as gaining actionable understanding of a complex situation, framing and reframing it, and iteratively developing prototypes that address it.’*

Stappers & Giaccardi (2017)

Besides seeing the co-creation sessions themselves as prototypes, most co-creation sessions involve artefacts and/or prototypes that are used to generate knowledge about the stakeholders’ needs and values.

## 2.2 Project structure

*This section elaborates on the project approach by diving into its three main elements: Frame Creation, Co-Creation and Research through Design*

This project was structured using Frame Creation, Co-Creation and Research through Design as building blocks. Figure 1 on the following pages gives an overview of the project approach, showing the research questions and activities per step of the Frame Creation process. The research activities and their codes can be found in Tables 1-3. Looking at Table 1, in total 37 stakeholders from the municipality, 103 youngsters and 18 Citisens employees participated in creative sessions for this project (counting every time a participant participated, as some participated twice or even three times). As several interviewees preferred to remain anonymous, the description in Table 2 in some cases only states the interviewee's job description or expertise.

Although Figure 1 seems to suggest a linear process, in reality several steps were often worked on in parallel, shifting between steps in the process of co-evolution: "a constant iteration of analysis, synthesis and evaluation passing back and forth between the two conceptual design "spaces" - the problem space and the solution space" (Dorst, 2015, p. 59). This explains why research activities often feed into to several steps in the Frame creation process.

The remainder of this section will provide a general overview of the activities in Figure 1. The activities for each step will be elaborated on in more detail in the short method section at the beginning of each chapter.

The first step of the Frame Creation process, **archaeology**, is an in-depth investigation of the problem, its organisational setting, and earlier attempts at finding solutions to it (Dorst, 2015, p. 74). In this project, three main topics were covered in this step: the context of the municipality, the challenge of youth participation and the project's client Citisens.

Abbreviation	Co-creation sessions & participants	Date	Appendix
CM1	Municipal stakeholders' view on youth participation Necker Parade, with council clerks, aldermen and mayors	24/25-08-2021	I
CC1	Purpose, capabilities, value proposition & market of Citisens Citisens, with 5 members of the Citisens team	15-09-2021	J
CY1	Motivation & capabilities youth council Youth Council Altena, with 14 members from the youth council	04-10-2021	K
CS1	Field - Themes - Frames - Futures Creative session with 5 fellow IDE graduation students	10-11-2021	L
CM2	Learning from frontrunners (Field - Themes - Frames) Municipality of Alphen aan den Rijn, with 14 civil servants	15-11-2021	M
CY2	Youngsters' view on sustainability and municipal involvement Mbo Rijnland, with 10 mbo students	19-11-2021	N
CY3	Youngsters & municipalities collaborating on youth challenges High School Willem de Zwijger, with 24 vwo 5 students	03-12-2021	O
CY4	Youngsters' ideas on involvement & feedback on 3 concepts Mbo Rijnland, with 12 mbo students	14-12-2021	P
CC2	Ideating and choosing a direction for the project Citisens, with 7 members of the Citisens team	22-12-2021	Q
CY5	Evaluating and detailing the concept (young people) Mbo Rijnland, with 14 mbo students	21-01-2022	R
CY6	Evaluating and detailing the concept (young people) High School Willem de Zwijger, with 19 vwo 5 students	26-01-2022	S
CM3	Evaluating and detailing the concept (politicians) Necker van Naem, with 4 municipal politicians/administrators	03-02-2022	T
CM4	Evaluating and detailing the concept (civil servants) Municipality of Alphen aan den Rijn, with 11 civil servants	07-02-2022	U
CY7	Evaluating and detailing the concept (young people) Mbo Rijnland, with 10 mbo students	08-03-2022	V
CC3	Roadmap for implementation Citisens, with 6 members of the Citisens team	16-03-2022	W

Table 1: Overview of co-creation sessions

Several research activities were undertaken to answer the research questions on these topics. First, literature was consulted to gain a (high-level) understanding of the three topics. This initial analysis was enriched and expanded through interviews and co-creation activities. Seven semi-structured were conducted to obtain in-depth expert input (Boeijen et al., 2020, p. 91) on the municipality, youth participation, the energy transition and Citisens. Council clerks, aldermen and mayors, a youth council, and Citisens employees participated in the co-creation activities.

Abbreviations	Research activities
AB#	Interview
A = activity type (Interview, Co-creation, etc.)	Co-creation
B = participants (Municipality, Youth, etc.)	Literature
# = number (of the combination A+B)	Other

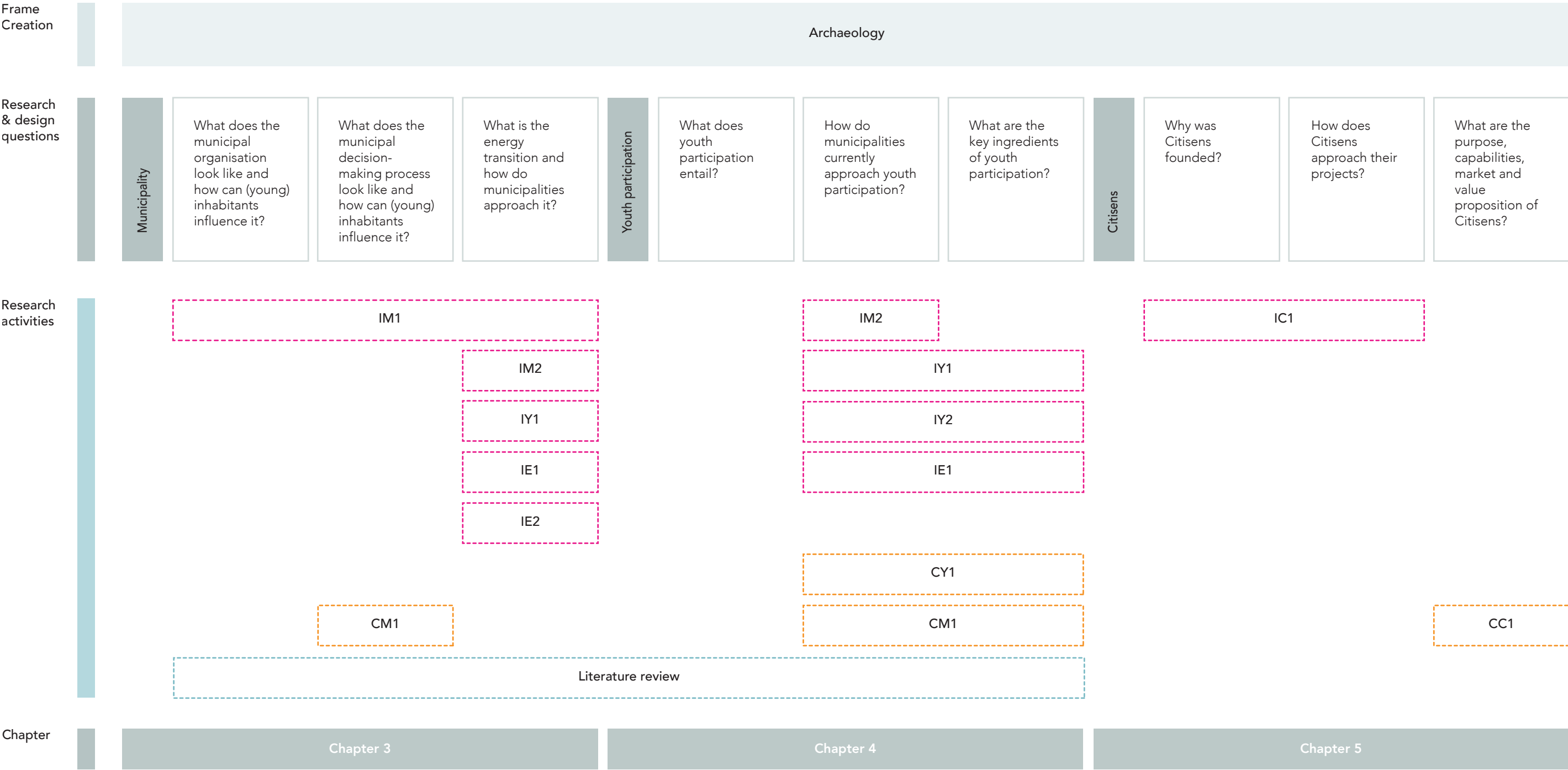


Figure 1: Project approach (continues on the next page)

The lead question in the second step is: “What makes this problem hard to solve?”. This **paradox** is expressed in a series of clashing “because” statements. After formulating the paradox, it is deliberately put aside to begin the third step with a fresh perspective. In this step, the **context**, the inner circle of key stakeholders is explored (Dorst, 2015, p. 74-75). The research activities for the paradox and context involved literature review and some of the same interviews and co-creation activities that fed into the archaeology step.

In the fourth step, the **field**, the context is radically widened, including all (potential) players that are connected to the problem or solution. The universal values that underlie the motivations, needs and experiences of frontrunners in the field are the **themes**, the fifth step of the Frame Creation process. In the sixth step, the themes are used as a basis for creating new **frames** for approaching the problem (Dorst, 2015, p. 76-78). Literature review, co-creation sessions with civil servants and fellow graduation students and a visit to events (around) the COP26 UN Climate

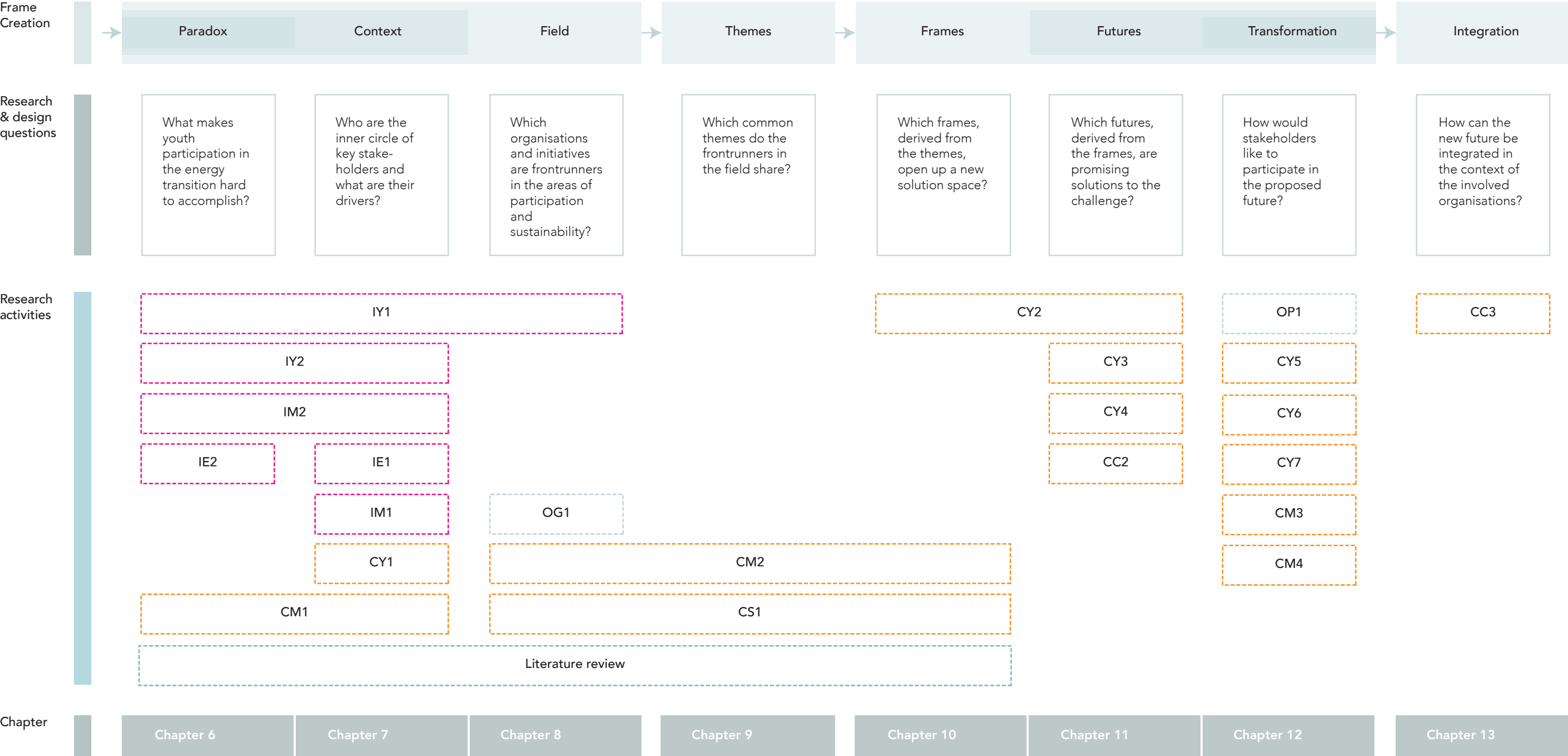


Figure 1: Project approach (continued)



Conference in Glasgow provided information and inspiration for these three steps.

The proposed frames are applied to the problem situation to explore the possible solutions, **futures**, in the seventh step. **Transformation** is the eighth step, in which the proposed frame and future are critically evaluated and iterated to make it come together (Dorst, 2015, p. 78-79). Research activities for these steps included co-creation sessions with mbo and vwo 5 students, civil servants, politicians and Citisens employees as well as a pilot session to iterate and evaluate the design.

In the final step, **integration**, a plan for integrating the final design and new frame in the relevant involved organisations is drawn up (Dorst, 2015, p. 79). A final co-creation session with Citisens employees was conducted in this phase to create a roadmap for implementation and discuss integration.

Abbreviation	Interviewee	Date	Appendix
IC1	Director/owner Citisens, Nicolette Ouwerling	06-09-2021	B
IM1	Council Clerk (Griffier), Municipality Altena, Hans Peet	22-08-2021	C
IM2	Policy officer Sustainability, Municipality Altena	09-09-2021	D
IY1	Representative Jong RES, Rotterdam Den Haag, Pelle Meurink	10-09-2021	E
IY2	Initiator Youth Ambassadors Program, Municipality Waalwijk	14-09-2021	F
IE1	Trainee National Energy Traineeship, Thomas Haitsma	16-09-2021	G
IE2	Lector Energy Transition, Hanzehogeschool, Martien Visser	20-09-2021	H

Table 2: Overview of interviews

Abbreviation	Other activities	Date	Appendix
OG1	Visiting events (around) the COP26 UN Climate Conference in Glasgow	04-11-2021 - 07-11-2021	n.a.
OP1	Pilot session with 6 young people, 3 civil servants, 1 city councillor and 2 Citisens employees	10-03-2022	X

Table 3: Overview of other activities



A woman with curly brown hair and glasses, wearing a plaid shirt and a name tag that says 'Eva', is standing in a meeting room. She is looking down at a table in front of her. The table has a microphone, a coffee cup, and some papers. In the background, another person is sitting at a desk. A large blue circle with a dashed orange line is overlaid on the left side of the image.

# Part 2

## Analysing the challenge





### 3. The municipality

*This chapter elaborates on municipalities and their role in the energy transition. The first section elaborates on the three main stakeholders in the municipal organisation and the ways in which young people can exert influence. The second section provides an overview of the municipal decision-making process, including the moments and ways young people can influence it. The final section focuses on the role of municipalities in the energy transition, as well as their approach and main challenges.*



# Method

Research questions and activities for Chapter 3

This chapter is the first part of the problem archaeology step of the Frame creation process. The archaeology is an in-depth investigation of the problem, its organisational setting, and earlier attempts at finding solutions to it. Delving into the problem owner’s world is crucial to understanding the problem’s history (Dorst, 2015, p. 74).

This chapter investigates three main research questions on the municipality that are important to the (organisational) setting of the problem:

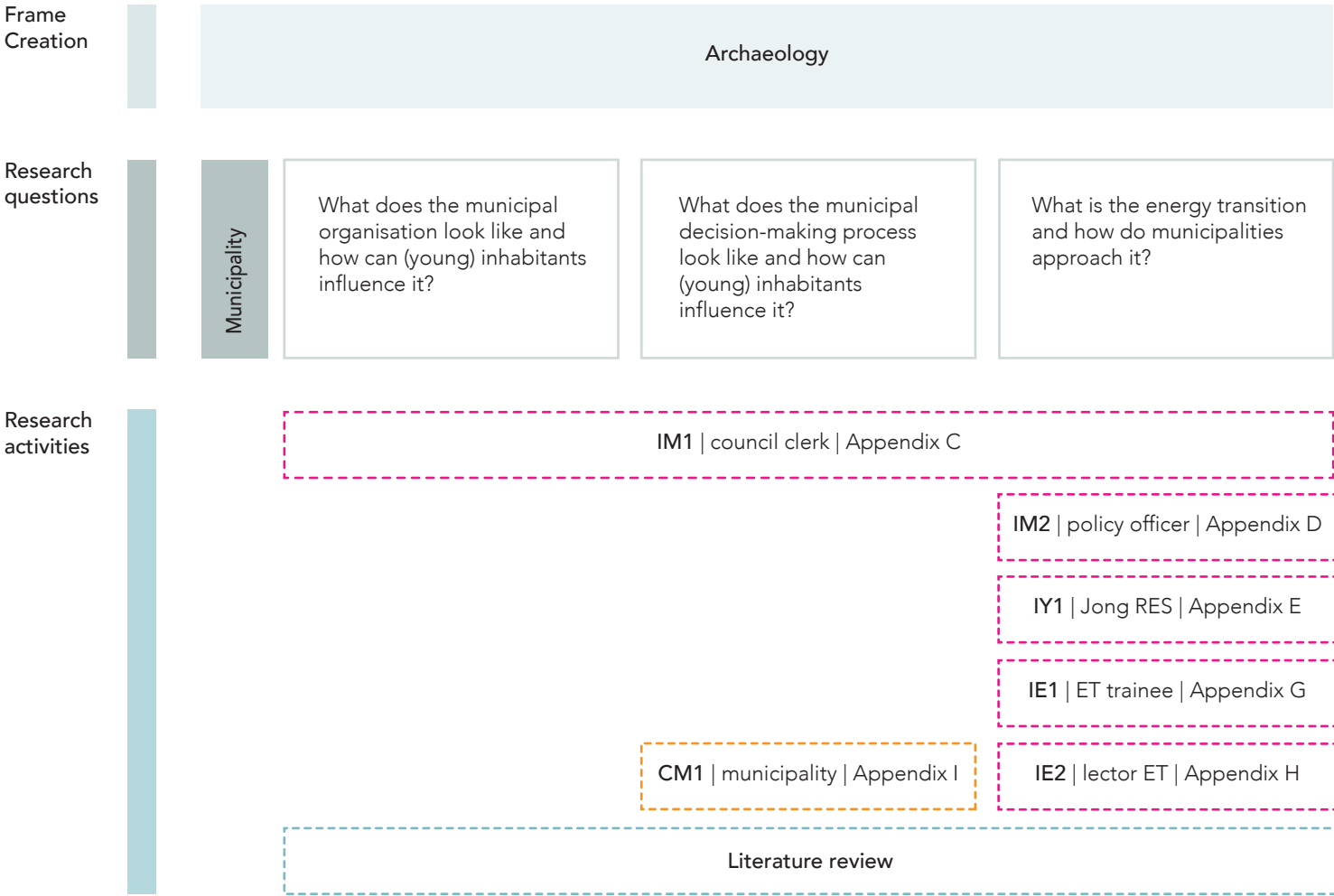
- 1. What does the municipal organisation look like and how can (young) inhabitants influence it?
- 2. What does the municipal decision-making process look like and how can (young) inhabitants influence it?
- 3. What is the energy transition and how do municipality approach it?

Several research activities were undertaken to answer these research questions. First, a basic understanding of the topics was gained through literature review. Secondly, several semi-structured interviews and a creative session were conducted to complement the insights from literature. Figure 2 shows the different research activities that contributed to answering the three research questions.

Figure 2: Research questions and activities for Chapter 3

A council clerk was interviewed to learn more about the municipal organisation and decision-making process, mainly focusing on the first two research questions (IM1, Appendix C). Co-creation activities on a wall at the Necker Parade with mayors, registrars, city councillors and aldermen further contributed to learning about the opportunities in the decision-making process for youth participation (CM1, Appendix I).

Interviews with a policy officer of sustainability (IM2, Appendix D), a representative from youth advocacy organisation focusing on the energy transition Jong RES (IY1, Appendix E), a national energy trainee (IE1, Appendix G) and a lector energy transition (IE2, Appendix H) contributed to answering the third research question.





## 3.1 The municipal organisation

*What does the municipal organisation look like and how can (young) inhabitants influence it?*

The municipal organisation can roughly be divided into three main stakeholder groups: civil servants, the college of mayor and aldermen and the city council. Figure 3 shows how these stakeholders relate to each other. Formal power in municipalities lies with the city council and the college of mayor and aldermen (IM1, 2021).

### The city council

The city council, consisting of elected representatives, is the municipality's supreme body. The city council has three main responsibilities:

- City councillors establish the policy outlines. They think about what the municipality should look like in a few years (ProDemos, 2020b). They do this by establishing frameworks and policies related to visions, ambitions and societal interests (IM1, 2021).
- Secondly, the city council checks whether the college of mayor and aldermen are performing properly on their administrative responsibilities (IM1, 2021; ProDemos, 2020b), within the frameworks established by the city council (Freeke, 2021, p. 81).
- The final responsibility of city councillors is representing the inhabitants of the municipality (Freeke, 2021, p. 78; ProDemos, 2020b).

The city council is supported by the registry (Dutch: griffie).

### The college of mayor and aldermen

The college of mayor and aldermen are the governing body of the municipality. While the mayor is appointed by the Crown, the aldermen represent a coalition of political groups from the city council. Their main responsibilities are (ProDemos, 2020b):

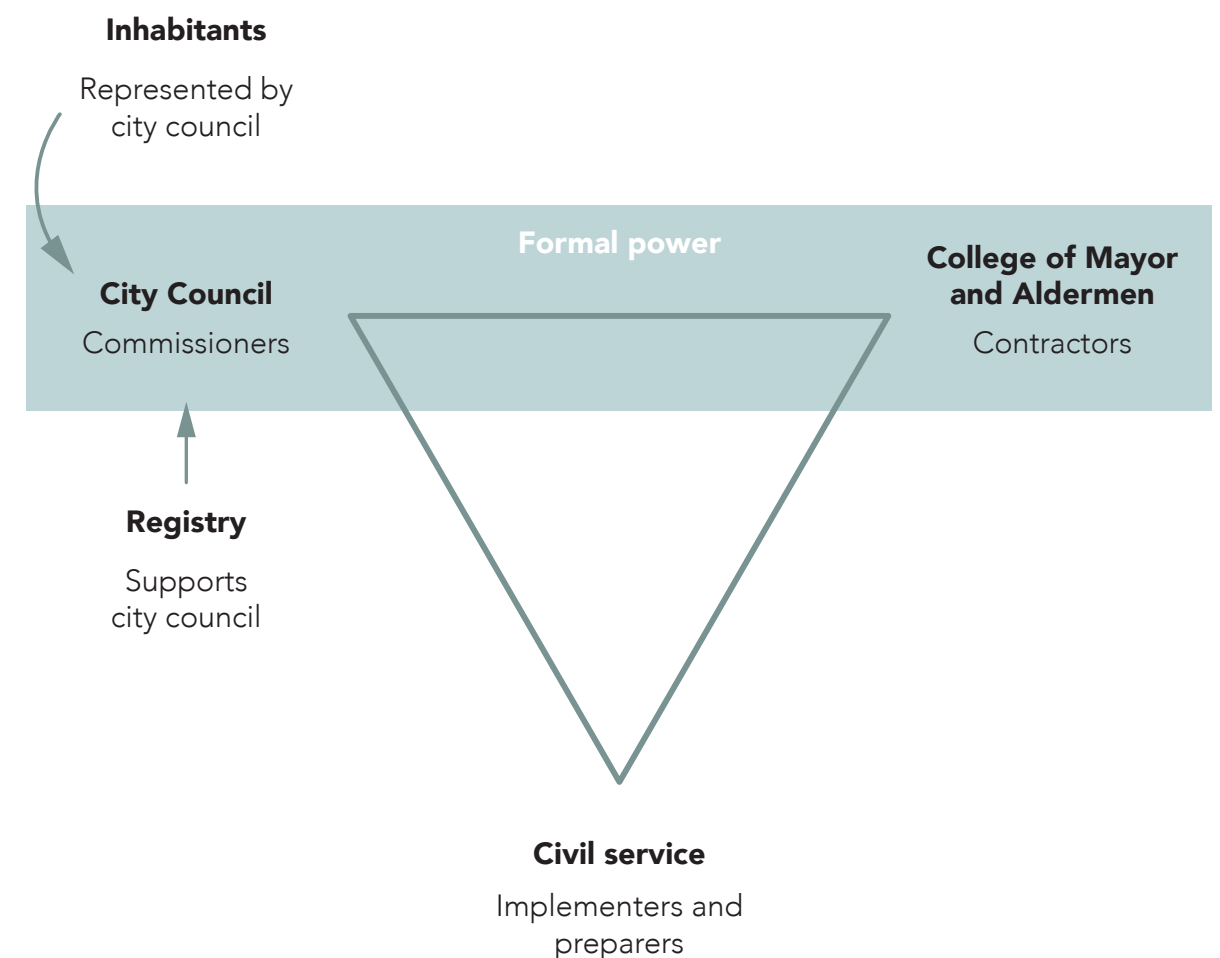
- Preparing matters that the city council decides on.
- Implementing council decisions.
- Implementing national laws and regulations.

The mayor and aldermen have a shared responsibility for the policies they implement. The civil service supports the college (IM1, 2021; ProDemos, 2020b).

### The civil service

Civil servants are employed by the national government, provinces, municipalities, water authorities and other governmental institutions. Municipal policy officials, who inform and advise the college, play a key role in municipal policy- and decision-making. They are often more informed about the policy area they work in than the mayor and aldermen, who have usually been in office for no more than four, or at most eight years. Throughout the years they build valuable connections with organisations, groups and individuals that are important to their policy area. They can be seen as a link between society and politics, because they are more in touch with the sentiment in society than professional politicians (ProDemos, 2017).

Figure 3: Organisational structure of municipalities (IM1, 2021).



The college of mayor and aldermen as well as the city council can initiate participation processes. The civil service usually implements and supports these processes. Since all three have their own distinctive roles and goals, they are best regarded as three separate key stakeholders in this project (IM1, 2021).

#### Inhabitants

The municipality's inhabitants can structurally influence the municipal organisation, most notably by voting in the municipal elections or by standing as a candidate for the municipal elections (ProDemos, 2020a). However, for both voting and becoming a city councillor there is a minimum age of 18 years (Nederlandse Vereniging voor Raadsleden, 2019).

99% of Dutch municipalities have district, neighbourhood or other councils that give advice to the college. The formal influence of these councils is quite limited: in only 16% of the municipalities councils can put topics on the agenda of the city council. A little over one in five municipalities in the Netherlands have installed a youth council (Ostaijen, 2018, p. 75-76), on which section 4.2 will elaborate further. Other ways in which inhabitants can influence decision-making on specific matters, will be discussed in subsection 3.2.

## Key insights

The municipal organisation consists of three main stakeholder groups with distinct roles and responsibilities:

- The **city council**, which establishes the policy outlines, checks the college and represents the inhabitants of the municipality.
- The college of mayor and aldermen, who prepare matters that the **city council** decides on and implement city council decisions and national laws and regulations.
- The **civil service**, who are the experts that support the college in preparing and implementing policies.

Because of the different roles that the three stakeholders fulfil, they will be seen as separate stakeholders in this project.

Children (<18) have limited opportunities to influence the municipal organisation, as they are not allowed to vote or be on the city council. While some municipalities have installed a youth council, the formal power of these councils is limited.

## 3.2 Municipal decision-making

*What does the municipal decision-making process look like and how can (young) inhabitants influence it?*

The municipal decision-making process consists of five main stages: agenda setting, policy research, policy development, policy implementation and policy evaluation. Figure 4 provides an overview of the five stages, including the steps that are taken by the three main stakeholders within the municipality: the city council, the college of mayor and aldermen and the civil service (IM1, 2021).

In Figure 4, the most standard decision-making process is indicated with orange lines and darker boxes, while optional steps are shown with dotted lines and lighter boxes. The linear process depicted can be regarded as a theoretical base process. In reality municipalities sometimes skip steps or go back several steps. As Figure 4 quite clearly shows, generally the process consists of cycles in which civil servants make preparations, from which the college of mayor and aldermen create a proposal, which is then discussed and established by the city council (IM1, 2021).

Policy processes of a larger scale usually start from the coalition agreement, which is translated to a budget that is established by the city council (IM1, 2021). The coalition agreement and budget are therefore both important to the agenda setting stage, but not depicted in Figure 4 to keep it simple and comprehensible.

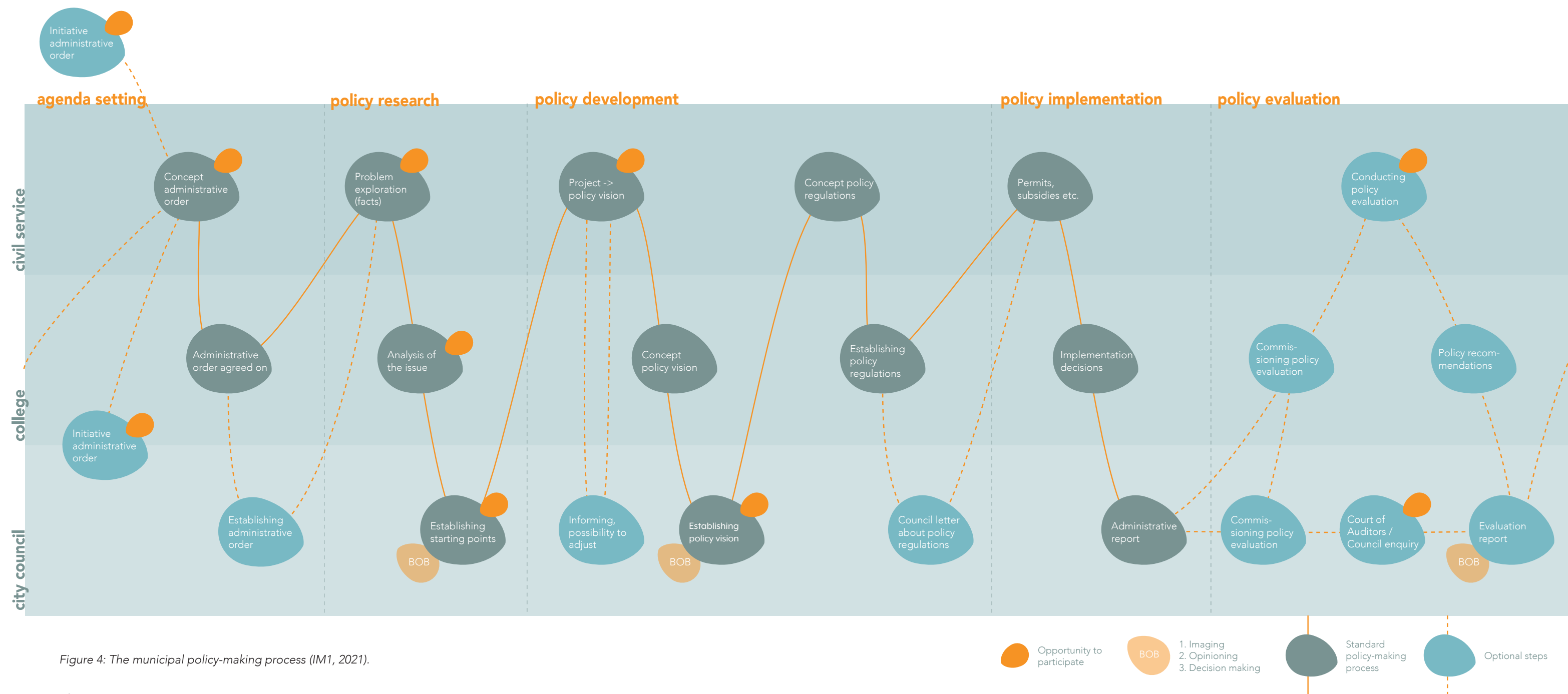
## Influence of inhabitants

There are several more common opportunities for inhabitants to voice their opinions in the municipal decision-making process, as indicated by the orange markers in Figure 4. These opportunities can roughly be divided into two categories: providing input or sharing your views when requested, and citizens' initiatives.

Most markers in Figure 4 indicate opportunities to provide input. A common way to collect this input is during participation evenings, which are organized in 85% of municipalities, usually on a specific topic (Ostaaïjen, 2018, p. 77). Section 4.2 elaborates on participation evenings as a form of youth participation.

Besides participation evenings, inhabitants can be consulted in the decision-making process of the city council. These decision-making processes usually consist of three steps: imaging, forming an opinion, and decision-making. In Dutch, this is called the BOB (Dutch: beeldvormen, oordeel vormen, besluitvormen) model, highlighted in Figure 3 with the orange BOB boxes. During the first step, imaging, inhabitants can be consulted for their view on the matter (Freeke, 2021, p. 132; IM1, 2021).

Besides being consulted, in 72% of municipalities inhabitants can put a proposal on the city council's agenda. In one third or half of these municipalities this occurs at least once per year (Ostaaïjen, 2018, p. 78)



In Figure 3, most opportunities for participation seem to be located in the first half of the municipal policy-making process. In line with this, RAND Europe (2021) found that typically children's involvement (under age of 18) in policy cycles takes place at the start of the cycle, while very few mechanisms involve them in implementation, monitoring or evaluation. This was confirmed by participants of the co-creation activities at the Necker Parade: most participants believed participation should take place in the policy research phase or even before, when there is still room for change in the policies under development. They believed participation should take place this early, because they want to find out what youngsters care about and towards what future the municipality should be working. In line with this goal, they would be using broad, open and future-oriented questions (CM1, 2021).

## Key insights

The municipal decision-making process consists of five main stages: agenda setting, policy research, policy development, policy implementation and policy evaluation. Generally speaking, the process consists of cycles in which civil servants make preparations, from which the college of mayor and aldermen create a proposal, which is then established by the city council.

Usually there are several opportunities for inhabitants to influence the decision-making process, either by sharing their views on a specific matter that the municipality is working on or by starting their own initiative.

Involvement of youth is often located in the first half of the decision-making process, when there is still room for change in the policies under development. Section 4.2 will elaborate in more detail on the methods municipalities currently use to involve young people in their decision-making process.

## 3.3 Municipalities and the energy transition

*What is the energy transition and how do municipalities approach it?*

The energy transition refers to the transfer from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources, to create a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the Netherlands with 49% in 2030 and with 95-100% in 2050 (RIVM, n.d.).

According to Ebskamp & Verbraak, the energy transition can be seen as one of the greatest societal challenges of our time. In this transition, governments have a special role to play. They have to align the activities of all players in society and set the goals and pace of the transition. Municipalities are, compared to other governments, closest to the people. They decide largely how our physical environment is shaped. Because of the strong social and spacial dimension of the energy transition, municipalities have a key role to fulfil (Ebskamp & Verbraak, 2019).

### **Municipal obligations in the energy transition**

From the perspective of municipalities, the energy transition can be split up in 8 sub-transitions, as shown in Figure 5 (Ebskamp & Verbraak, 2019).

Municipalities have several obligations in the energy transition, originating from the national goals (Hooijman & Van Walen, 2019). The agenda setting stage, as described in the previous section, for these obligations therefore did not happen within the municipality, but on a national level. This means that, unlike for policies that originate from the municipality itself, the municipal organisation does not necessarily have an internal drive to take responsibility for the process and direction (IM1, 2021).

Municipal obligations in the energy transition focus on the first 3 sub-transitions (Hooijman & Van Walen, 2019):

- Drawing up a municipal “Transitievisie Warmte”, which entails proposals for alternatives for natural gas with a planning on neighbourhood level (*sub-transition 1 & 2*).
- Participation in the Regional Energy Strategy (RES), which entails regional plans for the generation of renewable energy and distribution of heat sources (*sub-transition 3*).
- Establish wind energy sites on locations designated by the province (*sub-transition 3*).

The two other municipal obligations are somewhat separate from the sub-transitions in Figure 5. The first of these obligations is getting a clear picture of the challenges for climate change adaptation, in cooperation with the province and water authorities (Hooijman & Van Walen, 2019). However, not all municipalities link climate change adaptation and mitigation measures to the energy transition, as they do not contribute to reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (IM2, 2021).

The final obligation of municipalities in the energy transition is meeting the target from the Dutch Climate Agreement of 50% local participation in the generation of sustainable energy (Hooijman & Van Walen, 2019). This entails that citizens should profit at least from 50% of energy generation projects on land, for example by making citizens 50% owner of a windmill, by investing a part of the profit in neighbourhood projects or by neighbourhoods starting their own projects (Ministerie van Economische Zaken en Klimaat, 2021). This is why the energy transition can be seen as a **participation transition**: citizens transition from passive energy consumers to involved participants (Ebskamp & Verbraak, 2019).

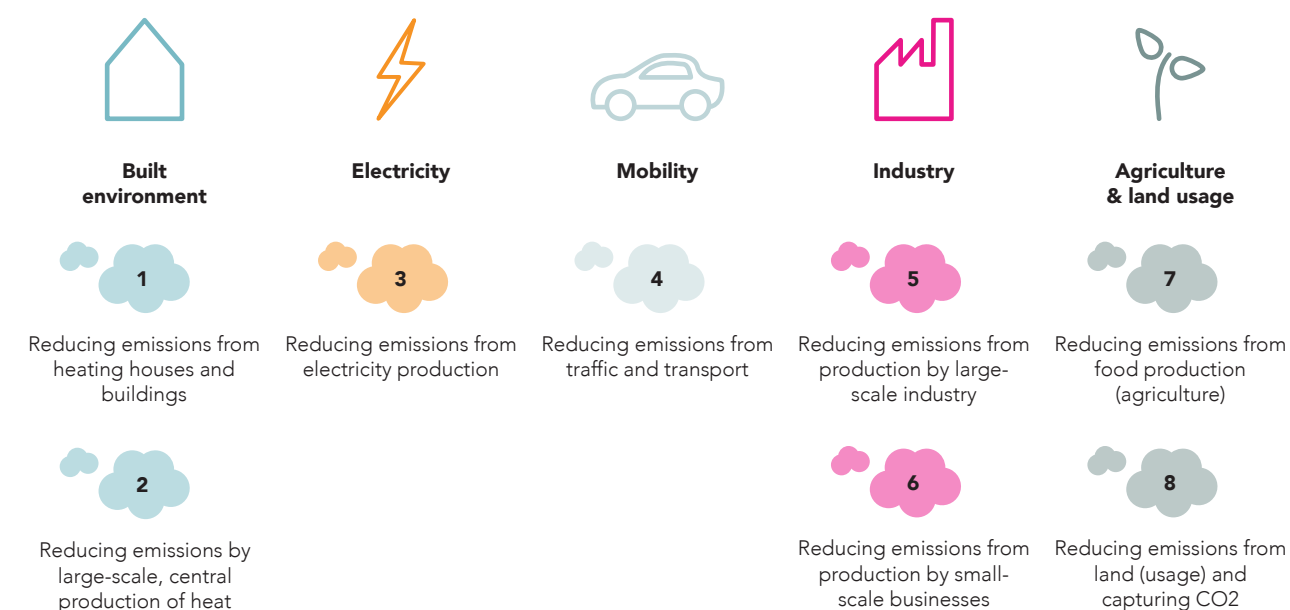


Figure 5: The 8 sub-transitions of the energy transition for municipalities (Ebskamp & Verbraak, 2019).

## Transition to the circular economy

Parallel to the energy transition, the transition to the circular economy is taking place. This transition aims to reduce the usage of primary resources with 50% in 2030 and reach a fully circular economy in 2050 (Drissen & Vollebergh, 2018). A circular economy is a system of closed loops in which resources, parts and products retain as much value as possible, renewable energy sources are used and the system is approached holistically (Het Groene Brein, 2021). While circularity is gaining attention within municipalities as a means of reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (IM2, 2021), linking the two transitions is only happening on a small scale at the moment (IE2, 2021). According to Martien Visser, municipalities should not address the transitions separately:

*“They have to be addressed together, because actually, the energy transition is a part of circularity. But, circularity doesn’t score on the energy transition ladder, and the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions you save are often emitted abroad.”*

Translated quote from an interview with Martien Visser, Lector Energy Transition at Hanzehogeschool (IE2, 2021)

Indeed, when looking at the overlap in potential reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the circular economy can contribute to a reduction of as much as 77% of Dutch greenhouse gas emissions. Figure 6 illustrates this overlap (Drissen & Vollebergh, 2018).

Concluding, you could say that the focus of municipalities in the energy transition is mostly on generating renewable energy, as well as reducing emissions from heating houses and buildings. However, a more holistic perspective on the energy transition would also include climate change adaptation and have a strong link to the circular transition. It differs per municipality whether these issues are linked to the energy transition, or are regarded separate policy areas. Participation is however certainly a central element, since the Dutch government aims for 50% local participation in the generation of renewable energy.

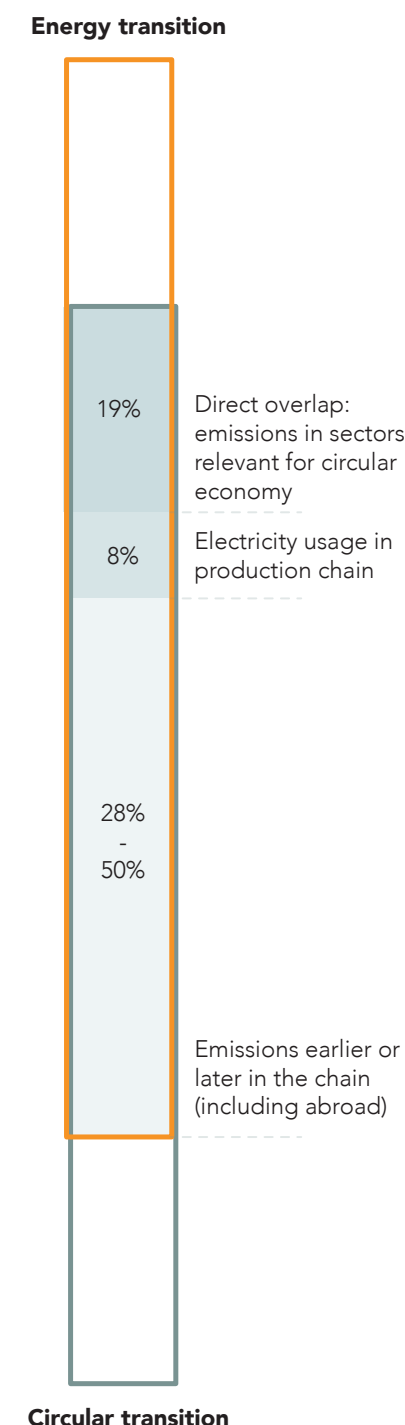


Figure 6: Overlap in greenhouse gas emissions of circular and energy transition (Drissen & Vollebergh, 2018).



## The Regional Energy Strategy (RES)

The previous section concluded that the generation of renewable energy is one of the two areas of focus of municipalities in the energy transition. To be able to plan for this sub-transition, the Netherlands have been divided in 30 energy regions, in line with the Dutch Climate Agreement. Each region researches where and how renewable energy in their region should be generated and what heat sources are available. Decisions regarding these issues are described in each region's Regional Energy Strategy (RES) (Nationaal Programma Regionale Energiestrategie, n.d.). While the RES proposals are drawn up at the regional level, all involved municipalities, provinces and water authorities separately have to agree to the plans that have been made, making the decision-making process both diffuse and complex (IM1, 2021). Figure 7 shows the organisational structure of the RES (IE1, 2021), although this structure slightly differs per region (IY1, 2021).

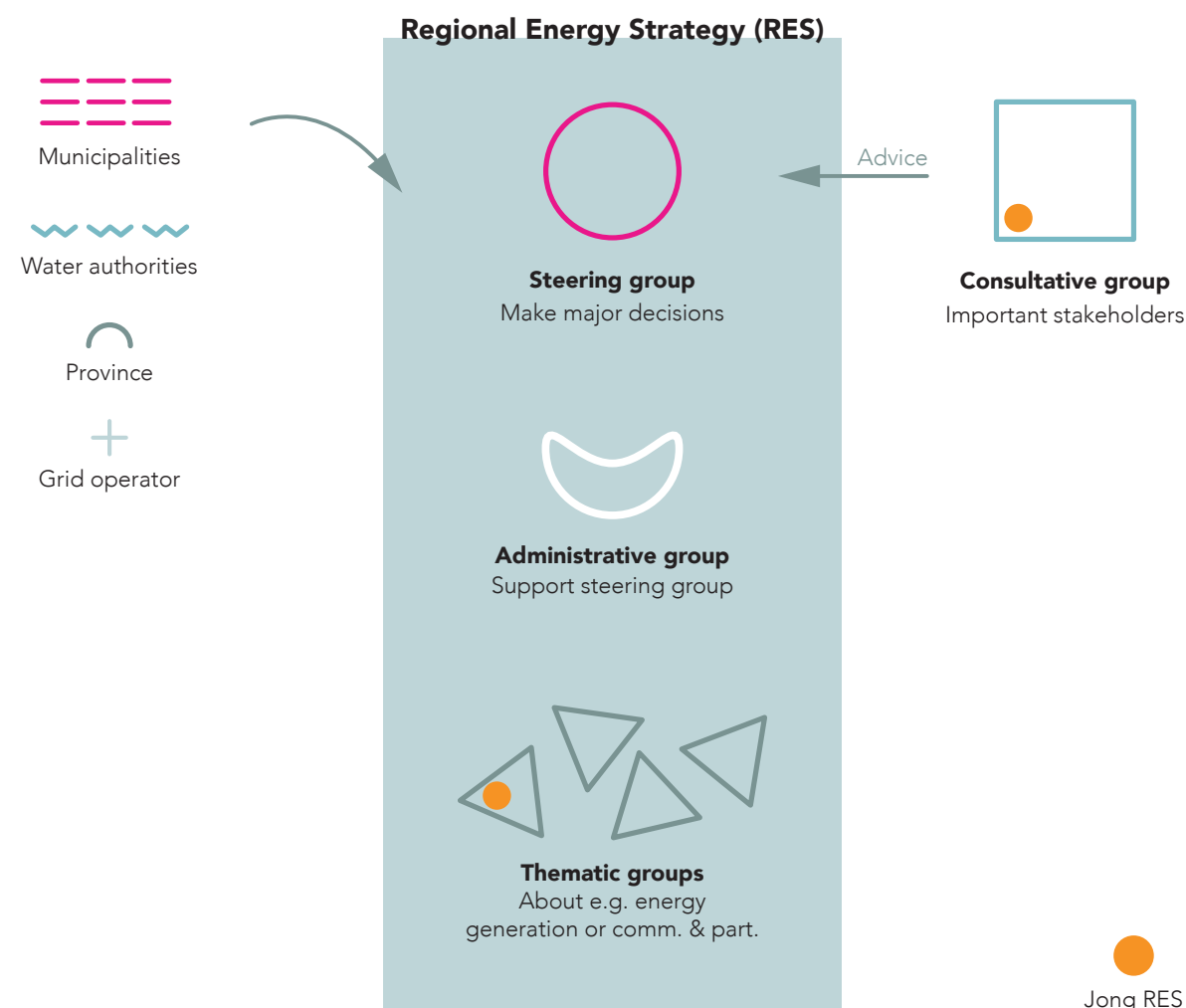


Figure 7: The organisational structure of the Regional Energy Strategy (I.E.1, 2021).

Within the RES, Jong RES (Young RES) is an advocacy organisation that aims to give the interests of young people a place in the process (IY1, 2021). Jong RES is one of the current strategies to youth participation that will be discussed in section 4.2.

## Municipal challenges in the energy transition

According to lector energy transition Martien Visser, implementing the energy transition proves to be difficult in practice (IE2, 2021). This section explores the four factors that make the transition challenging for municipalities.

Firstly, the energy transition put municipalities in charge of a new policy area, while they received very little extra resources to do so (IY1, 2021). This leading role for municipalities is further complicated, because (sustainable) energy is a new policy domain in which municipalities have limited expertise and knowledge (Ebskamp & Verbraak, 2019).

Secondly, according to Ebskamp & Verbraak (2019), municipalities have a key role in the energy transition because the transition has a strong social dimension and municipalities are the government bodies closest to citizens. This social dimension is however one of the main challenges to overcome in the energy transition. According to Martien Visser, we underestimate the social issues that we have to deal with in the transition, as the energy transition is so far mostly something for the "happy few" that have a large roof for solar panels and an electric car on their driveway. He also criticises the so-called neighbourhood approach that municipalities have to making the transition from natural gas to sustainable heat sources, as people living in a row of identical houses do not necessarily have identical interests (IE2, 2021).

This remark touches upon a third challenge of the energy transition: there are many different stakeholders involved, that all have their own interests. Ebskamp & Verbraak (2019) list as much as 26 types of stakeholders for just the first of the eight sub-transitions in Figure 5.

All these different stakeholders and interests make it terribly difficult to weigh up the interests and make a decision (IE2, 2021).

*"Every player, regardless of who, that includes local governments and national governments, has partial interests that they sometimes try to achieve across the energy transition and that makes it very complicated."*

Translated quote from an interview with Martien Visser, Lector Energy Transition at Hanzehogeschool (IE2, 2021)

According to Martien Visser, leadership is a final factor that complicates the energy transition, as many different organisations are in charge and there is not one clear “project leader” (IE2, 2021). Taking all of this into account, it can hardly surprise that municipalities see the energy transition as their greatest strategic challenge in the coming years (Ebskamp & Verbraak, 2019).

## Key insights

Dutch municipalities are key stakeholders in the energy transition, the transfer from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources. The main responsibilities of municipalities within the transition are proposing **alternatives for natural gas**, participating in the **RES** to create regional plans for the generation of renewable energy and distribution of heat sources, establishing **wind energy sites**, getting an overview of **necessary climate adaptation measures** and ensuring **50% local participation** in energy generation projects.

Parallel to the energy transition, the **circular transition** is taking place. Circularity is gaining attention as a means of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and might therefore be interesting to keep in mind when designing for the energy transition.

The energy transition is a **challenging policy area** for municipalities. They have a leading role but little experience on the topic and have to get many different stakeholders on board.





## 4 Youth participation

*This chapter explores what youth participation entails, as well as relevant frameworks, in the first subsection. The second subsection dives into the current approach to youth participation, by elaborating on the benefits and challenges of 5 more common approaches. The final subsection gives an overview of the core ingredients of youth participation based on more common approaches in the Netherlands as well as international success cases.*



# Method

Research questions and activities for Chapter 4

This chapter is the second part of the problem archaeology step of the Frame creation process. The archaeology is an in-depth investigation of the problem, its organisational setting, and earlier attempts at finding solutions to it. Understanding current approaches helps avoid the risk of getting caught in the traps leading to the initial problem (Dorst, 2015, p. 74).

This chapter investigates three main research questions that are important to the problem and earlier attempts at finding solutions to it:

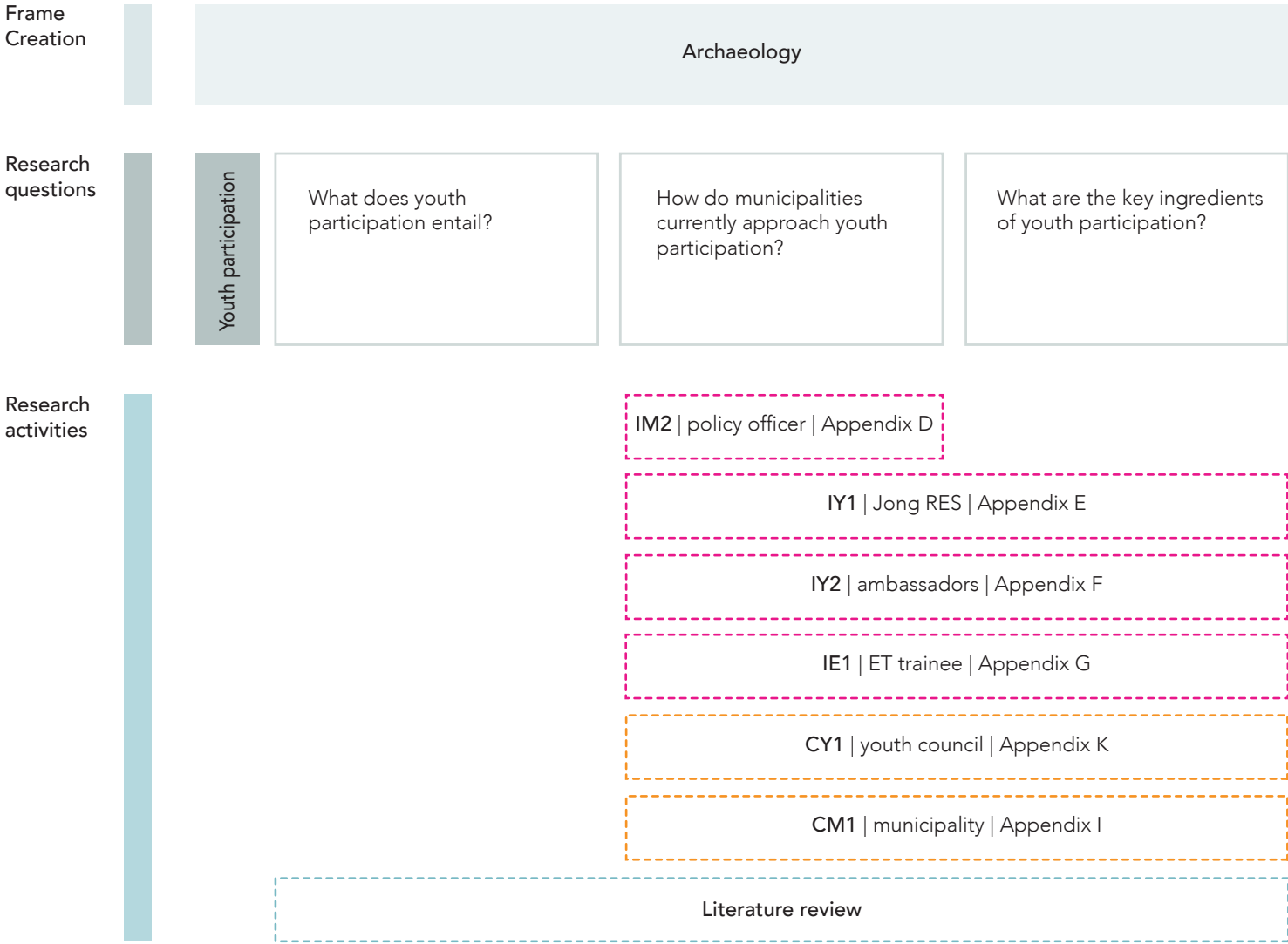
- 1. What does youth participation entail?
- 2. How do municipalities currently approach youth participation?
- 3. What are the key ingredients of youth participation?

Several research activities were undertaken to answer these research questions. For the first question, through literature review background information on youth participation was acquired such as the legal imperative, children’s ability to participate and relevant frameworks for youth participation. Furthermore, a basic understanding of the current approaches and key ingredients of youth participation was gained through literature review, which was enriched with insights from semi-structured interviews and co-creation sessions. Figure 8 shows the different research activities that contributed to answering the three research questions.

Figure 8: Research questions and activities for Chapter 4

In an interview with a policy officer of sustainability, insights about municipalities’ current approach to youth participation were gained (IM2, Appendix D). To learn more about their approach to youth participation and key ingredients of those approaches, interviews with a representative from youth advocacy organisation Jong RES (IY1, Appendix E) and the initiator of a youth ambassadors program (IY2, Appendix F) were conducted. Additionally, a creative session with a youth council (CY1, Appendix K) was organised, in which the Ikigai framework was used to learn about the youth council’s purpose and capabilities, and the needs of the municipality they fulfil (Hogenhuis, 2018).

An interview with a national energy trainee (IE1, Appendix G) and the co-creation activities at the Necker Parade with mayors, registrars, city councillors and aldermen (CM1, Appendix I) provided further insight into how (local) governments approach youth participation as well as their perspective on key ingredients.



# 4.1 Framing youth participation

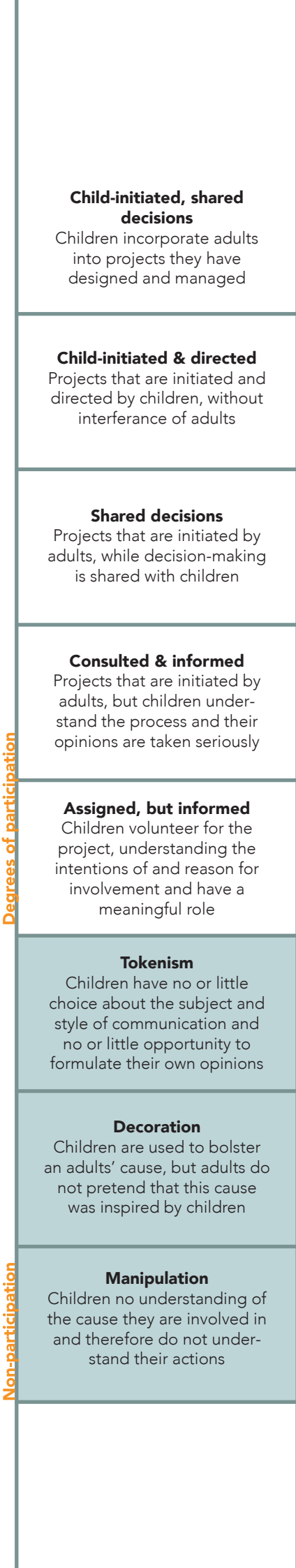
What does youth participation entail?

Children’s right to give their views in matters that affect them and have these views given due weight is part of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (Lundy, 2007). The UNCRC is the most widely and rapidly ratified human rights treaty in all of history; only 3 countries (South Sudan, Somalia & the USA) have not ratified it (Human Rights Watch, 2014). Article 12 of the UNCRC states:

- 1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.
- 2. For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.

(OHCHR, 1990)

This Article forms a legal imperative for actively involving children in decision-making on matters that, according to themselves, affect them, instead of it being an option that is given by the grace of adults (Lundy, 2007). As millions of youngsters have participated in climate protests all over the world (Van Zoelen, 2019) and 75-85% of Dutch youngsters are worried about climate change (Habraken et al., 2021), they clearly have a view on climate change and believe it affects them.



Besides being affected by the matter at hand, children’s ability to form their own views is mentioned in Article 12 as a prerequisite for participation. According to Hart (1992), the ability to truly participate depends on the basic competence of taking another perspective, while maintaining your own view, which develops through adolescence (although the ages can vary according to individual characteristics of the child and culture):

- **Between 5 and 9 years old**, a child becomes capable of differentiating the psychological and physical characteristics of a person, realizing that everyone has their own subjective world view.
- **Between 7 and 12 years old**, children start taking a self-reflective look at their intentions and realize other people do the same, enabling them to put themselves in the other person’s shoes.
- **Between 10 and 15 years old**, children can coordinate their own perspective with that others simultaneously.
- **From the age of 12** children can develop the ability to imagine multiple perspectives that together form a generalized, moral, legal or societal perspective which individuals can share.

Adults however have a strong tendency to underestimate children’s competence while involving them in events to influence a cause and sometimes have children merely act out predetermined roles. To distinguish between models of (non-) participation of children, Hart developed a Ladder of Participation (Figure 9). The ladder metaphor was borrowed from Arnstein (1969), using new categories. Although children’s ability to participate varies greatly with their development, and children do not always need to operate on the highest levels of the ladder, according to Hart participation should maximize opportunities for children to participate at the top level of their abilities (Hart, 1992).

This Ladder of Participation highlights several important elements of youth participation. Although the concept of participation is difficult to define, according to Crowley & Moxon (2017) youth participation inherently involves young people having agency, forming opinions, taking action and exerting influence.

*‘Inherent in all definitions of youth participation are young people who have agency, form opinions, take action and exert influence.’*  
(Crowley & Moxon, 2017)

When looking at the possible forms of youth participation, Crowley & Moxon (2017) distinguish five different types:

- 1. **Youth councils, parliaments, boards and other formal structures** - bodies that represent the views of youngsters to decision-makers.
- 2. **Co-management and co-production** - youngsters and adults share decision-making about an organisation or project.

Figure 9: Ladder of Youth Participation (Hart, 1992)

3. **Deliberative youth participation** - youngsters from all backgrounds are included in public debate about a decision.
4. **Youth activism and protest** - youngsters are involved in democratic protest and campaigning groups to influence public decision-making.
5. **Young people's digital participation** - connecting youngsters to decision makers in public authorities through the internet, mobile technology and social media, aiming to influence decisions.

A participation type that does not fit in this typology are participatory spaces, that focus on the creation of a setting and environment that encourages long-term participation. It is however challenging to find examples of this form including evidence of youngsters influencing decision-making and participating (Crowley & Moxon, 2017).

Besides Hart's (1992) Ladder of Participation and the five forms of youth participation in Crowley & Moxon (2017), participation can differ in terms of timing. Most mechanisms for participation are **(semi-)permanent structures**, e.g. youth councils. **Project-based mechanisms** are characterized by the fact that they are time-limited, while **one-off consultations** are both time- and topic-limited (RAND Europe, 2021).

## Key insights

Children's right to give their views in matters that affect them and have these views given due weight is part of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child, the most widely and rapidly ratified human rights treaty in all of history.

Children's ability to truly participate depends on competence of taking another perspective, while maintaining your own view, which children develop through adolescence.

Hart's (1992) Ladder of Participation shows different models of participation, with varying levels of influence for participants. Crowley & Moxon (2017) distinguish between formal structures such as youth councils, co-management and -production, deliberative youth participation, youth activism and digital participation. A final lens through which youth participation can be regarded is the timing: (semi-)permanent structures, project-based mechanisms and one-off consultations (RAND Europe, 2021).

## 4.2 Current approach youth participation

*How do municipalities currently approach youth participation?*

Since the decentralisations in the social domain in 2015, municipalities are key public authorities in Dutch youth participation processes. However, municipalities' attention for and approaches to youth participation varies (RAND Europe, 2021).

In 2016, for 66% of Dutch municipalities youth participation was a policy objective, while 18% was planning on making it a policy objective. An average of 73% of Dutch municipalities involved young people in policy-making, ranging from 67% of the smallest municipalities (<20.000 inhabitants), to 94% of the largest municipalities (100.000< inhabitants). In terms of level of participation, there has been an increase in the higher levels of youth participation: giving youngsters a voice and stimulating their initiatives (Mak, Gilsing & Wróblewska, 2016). In line with these findings, the mayors, aldermen, municipal councillors and registrars at the Necker Parade believed youth participation is very important and should be applied more in municipal policy-making (CM1, 2021).



To learn more about municipalities’ current approach to youth participation, five relatively common approaches are analysed in more detail. These approaches each represent one of the five categories from the typology of Crowley & Moxon (2017) mentioned in the previous section:

- 1. **Youth council** - a formal structure that represents youngsters
- 2. **Youth Ambassadors** - co-management and -production
- 3. **Regular participation evening** - deliberative participation
- 4. **Jong RES** - activism & protest
- 5. **Swipocratie** - digital participation

Figure 10 compares these five different approaches to youth participation on their relation to the municipality, their location on the Ladder of Youth Participation (Hart, 1992) and their timing: a (semi-)permanent structure, a project-based mechanism or a one-off consultation (RAND Europe, 2021).

The remainder of this subsection will dive deeper into the five different approaches, whether they have been successful, what challenges they have encountered and what can be learned from them.

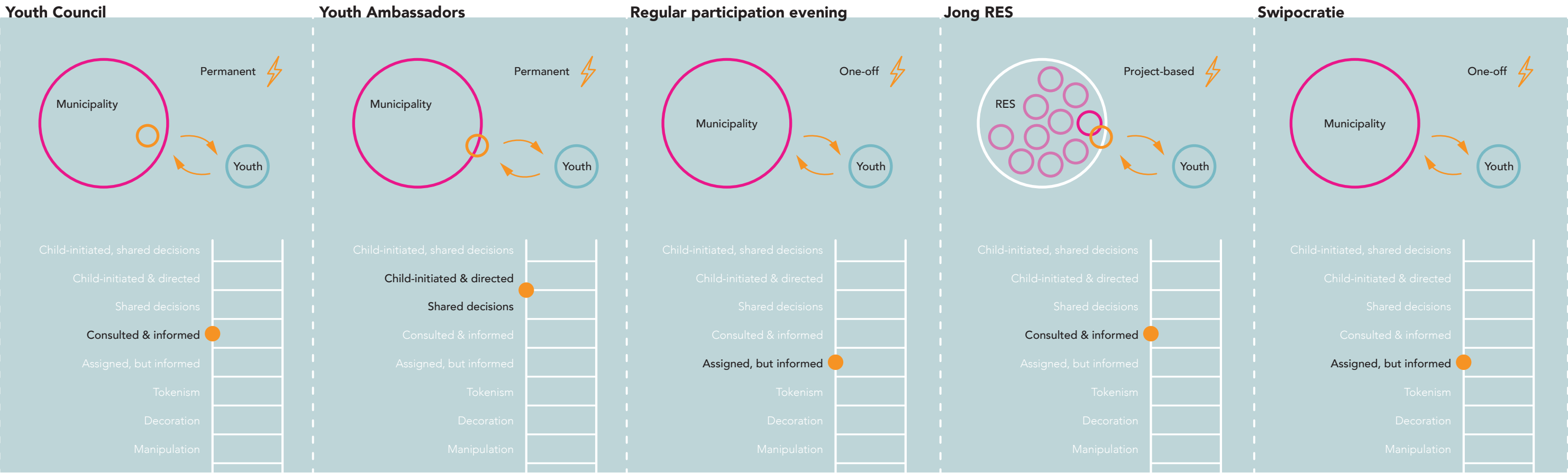
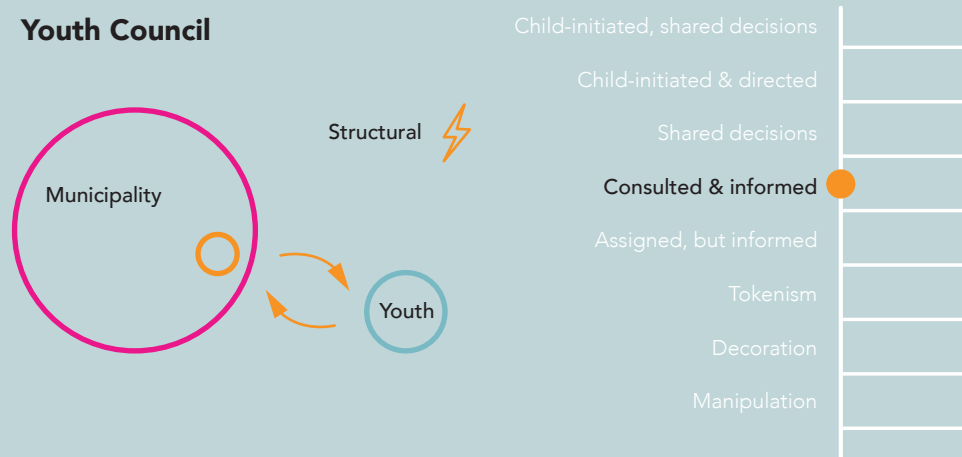


Figure 10: Comparison of current strategies to youth participation



## Youth Council



A little over one in five municipalities in the Netherlands have installed a youth council (Ostaijen, 2018). A youth council often takes shape as a structural consultation platform and advisory body to the city council (ProDemos, n.d.).

### Benefits

Being part of the youth council gives youngsters an opportunity to contribute to their community by giving young people a voice in their municipality. The youth council can be the bridge between the municipality and youngsters and create more cohesion in a municipality. They can keep the municipality on its toes with their new, fresh perspective. For the youngsters themselves the youth council provides an opportunity for personal development and networking (CY1, 2021).

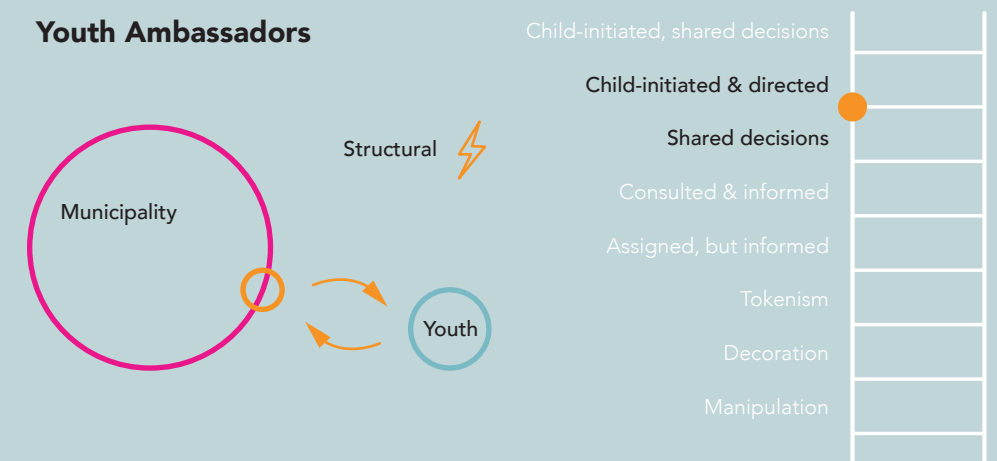
### Challenges

According to ProDemos (n.d.), there are however a lot of pitfalls that municipalities are not aware of (in time).

1. There is a mismatch between the goals and ways of working of a municipality and youngsters (ProDemos, n.d.). Youngsters in a youth council often have a fixed division of tasks (taking notes, chairing, keeping track of finances). These are activities that a lot of youngsters do not enjoy and cause them to drop out (IY2, 2021).
2. The municipality underestimates the structural financial and professional support needed (ProDemos, n.d.).
3. Young people want to see results quickly (ProDemos, n.d.), and some would rather act instead of talking and thinking along (Movisie, 2020). All of this does not fit with a youth council.
4. A youth council is far from representative for young people in general (CM1, 2021). It is a limited group that declines over time (ProDemos, n.d.) and participants are usually articulate, skilled and people who enjoy the discourse with a municipality (Movisie, 2020). This was also apparent in the youth council that participated in my creative session: of around 20 members, 5 were from the same 2 families (CY1, 2021). On top of that, it is difficult for the youth council to reach a larger (representative) group of youngsters (CY1, 2021; ProDemos, n.d.).

A concern that makes municipalities reluctant to implement more formal approaches to youth participation such as a youth council, is that this might make youngsters too much "part of the system", losing the authentic youth perspective that makes their contribution unique (CM1, 2021; Movisie, 2020). Furthermore, some civil servants and public administrators are held back by a fear of negative feedback or publicity from a youth council (Movisie, 2020).

## Youth Ambassadors



Youth ambassadors are a group of youngsters that get the opportunity to contribute to their municipality in a way that fits their own ambitions. They can organize an event, start a project or give advice to the city council, aldermen or another organisation in the municipality. In the municipality of Waalwijk, the youth ambassadors are a group of around 15 youngsters aged 14-24 (IY2, 2021).

### Benefits

One core benefit of a youth ambassadors program is that youngsters are quite close to the municipality, but at the same time independent. They get to decide themselves what kind of projects they want to take on. This provides opportunities for youngsters that want to give advice to their municipality, as well as youngsters that would rather do their own projects and immediately see the results of their efforts (IY2, 2021).

*"That they really do have that certain degree of autonomy. That they are allowed to come up with their own ideas, that they are very much empowered and supported. So they are not told: 'you must do this and that', but that they can undertake things themselves and also experience that they have the possibilities to make their own choices and that they are supported in this."*

Translated quote from an interview with the initiator of the Youth Ambassador programme at the municipality of Waalwijk (IY2, 2021)

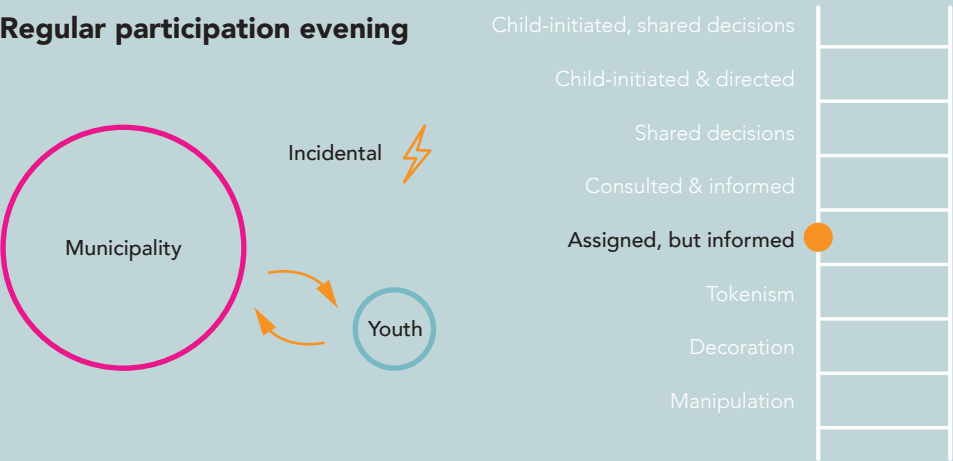


The supportive role of the facilitator from the municipality is crucial in taking away thresholds (such as contacting the right people in- or outside the municipality or keeping track of the budget) and forming a bridge between the municipality and youngsters (IY2, 2021).

Challenges

The main challenge for a youth ambassadors program is, as for youth councils, representation. It proves challenging to involve a larger group of youngsters besides the ambassadors and being a youth ambassador requires social skills that for example youngsters in vocational education might lack. Another challenge is the fact that being a youth ambassador requires time that not all youngsters might have or want to spend on it. Mainly older youngsters already spend a lot of their time on school, sports and a job, and do not have time for an extracurricular activity that does not earn you any money (IY2, 2021).

Regular participation evening



85% of Dutch municipalities involve their citizens in consultation/ participation evenings. During these evenings, citizens are informed and consulted on a specific matter (Ostaaijen, 2018, p. 75-77).

Benefits

Participation evenings give involved citizens that want to contribute to their municipality the opportunity to do so (Ostaaijen, 2018, p. 77). The fact that these evenings are so common illustrates that to civil servants involving society as a whole in policy-making is an important goal. For matters that have a lot of impact on peoples lives, such as the energy transition, they believe it is crucial to involve citizens as early and much as possible to make a plan together (IM2, 2021).

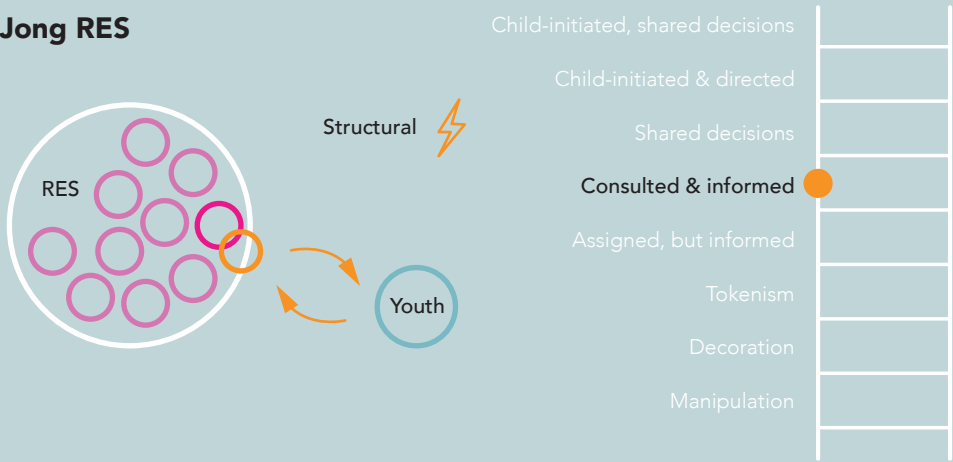
Challenges

However, like many other participation approaches, these evenings attract a 'participation elite' of older, highly educated,

male participants that have no migration background (Ostaaijen, 2018, p. 77). Although civil servants want to attract a diverse group of people, they do not seem to be able to using this method. A civil servant that was interviewed for this project reported that during participation evenings on the energy transition, participants discussed the importance of involving youngsters in such evenings as well. While the municipality shared this concern, they were unable to attract youngsters to the participation evenings. They even tried to attract youngsters from or through the youth council, which proved fruitless as well (IM2, 2021).

As the participants in these evenings are far from representative for the municipality as a whole, the outcomes are too. This lack of inclusivity can, when blindly implemented in policy-making, actually cause policy to be less inclusive instead of more. Because of this, municipalities have to make their own decision instead of blindly copying outcomes of participation evenings, also weighing the interests of the people who did not participate (IY1, 2021).

Jong RES



Jong RES is an interest group that aims to give young people's interests a place in the process of creating the Regional Energy Strategies (RES). Young people are not represented by political parties or interest groups, so Jong RES jumped into the gap to connect one Jong RES representative to each RES. As every RES is differently organized, the Jong RES representatives employ different strategies to champion the interests of youngsters. These strategies range from giving input on the RES on behalf of youngsters as one of the stakeholders in the process, to facilitating youth participation in the RES, to lobbying in the individual municipalities that are part of the RES to get youth participation on the agenda (IY1, 2021).

Benefits

Jong RES is an organisation that is initiated truly for and by young people. The representatives get a lot of freedom from the national organisation and coordinators to experiment and choose their own approach. They champion the interests of young people in the RES that would have otherwise not been taken into account in all

regions. One example of impact is that a municipality in the region Rotterdam The Hague will now include a participation section in each bill they send to the city council (IY1, 2021).

Challenges

The two main challenges of Jong RES are finding their own role and position in the RES, and involving a larger group of youngsters in what they do. The former is challenging because the RES is complex and resources are limited, making participation “instead of a must have, a nice to have” and very dependent on the responsible people. If Jong RES representatives do get the opportunity to participate, they attach their name to the end result and cannot be critical afterwards (IY1, 2021).

The latter presents a challenge because youngsters are not interested in the energy transition or the RES at all, however interested they may be in the broader and more abstract topic of “climate change” (IY1, 2021).

*“The moment you start talking about the energy transition, there is no room for abstraction. When you talk about energy transition, it’s not: ‘oh, we have to take action for the climate’ in broad, abstract terms. That it is easy to talk about it with visions and to take people along. Energy transition is directly about: ‘okay, if we place a windmill, where do we place it?’”*

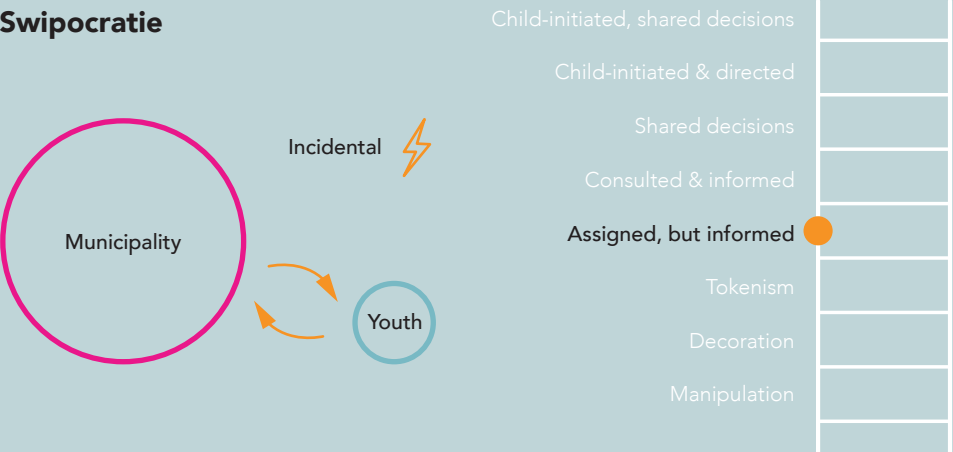
Translated quote from an interview with Pelle Meurink, Jong RES representative in RES region Rotterdam Den Haag (IY1, 2021)

As reaching youngsters and making them enthusiastic for the RES is already a challenge, involving an inclusive group is near impossible. Jong RES is trying to involve youngsters in all kinds of ways, but did not have any structural success yet with involving a representative group (IY1, 2021). As the RES is very technical and complex, Pelle Meurink explained:

*“If you also try to link that to groups that are a bit behind in it anyway, that’s almost completely impossible.”*

Translated quote from an interview with Pelle Meurink, Jong RES representative in RES region Rotterdam Den Haag (IY1, 2021)

Swipocratie



Swipocratie is an accessible app that allows youngsters to give their opinion on a wide range of topics by swiping left or right. It provides insight into their preferences, attracts attention in a playful way and allows for collection of contact details of youngsters that are interested in follow-up activities (Habraken et al., 2021).

Benefits

The largest benefit of apps such as Swipocratie is their accessibility: youngsters only have to spend a few minutes swiping on their phone. This makes it easier to reach a larger group of youngsters. In a campaign in 2019, 2.200 youngsters participated using Swipocratie in eleven municipalities in three weeks time. The fact that Swipocratie can be an appetizer for further involvement is another great opportunity.

Challenges

Swipocratie has however not been effective in all cases. The app is expensive (IE1, 2021), which presents a problem because the resources that municipalities have for the energy transition are scarce (IY1, 2021). Furthermore, the app may not be as accessible as it seems: when Swipocratie was used by RES West Brabant to involve youngsters, mostly highly educated youngsters from privileged backgrounds participated (IE1, 2021). This is in line with literature, which reports that digital technologies can widen the gap between social classes as they act as a barrier to youngsters from marginalized or disadvantaged backgrounds that have limited access (Crowley & Moxon, 2017; De Vries, 2020). A concern that municipalities have, is that these apps provide relatively shallow information about the preferences of youngsters (just left or right, yes or no). As a consequence, they believe such apps can only fulfil a supporting role in youth participation (CM1, 2021)



As this section illustrates, a lot of municipalities are aware of the importance of youth participation and try to make it work using a wide range of approaches. While we can learn a lot from these efforts, as section 4.3 will illustrate, municipalities are not satisfied with the results (CM1, 2021; Movisie, 2020). Mak, Gilsing & Wróblewska (2016) found that 62% of municipalities felt that youth participation was in its infancy in their municipality in 2016, while only 37% subscribed to this in 2009. In the same study in 2009 only 22% of municipalities believed they had no need for tools to help them involve young people. According to the NJi (Dutch Youth institute) and Movisie, despite municipalities' considerable efforts on the topic, in 2020 the dissatisfaction and need for tools had not changed (Movisie, 2020).

The challenges for each of the different approaches to youth participation explored in this section show, in line with these findings, that involving youngsters is a challenge for municipalities indeed. These challenges will be further explored as paradoxes in Chapter 6.

## Key insights

Since the decentralisations in the social domain in 2015, municipalities are key public authorities in Dutch youth participation processes. In 2016, 73% of Dutch municipalities involved young people in policy-making. There has been an increase in the **higher levels of youth participation**: giving young people a voice and stimulating their initiatives.

Five relatively common approaches to youth participation (youth council, youth ambassadors, regular participation evening, Jong RES and Swipocratie) and their benefits and challenges were elaborated on further in this section. A key insight is that youth participation is **challenging**, especially on the topic of the energy transition in which does not interest young people. All approaches struggle with **reaching and involving a representative group**, and most municipalities feel they have a need for tools that help them to involve young people. The challenges of youth participation will be elaborated on further in Chapter 6.

## 4.3 Key elements of youth participation

*What are the key ingredients of youth participation?*

While the previous section showed that youth participation is challenging for municipalities, there is nonetheless a lot that can be learned from the successes and failures of current approaches to youth participation. This section explores the key ingredients of youth participation, using Lundy's conceptualization of Article 12 of the UNCRC.

Section 4.1 referred to Article 12 of the UNCRC, which states that children have the right to give their view in matters that affect them and have their view given due weight. According to Lundy, there are two key elements in this Article: children have the right to express their view, and the right to have their view given due weight. In her conceptualization of Article 12 combined with other relevant Articles of the UNCRC, expressing your view requires both a **voice** and a **space**, while having your view given due weight requires **influence** and an **audience** (2007). These four elements are being used to structure the key ingredients of youth participation in Table 4.

Prerequisite for meaningful involvement of children in decision-making is creating an opportunity, a space, in which they can express their views (Lundy, 2007). In line with Article 12 of the UNCRC, the first important step is **asking children what matters they feel impact them**, as well as whether, and if so how, they would like to participate and influence decisions on that matter (CM1, 2021; Crowley & Moxon, 2017; IY2, 2021; Lundy, 2007; Movisie, 2020). When creating a space for participation, it is vital to acknowledge that young people are a heterogeneous group and therefore **cater for diverse participation styles and forms** (Crowley & Moxon, 2017; IY1, 2021). Digital technologies may lower the threshold to participate, but can be a barrier to young people from disadvantaged backgrounds (Crowley & Moxon, 2017; De Vries, 2020; IC1, 2021). The most successful participation strategies have both an online and an offline component (Crowley & Moxon, 2017).

Facilitating **participation in groups** is another key element. Youngsters enjoy having discussions and acting together, because this makes them feel part of a group, it gives more weight to their opinions and they learn from each other (Crowley & Moxon, 2017; De Vries, 2020; IY2, 2021; RAND Europe, 2021). Furthermore, according to RAND Europe (2021), the most successful mechanisms allow children to participate in all stages of policy-making. **Structural participation** helps build capacity and trust, creating a safe space for children to participate (CM1, 2021; Crowley & Moxon, 2017; RAND Europe, 2021). Finally participation should strike the right balance between consultation or advocacy and **fun, easy and attractive** activities that lower the threshold to participate (Crowley & Moxon, 2017; Habraken et al., 2021; IE1, 2021; Lundy, 2007).

According to Article 12 of the UNCRC, children have a right to express their views if they are capable of forming their own views (Lundy, 2007). To enable children to do so, it is important to provide them with the right **information** about the topics they are working on, the local environment and the municipal organisation as well as the skills to make sense of that information (CM1, 2021; Crowley & Moxon, 2017; IY2., 2021; Lundy, 2007). In line with this, young people value **transparency** about the activities youngsters are invited to participate in, the degree of influence, the time frame and possible outcomes (CM1, 2021; Crowley & Moxon, 2017). Besides information, **support and guidance from adults** helps children to feel empowered to form and express their views (IY2., 2021; Lundy, 2007; RAND Europe, 2021).

*“The facilitator is the link between the youngsters and what they want to achieve.”*  
Translated quote from an interview with the initiator of the Youth Ambassador programme at the municipality of Waalwijk (IY2, 2021)



Having the opportunity to express your view



Being facilitated in expressing your view





Requirements	Key elements	Explanation
 Space Having the opportunity to express your view	Starting from the children	Asking children which matters they feel impact them and whether, and if so how, they want to be involved.
	Facilitating different methods	Acknowledging the heterogeneity of youngsters by offering a plurality of styles and forms of participation, e.g. mixing digital and physical.
	Facilitating groups	Youngsters enjoy participating together, as this gives greater weight to their views and opinions.
	Structurally	Structural involvement in all stages of policy-making to build capacity and trust.
	Fun factor	Balancing fun and consultation/advocacy to lower the threshold.
 Voice Being facilitated in expressing your view	Information	Providing youngsters with the right information to enable them to form their own views.
	Transparency	Transparency about the activities, degree of influence, time frame and possible outcomes.
	Support & guidance	Support & guidance from adults to empower youngsters to form and express their views.
	Facilitating different media	Giving youngsters the freedom to express their views in a way that suits them.
 Audience Your view is listened to	Not just heard, but listened to	Have your views truly listened to by decision makers.
	Building a bridge	Building a bridge between youngsters and the municipality to create mutual understanding.
	Commitment	Commitment from (high-ranking) decision makers to children's participation.
 Influence Your view is acted upon (as appropriate)	Actual influence	Ideally, young people's opinions, concerns and ideas are acted upon and implemented.
	(Quick) results	Having to wait too long until the results of participation are apparent causes youngsters to drop out.
	Feedback	Giving feedback on how the input from young people was taken into account and why it was acted upon or not.
	Youngsters taking action	Youngsters highly value acting rather than talking and implementing projects themselves.

Table 4: Key ingredients of youth participation



Finally, when youngsters express their views, in line with Article 13 of the UNCRC, it is important that they may do so in a variety of ways, using a **medium that suits them**: e.g. orally, written, through visuals or art (Crowley & Moxon, 2021; IY2, 2021; Lundy, 2007).

Article 12 of the UNCRC states that children’s views should be given due weight, implicitly indicating that their views should **be listened to**, not just heard, by decision makers (Lundy, 2007). While this is a key enabler and motivator for youth participation (Habracken et al., 2021; IY2, 2021), many studies find that this is currently lacking and acknowledge the need to train adults in listening skills (Crowley & Moxon, 2017; Lundy, 2007). To make this possible, a **bridge needs to be built** between the municipality and youngsters to create a better mutual understanding (Arnstein, 2019; CM1, 2021; IY2, 2021). This can for example be realized by involving a coach from the municipality, or involving a youth council in a participation project (CY1, 2021; IY2, 2021).

*“The municipality is willing, and the young people are willing. But you have to connect them.”*

Translated quote from an interview with the initiator of the Youth Ambassador programme at the municipality of Waalwijk (IY2, 2021)

A final element that ensures that young people’s view is listened to is **commitment from (high-ranking) decision makers**, for example by including children’s participation in policies and plans (IY1, 2021; IY2, 2021; RAND Europe, 2021).

*“Trying that the municipality **MUST** go that extra mile, instead of trying to go it.”*

Translated quote from an interview with Pelle Meurink, representative of Jong RES, region Rotterdam Den Haag (IY1, 2021)

The final element in Lundy’s (2007) conceptualisation of Article 12 to have children’s view given due weight is influence: children’s view is acted upon (as appropriate). Ideally this means that young people’s ideas, opinions and concerns are taken seriously and are acted upon or implemented, so young people see the **positive impact** of their participation in their own environment (CM1., 2021; Crowley & Moxon, 2017; IE1, 2021). Furthermore, it is important that youngsters **do not have to wait for a year** until they see the results of their participation, to prevent them from dropping out (IY2., 2021). In reality, influence cannot universally be guaranteed (Lundy, 2007). However, it is possible to ensure that children get



Your view is listened to



Your view is acted upon (as appropriate)

**feedback** on how their views and ideas were taken into account, and why they were acted upon or not (CM1, 2021; Crowley & Moxon, 2021; Habracken et al., 2021; IY2., 2021; Lundy, 2007).

*“A bit of feedback and feeling seen and heard is really very important, otherwise young people will drop out at some point.”*

Translated quote from an interview with the initiator of the Youth Ambassador programme at the municipality of Waalwijk (IY2, 2021)

A final ingredient to consider is the possibility of youngsters taking action themselves. **Acting rather than talking**, creating and implementing projects is valued highly by youngsters and generates change (Crowley & Moxon, 2017).



# Key insights

Using Lundy’s (2007) conceptualization of Article 12 of the UNCRC, this section articulated the key ingredients of youth participation that ensure young people have a space to express their view, a voice, audience and influence.

Ingredients for a **space** are ensuring participation starts from the children, facilitating different forms (online and offline) of participation and participation in groups, and ensuring participation is structural and fun. Forming an opinion and expressing your **voice** requires information, transparency, support and guidance, and room for different media. Having an **audience** requires the feeling of being listened to, a bridge between the municipality and young people and commitment from decision makers. Finally, **influence** can be established through actual influence and results, but also through feedback, or by letting young people take action themselves.



## 5. Citisens

*This chapter elaborates on Citisens, the client of this graduation project. The first subsection provides insight into the founding of Citisens and their relation with Necker van Naem, the company they originated from. The second subsection elaborates on Citisens' clients, their needs and the approach Citisens uses to fulfil those needs. The final subsection focuses on Citisens' strategy, using the Ikigai framework.*





# Method

Research questions and activities for Chapter 5

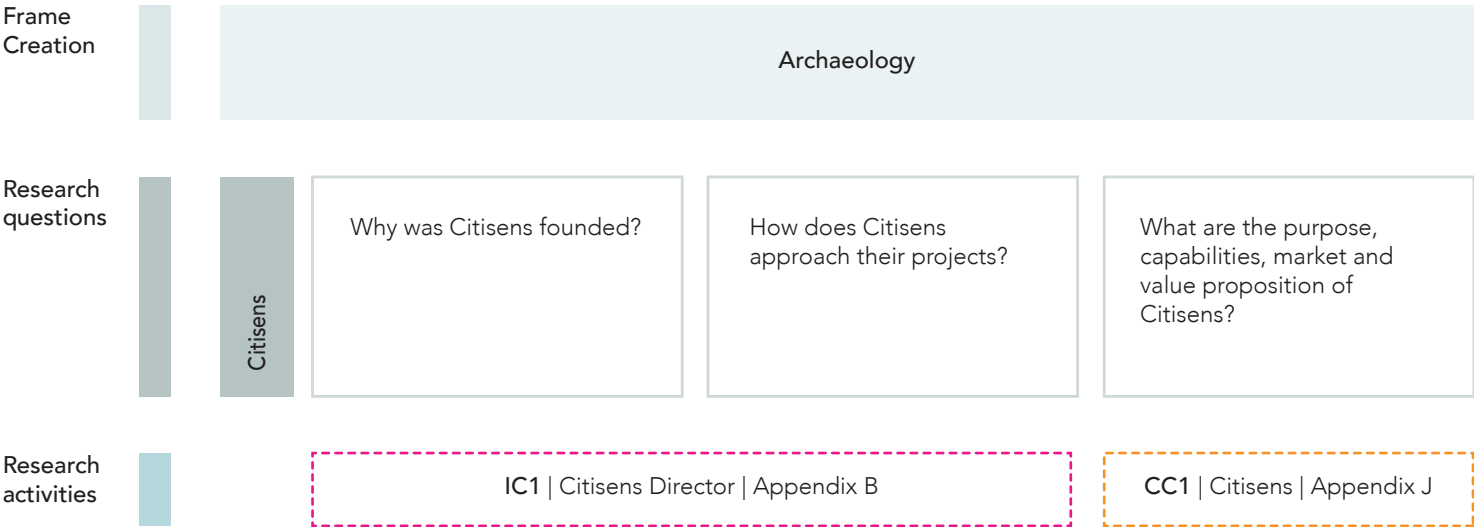
This chapter is the third part of the problem archaeology step of the Frame creation process. The archaeology is an in-depth investigation of the problem, its organisational setting, and earlier attempts at finding solutions to it. This step aims to provide insight into the client’s role as well as the organisation’s dynamics (Dorst, 2015, p. 74).

This chapter investigates three main research questions that are relevant to the organisational setting of client of this project:

- 1. Why was Citisens founded?
- 2. How does Citisens approach their projects?
- 3. What are the purpose, capabilities, market and value proposition of Citisens?

Figure 11: Research questions and activities for Chapter 5

Figure 11 shows the different research activities that contributed to answering the three research questions. Insights on the first two questions were acquired during a semi-structured interview with Citisens director Nicolette Ouwerling (IC1, Appendix B). To answer the last question a creative session with Citisens employees was organized (CC1, Appendix J), using the Ikigai framework to learn more about their purpose, capabilities, market and value proposition (Hogenhuis, 2018).



# 5.1 Introduction to Citisens

Why was Citisens founded?

Citisens is a consulting firm that supports their clients (mostly municipalities) in reaching citizens and involving them in their projects through data, research and participation processes. The company is situated in Utrecht and consists of +/-15 researchers, consultants and graphic designers.

The company was founded as a new label in the market in 2017 by Necker van Naem, a consulting firm focusing on public administration. In 2010 Necker saw an opportunity: using the data from voting aid applications to give governments insight into the opinions of their citizens about current affairs. Following this, they made their own voting aid application, MijnStem, which produced a large quantity of data and insights. At the same time, they were working on a segmentation model for societal issues and engagement to show the differences in citizen preferences, and experienced an increase in demand for guidance in support base and participation processes. This caused them to found Citisens as a subsidiary company, because it focuses on different topics and serves a different target group (citizens, as opposed to politicians or administrators). Table 5 shows the differences between Citisens and Necker van Naem in terms of topics they work on, how they present themselves to the outside world and the type of clients they work for (IC1, 2021).

	Citisens	Necker van Naem
Topics	Participation	Integrity, appointment of Mayors, Court of Auditors Studies
Branding	Younger, hipper, speaks the people's language	Classical consulting firm, people in suits.
Clients	Project managers, communication departments	Aldermen, administrators, registrars

Table 5: Citisens vs Necker van Naem (IC1, 2021).

Although Citisens and Necker are different labels in the market, they share an office, go on work trips and have lunch together, and collaborate closely in mixed teams on about 50% of their projects. Citisens knows how to involve citizens on difficult issues, but increasingly clients want to know how they should implement the outcomes of participation processes. This weighing of interests is part of Necker's expertise, causing Necker and Citisens to collaborate ever more often. From a distance Necker and Citisens may look like two separate companies, but on the inside it feels like one company: all employees, from either Necker or Citisens, regard each other colleagues (IC1, 2021).

## Key insights

Citisens is a consulting firm that supports their clients in reaching and involving citizens through data, research and participation projects. The company was founded as a new label in the market by Necker van Naem for their voting aid application and segmentation model.

Although Necker and Citisens work on different topics for different target groups, they collaborate closely in mixed teams in about 50% of their projects. Increasingly clients want to know how they should implement the outcomes of participation processes, which is part of Necker's expertise, causing them to collaborate ever more often.



## 5.2 The Citisens approach

*How does Citisens approach their projects?*

According to Citisens director Nicolette Ouwerling (IC1, 2021), their customer demand can be divided into three main questions:

1. "I want more insight into participation and communication preferences."
2. "I want to know what people think about a topic within this specific project."
3. "I want a complete participatory process, guided by a specialized partner."

These three questions form the base of the Citisens approach, as shown in Figure 12. The first step, acquisition, is a general step that is not linked to a specific customer demand. Following that step however, there are three options: 1. Area analysis, 2. Enquiry, and 3. Deepening and making choices. These three are directly linked to the questions above. It is possible for municipalities to go through one, two or all of these steps, depending on their needs. While 1 and 2 are commissioned separately more often, 3 is mostly combined with 1 and 2. The final step in Figure 12 shows the different follow-up actions, that depend on the type of project (1, 2 or 3) it concerns (IC1, 2021).

Most clients of Citisens are municipalities. According to the director of Citisens, there is probably no municipality in the Netherlands that they never did an assignment for. As there is a limited pool of approximately 350 municipalities in the Netherlands, it is important to always leave a good impression, have a good network and know who works where. Within municipalities Citisens mostly works for the official side, for heads of communication or project/program managers as shown in Figure 12. Only their voting aid application focuses on the city council (IC1, 2021).

Besides municipalities, Citisens supports project developers that plan to build new apartments or solar panels in having a dialogue with relevant stakeholders. These dialogues help to create support base for these projects, which municipalities require to provide the relevant permits (IC1, 2021).

According to Citisens director Nicolette Ouwerling, the elaborate approach in Figure 12 is something that makes them unique in the market. There are other companies that offer segmentation tools, support base research, participation processes and expertise in political decision-making. There are however no companies that offer all these things except Citisens.

*"We don't do anything that nobody else in the market does, but there is nobody like us who can support the entire process from A to Z"*

Translated quote from an interview with Citisens director Nicolette Ouwerling (IC1, 2021)

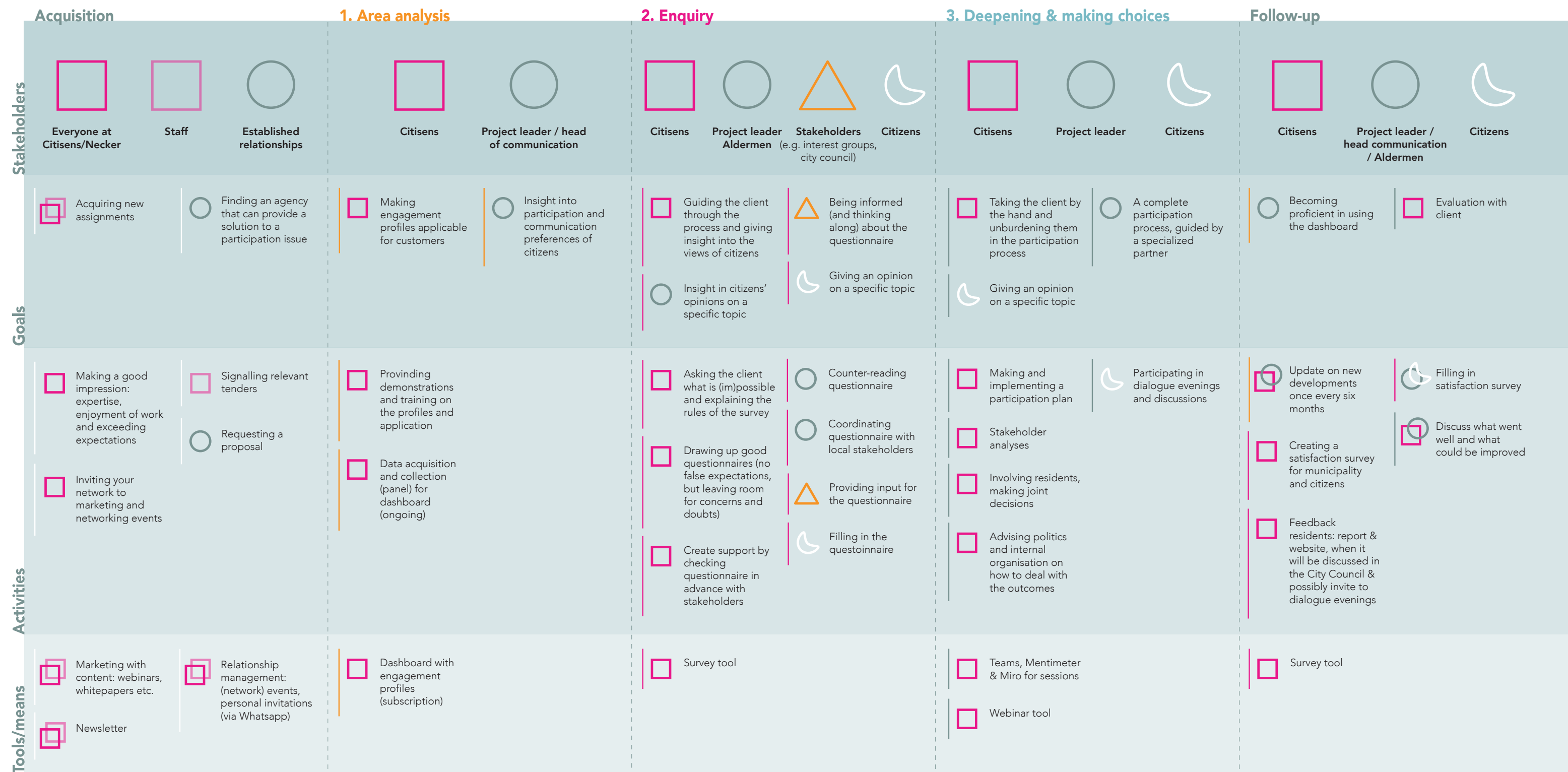
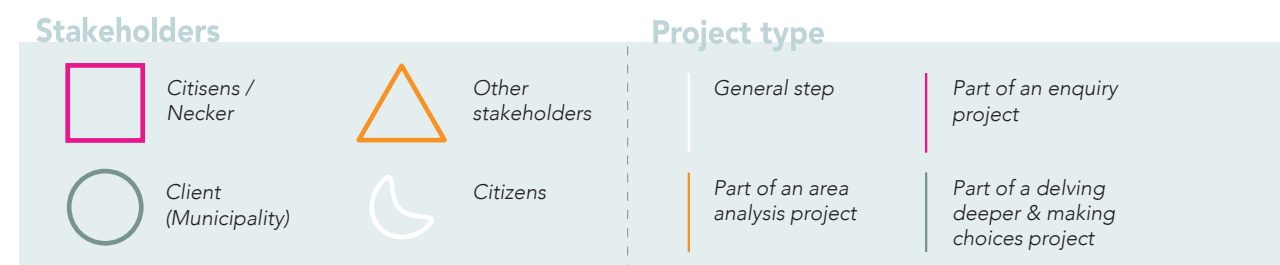


Figure 12: Citisens' approach





	Organisation	Collaboration
Whooz	Data supplier	Provides segmentation data for the engagement profiles
Stormpunt	Facilitator of (online) sessions	Provides creative ways of working and good facilitators
Ekwadraat	Energy experts	Provide the calculations for heat transition visions (Citizens provides participation)

Table 6: Partner organisations of Citizens (IC1, 2021)

To be able to offer their elaborate approach, Citizens has several partner organisations besides Necker van Naem. Table 6 shows three important partnerships.

Whooz provides segmentation data for the engagement profiles. Citizens collaborates with Stormpunt for their creative ways of working and good facilitators for sessions with citizens. Finally, Citizens collaborates with Ekwadraat: they provide the calculations for municipal heat transition visions, while Citizens provides the participation part.

## Key insights

Citizens' clients, often municipalities and sometimes project developers, come to Citizens for insight into participation and communication preferences, finding out what people think about a specific topic and complete participatory processes. Offering this broad range of services gives Citizens a unique position in the market, according to Citizens director Nicolette Ouwerling.

Data supplier **Whooz**, facilitator **Stormpunt** and energy expert **Ekwadraat** are partner organisations of Citizens, besides Necker van Naem.

## 5.3 Citizens' strategy

*What are the purpose, capabilities, market and value proposition of Citizens?*

The Ikigai framework was used to create a better understanding of Citizens' (innovation) strategy during a creative session with employees (CC1, 2021). Ikigai is a Japanese philosophy that describes the ingredients for long, happy and healthy lives: doing what you love, what you are good at, what the world needs and what you can be paid for. Your Ikigai, or reason for being, is a combination of these ingredients. Fronteer combined this philosophy with the New Growth Platforms model and derived four key elements of a successful innovation strategy: purpose, market, capabilities and value (Hogenhuis, 2018). The worksheet used during the creative session was a combination of these elements and the Ikigai model. Figure 13 shows the Ikigai worksheet including a summary of the results of the session.

What stood out during the session, was that all participants unconsciously were very aware of the Ikigai of Citizens, although they virtually never discussed this amongst each other. The Ikigai appeared to be intertwined with everything they did, possibly because they reportedly only hired people that fit with their Ikigai.

The Ikigai of Citizens is:

*"Increasing engagement by increasing mutual trust between government and society with participation expertise and data insights."*

Translated text from the creative session with Citizens employees (CC1, 2021)

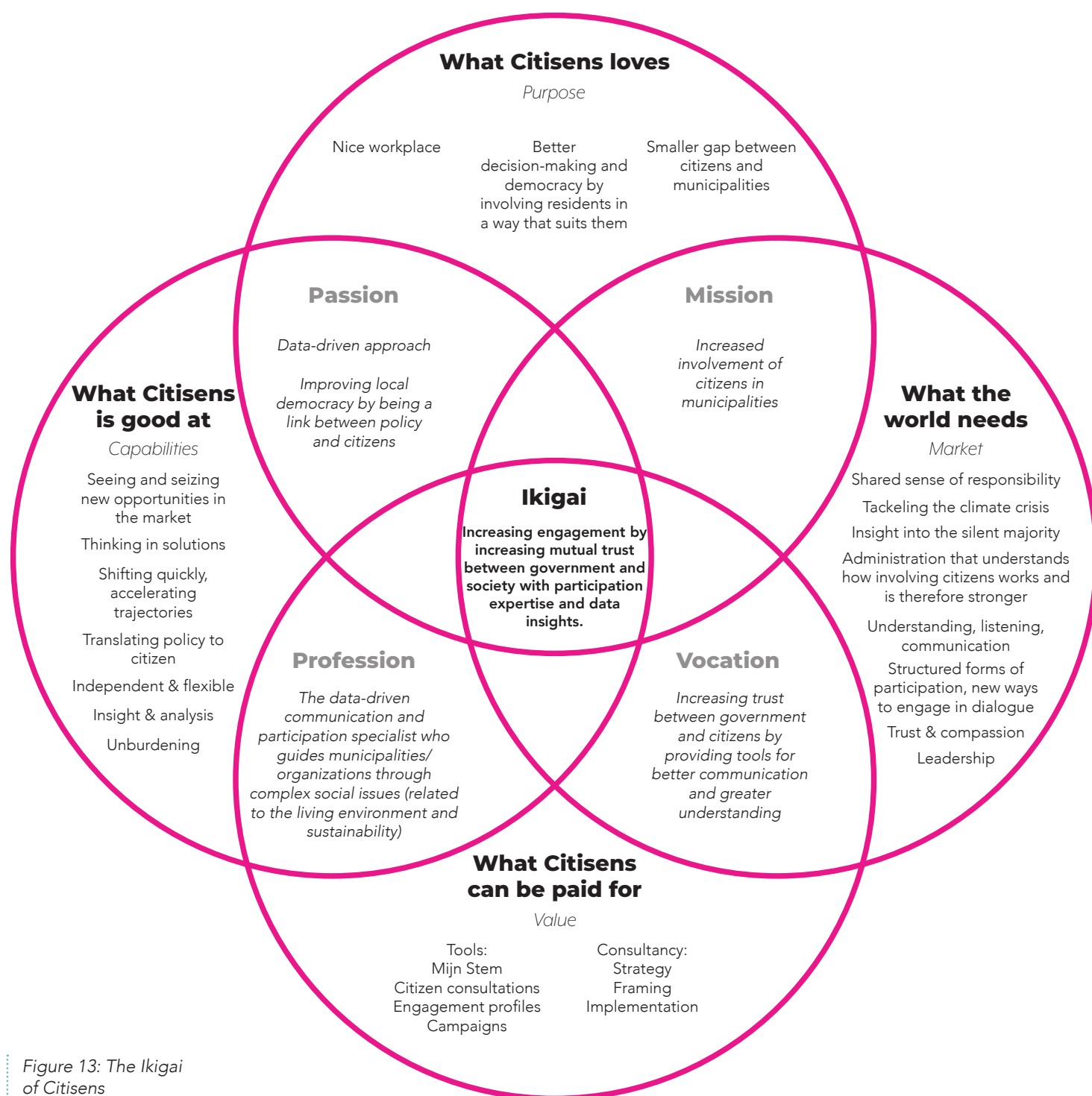


Figure 13: The Ikigai of Citisens

From this sentence, and the rest of Figure 13, it becomes clear that engagement and trust are central values to the company. Participation expertise and data insights are the means they use to respond to complex societal issues. This Ikigai was seen as future proof, illustrated by the answers to the question: 'In 20 years, Citisens is ...'

*"Still responding to the societal context, with a larger group of people"*

*"Still relevant because of this Ikigai"*

Translated text from the creative session with Citisens employees (CC1, 2021)

Building engagement and trust fits with responding to the societal challenges of today as well as tomorrow, just like participation and data insights can be used in many different contexts and for different topics. These four key ingredients create space for innovation and expansion, but at the same time make Citisens a distinct organisation in the market. They are therefore important to keep in mind while designing new interventions that should fit with the purpose, capabilities, market and value of the organisation.

## Key insights

Citisens' Ikigai, or reason for being, is:

*Increasing engagement by increasing mutual trust between government and society with participation expertise and data insights.*

The key ingredients of their Ikigai are building trust and engagement, through participation and data insights. These four elements will help them respond to the societal challenges of today and tomorrow, creating room for innovation and expansion.





## 6. Paradox

The previous chapters elaborated on the organisational context of the municipality and Citisens, the energy transition and the current state of youth participation. This chapter aims to investigate the problem definition itself, driven by the question: "What makes youth participation in the energy transition hard to accomplish?". In line with the Frame Creation method, this chapter identifies five main paradoxes, formulated as series of "because" statements (Dorst, 2015, p. 74-76).



# Method

Research questions and activities for Chapter 6

In this chapter, the second step of the Frame creation process is described. This step is an investigation of the problem definition, aiming to answer the question: “What makes this problem hard to solve?” (Dorst, 2015, p. 74-76). The research question for this step is therefore:

“What makes youth participation in the energy transition hard to accomplish?”

In line with the Frame creation method, this question is answered through the formulation of several paradoxes, that are expressed in a series of clashing “because” statements (Dorst, 2015, p. 74-76).

The combined insights from Chapter 3 and 4, which were both part of the problem archaeology step, formed the basis of the paradoxes. The most striking, paradoxal findings about youth participation and the energy transition were clustered and rewritten as five main, overarching paradoxes. The subparadoxes that the main paradoxes are based on are also presented in this chapter.

As the paradoxes stem from insights from Chapter 3 and 4, this step required no new sources or research activities. Figure 14 shows the activities that yielded the insights that the paradoxes were based on:

- An interview with a policy officer sustainability (IM2, Appendix D)
- An interview with a Jong RES representative (IY1, Appendix E)
- An interview with the initiator of a youth ambassador program (IY2, Appendix F)
- An interview with a lector energy transition (IE2, Appendix H)
- Co-creation activities at the Necker Parade with mayors, registrars, city councillors and aldermen (CM1, Appendix I)
- Insights from literature

The remainder of this chapter will present the five main paradoxes in Figure 15, after which each paradox, and the subparadoxes it consists of, is explored in more detail.

Figure 14: Research questions and activities for Chapter 6

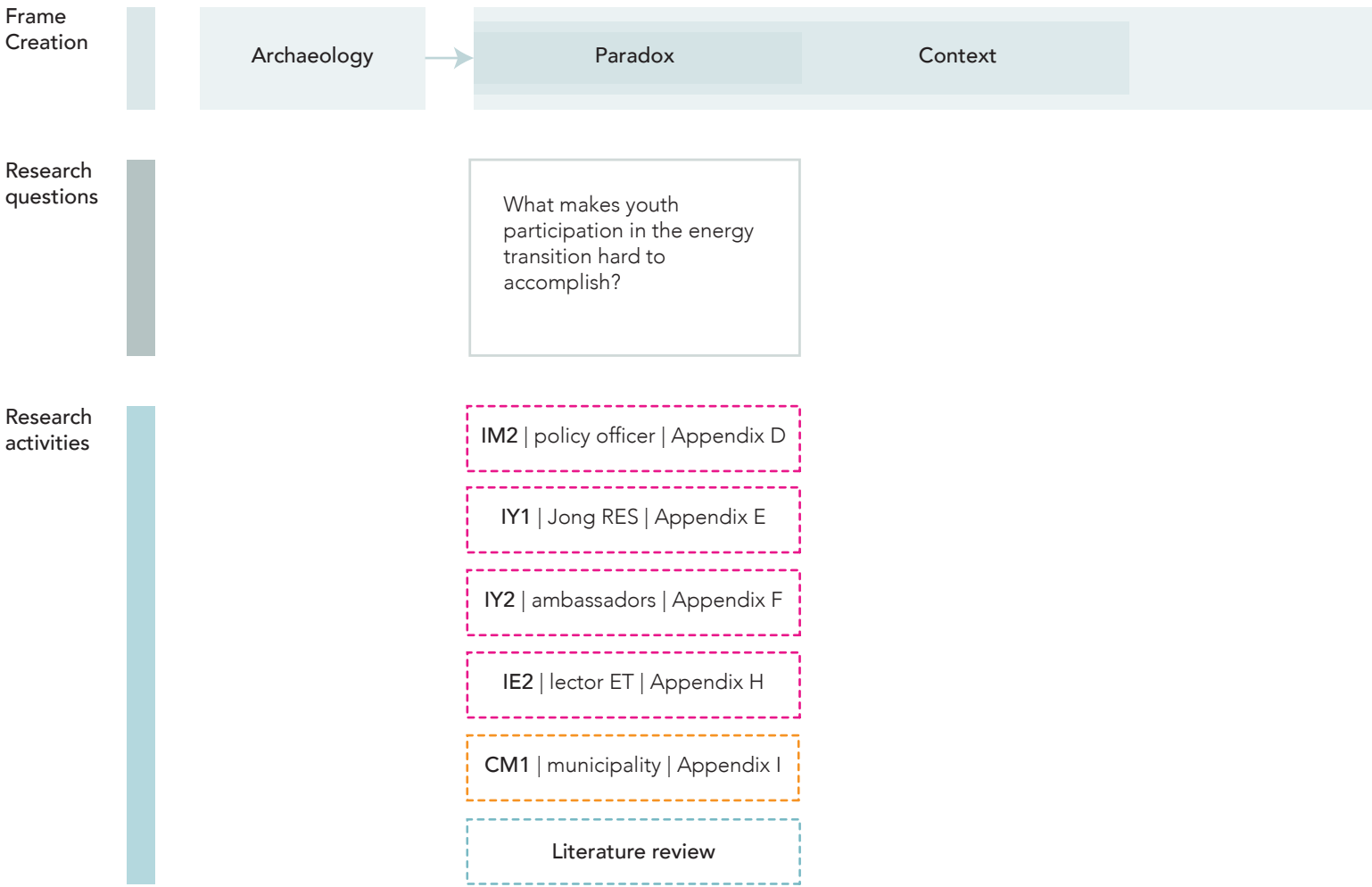
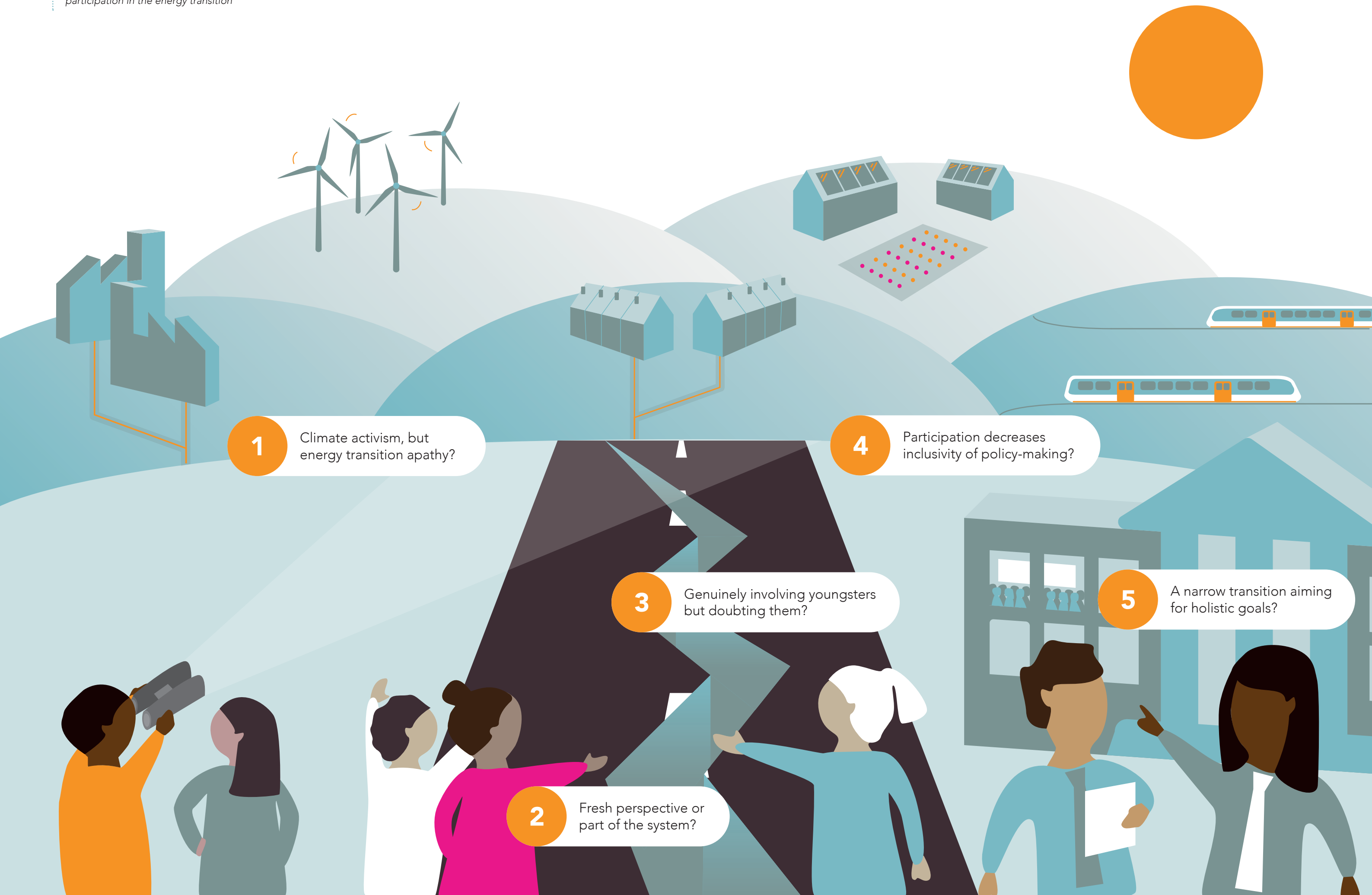




Figure 15: Paradoxes of youth participation in the energy transition



## 6.1 Climate activism, but energy transition apathy?

The first paradox is that youngsters are easily engaged on the topic of climate change, while they drop out instantly when you start talking about the energy transition (IY1, 2021):

*Because they believe climate change endangers our future, youngsters are very involved with the topic.*

*Because we want to prevent climate change, we are going through the energy transition.*

*Because the energy transition is (1) concrete, (2) complex and technical and (3) their own interests are not apparent, youngsters are not involved in the energy transition.*

The three reasons mentioned in the final sentence of the paradox are actually subparadoxes.

1.

The first subparadox is about the mismatch between the quick results and abstract visions that youngsters both value (CM1, 2021; IY1, 2021; IY2, 2021).

*Because youngsters value quick results and impact of their participation, it makes sense to involve them in more concrete projects that are implemented in the near future.*

*Because it makes sense to involve young people in more concrete projects that are implemented in the near future, the energy transition seems a fitting subject for youth participation.*

*Because young people however rather discuss climate change than the energy transition, it appears they prefer visions and abstract topics to more concrete projects.*

*Because youngsters would rather discuss visions and abstract topics such as climate change, the results or impact of their participation will not likely be visible in the near future.*

2.

The second subparadox describes the knowledge gap that youngsters experience when it comes to the energy transition (IY1, 2021):

*Because the energy transition is complex and technical, youngsters lack the knowledge to participate in the discussion.*

*Because youngsters lack the knowledge to participate in the discussion on the energy transition, it is hard to interest and involve them.*

*Because youngsters are not interested and involved in the energy transition, they do not gain the knowledge to do so.*

3.

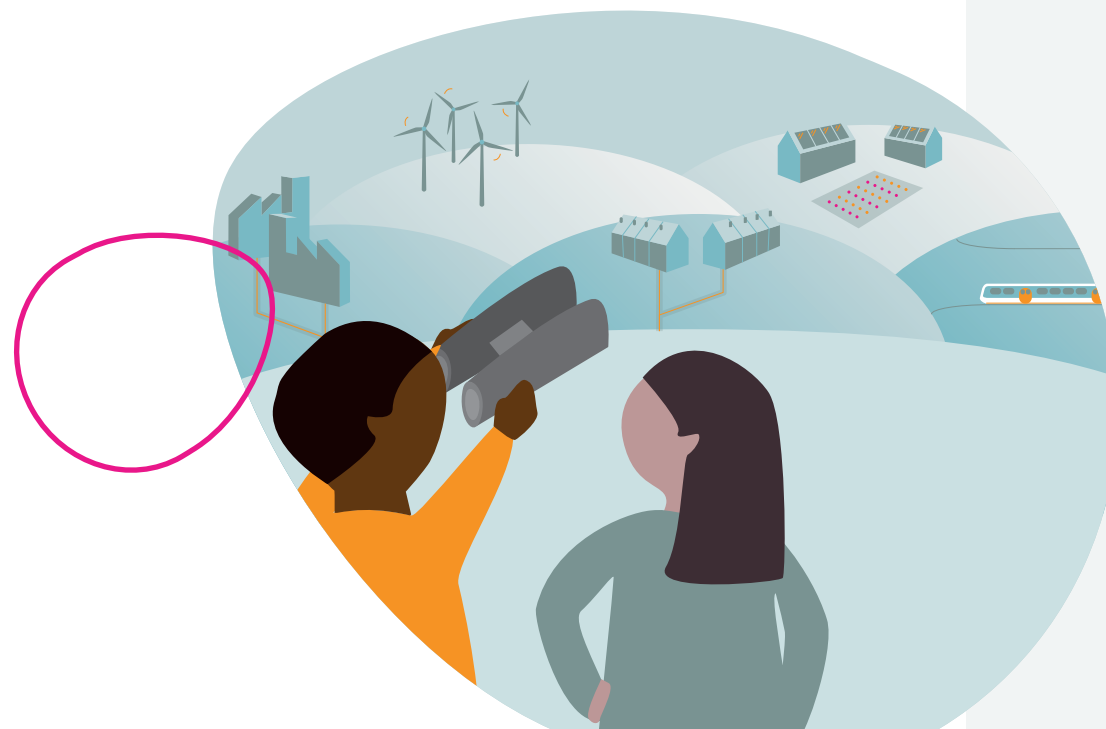
The final subparadox is about the interest of youngsters in the energy transition (IY1, 2021):

*Because youngsters are the future of our society, the energy transition is in their interest.*

*Because the energy transition is in their interest, youngsters are involved through participation initiatives.*

*Because youngsters are involved through participation initiatives, their personal, current interest should be apparent.*

*Because youngsters do not own a house or car, nor have considerable financial resources, they do not have an apparent interest in the energy transition.*





## 6.2 Fresh perspective or part of the system?

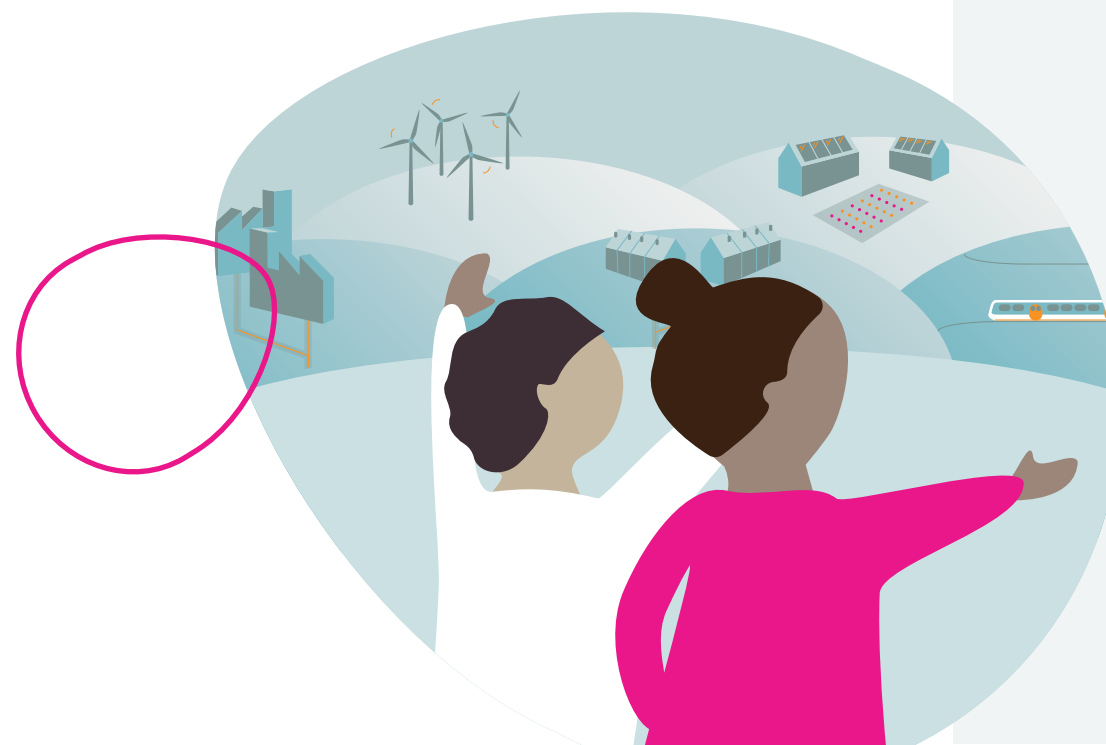
The second paradox focuses on the importance of being part of the system for meaningful participation, while being part of the system at the same time hinders meaningful participation (CM1, 2021; IY1, 2021; IY2, 2021).

*Because youngsters want to influence policy-making, they participate within the municipal system.*

*Because youngsters participate within the municipal system, (1) their name is connected to the end result and (2) they cannot think as freely as they could outside the system.*

*Because their name is connected to the end result and they cannot think as freely, the municipal system in some respects hinders young people's ability to influence policy-making.*

Two subparadoxes can be distinguished within this main paradox.



1.

The first paradox shows the contradiction that having a voice within the system prevents you to voice an opinion after participation (IY1, 2021):

*Because youngsters want to influence policy(-making), they participate within the municipal system.*

*Because youngsters participate within the municipal system, their name is connected to the end result.*

*Because their name is connected to the end result, young people cannot be very critical on the resulting policy (even when the youngsters giving the input were not representative for all youngsters and many more stakeholders participated)*

2.

The second paradox describes that for meaningful participation, youngsters should be inside and outside the municipal system at the same time (CM1, 2021).

*Because youngsters are not part of the municipal system, they are able to think freely, which gives their participation additional value.*

*Because youngsters think freely, they have unrealistic expectations of (the impact of) their participation.*

*Because youngsters have unrealistic expectations, their ideas are less implementable.*

*Because the ideas of youngsters should be implementable to be impactful, youngsters should be made aware of the possibilities and boundaries of the municipal system.*

## 6.3 Genuinely involving youngsters, but doubting them?

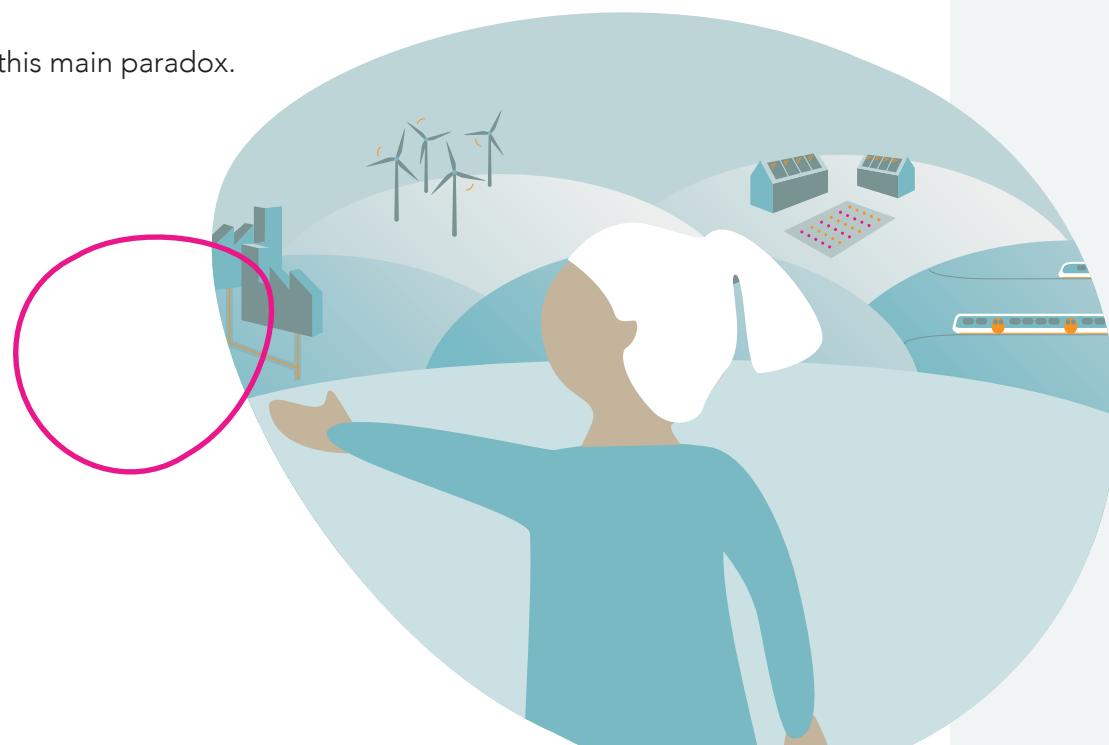
The third paradox is that municipalities genuinely want to involve youngsters, but at the same time are unable to overcome certain internal barriers (Crowley & Moxon, 2017; Hart, 1992; IM2, 2021; IY1, 2021; Lundy, 2007; RAND Europe, 2021).

*Because municipalities want to know what youngsters want, need and motivates, they involve them in participation trajectories.*

*Because municipalities want to involve youngsters in participation trajectories, they should be (1) aware of youngsters' preferences, (2) appreciate youngsters' capabilities and (3) allocate sufficient resources.*

*Because municipalities are not aware of youngsters' preferences, underestimate their capabilities and do not allocate sufficient resources, they do not find out what youngsters want, need and motivates.*

There are three subparadoxes within this main paradox.



1.

The first paradox is about the difficult position municipalities find themselves in when it comes to youth participation: they want to involve youngsters to learn more about their preferences, but to be able to do so, they already need to have some basic knowledge on what their preferences are (IM2, 2021).

*Because municipalities want to know what youngsters want, need and motivates, they involve them in participation trajectories.*

*Because municipalities want to involve youngsters in participation trajectories, they need to have some basic knowledge on what youngsters want, need and motivates.*

2.

In the second subparadox a barrier of youth participation that is frequently mentioned in literature is discussed (Crowley & Moxon, 2017; Lundy, 2007; RAND Europe, 2021).

*Because adults are sceptical about children's capacity to give meaningful input into decision-making, children get fewer opportunities to participate and participation mechanisms can typically be classified in the lower steps of the ladder of participation.*

*Because children get fewer opportunities to participate and participation mechanisms can typically be classified in the lower steps of the ladder of participation, they do not get a chance to develop and show their capacities.*

3.

The final subparadox is a more general barrier to participation: it is difficult to identify the exact benefits of participation, making it a less likely candidate to receive sufficient resources, which makes the benefits even less apparent (Crowley & Moxon, 2021; IY1, 2021).

*Because municipal capacity and resources are limited, participation is just one of the many subjects that require attention from policy-makers.*

*Because the benefits of participation are hard to quantify and often long-term, frequently insufficient resources are allocated to participation.*

*Because frequently insufficient resources are allocated to participation, the benefits are less apparent and significant.*



## 6.4 Participation decreases inclusivity of policy-making?

The fourth main paradox is about the potential of participation to make policy-making more inclusive, while current bottlenecks prevent it from living up to that expectation and make policy-makers hesitant to let citizens participate (CM1, 2021; IM2, 2021; IY1, 2021).

*Because municipal decisions should be as democratic and inclusive as possible, relevant stakeholders get the opportunity to be involved in municipal decision-making on specific topics.*

*Because numerous stakeholders are involved on specific topics, (1) transparency and influence for individual stakeholders is reduced, and (2) especially stakeholders with apparent interests on the subject in question and more resources participate, which is why municipal decision-makers will always make the final decision.*

*Because municipal decision-makers will always make the final decision, the actual influence of participants is decreased and the possible disappointment following this makes policy-makers hesitant to let citizens participate.*

Two subparadoxes can be distinguished within this main paradox.

1.

The first subparadox elaborates on the contradiction that transparency is increased when you involve many stakeholders in the process, but at the same time reduced because of the complexity caused by such a wide range of interests (IE2, 2021).

*Because municipal decisions should be as democratic and transparent as possible, numerous relevant stakeholders get the opportunity to be involved.*

*Because numerous stakeholders are involved, transparency and influence for individual stakeholders is reduced by the complexity caused by the wide range of interests.*

2.

The second subparadox focuses on the contradiction between participation as a tool to make policy-making more inclusive, and the potential counterproductive result (IC1, 2021; IY1, 2021).

*Because municipal decisions should be as democratic and inclusive as possible, citizens get the opportunity to be involved in municipal decision-making on specific topics.*

*Because citizens are involved in municipal decision-making on specific topics, especially people with strong opinions and interests in those specific topics show up.*

*Because only people with strong opinions and interests participate, exactly implementing the outcomes of a participation process potentially makes municipal decision-making less democratic and inclusive.*

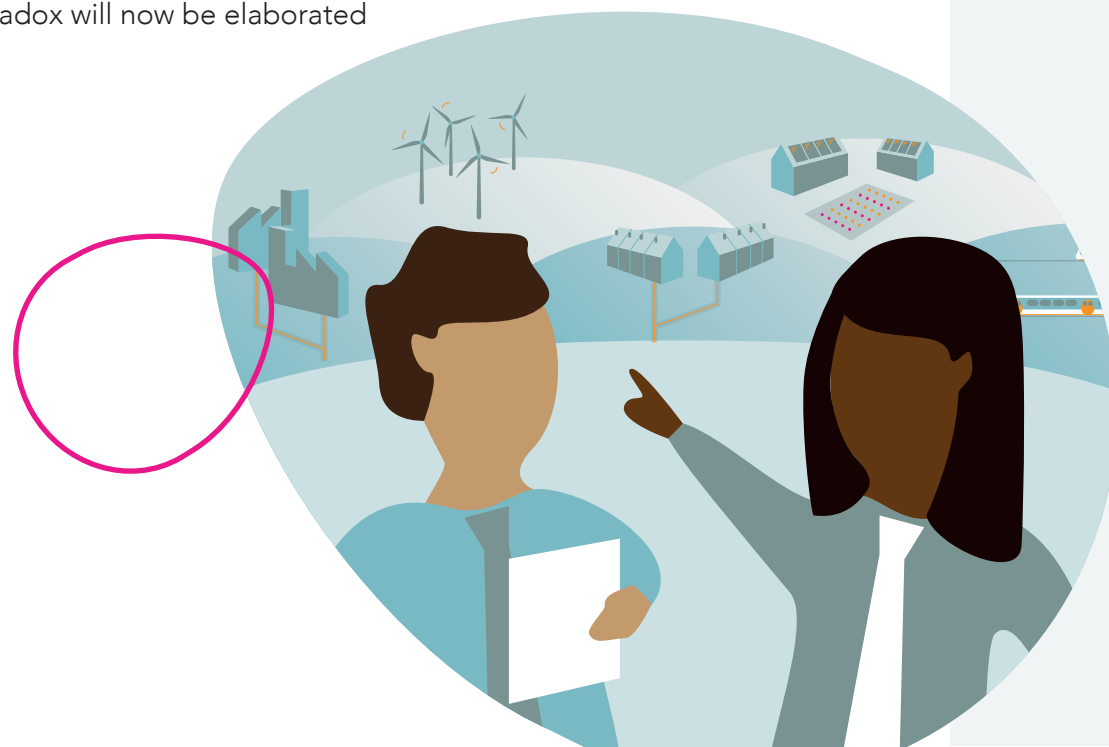
## 6.5 A narrow transition aiming for holistic goals?

The final main paradox is about the contradiction between the higher goal of the energy transition, which is transitioning society as a whole to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prevent climate change, and the transition's narrow scope and lack of inclusivity. In some cases these even make the energy transition counterproductive (IE2, 2021).

*Because we want to prevent climate change, society as a whole has to take part in the energy transition.*

*Because the goals of the energy transition are (1) focused on energy generation and usage only and (2) the pains and gains of the transition are not fairly distributed in society, the energy transition does not contribute as much to the prevention of climate change as is possible and needed.*

The two subparadoxes within this paradox will now be elaborated on further.



1.

The first paradox focuses on the fact that we miss out on opportunities and impact to prevent climate change because the approach to the energy transition is not holistic (Drissen & Vollebergh, 2018; IE2, 2021).

*Because we want to prevent climate change, society as a whole has to take part in the energy transition.*

*Because the goals of the energy transition are focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions caused by energy generation and usage within the Netherlands only, we miss out on opportunities, in some cases increase greenhouse gas emissions or just move emissions abroad.*

*Because we miss out on opportunities, in some cases increase greenhouse gas emissions or just move emissions abroad, we are not as effective as we could potentially be in preventing climate change.*

2.

The second subparadox elaborates on the energy transition as a transition of society as a whole, that at the same time lacks the inclusivity to allow everyone to participate (IE2, 2021).

*Because the energy transition is a large, national effort, everyone in society should be able to participate.*

*Because everyone in society should be able to participate, the pains and gains of the transition should be distributed in a fair way and within the capacity of all stakeholders.*

*Because the pains and gains of the transition are not distributed in a fair way and not within capacity of all stakeholders, not everyone is able to participate.*



## Key insights

Five paradoxes explain why it is challenging to achieve youth participation in the energy transition:

1. Though they are very interested in climate change, young people are **not interested in the energy transition**, because it's too concrete, complex and technical and their own interests are not apparent.
2. For meaningful participation, young people need to participate within the municipal system, but this might cause them to **lose their valuable fresh perspective**.
3. Municipalities want to involve young people, but are not sufficiently **aware of their preferences, underestimate their abilities and do not allocate sufficient resources**.
4. Though participation aims to improve transparency and inclusivity, it might **reduce transparency for individual stakeholders and inclusivity of decision-making** since especially people with strong opinions and interests participate.
5. The energy transition aims to transition society as a whole, but has a **narrow focus on energy and lacks inclusivity**.





## 7. Context

*In the next step of the Frame creation process, the context, the paradox statements are deliberately put aside to start the next step with a sense of energy and freshness. The context step is an exploration of key stakeholders. These are stakeholders that are clearly involved in the problem situation, or will clearly be necessary participants in possible solutions (Dorst, 2015, p. 76). The key stakeholders in this project are the youngsters, the city council, the civil service, the mayor & aldermen and Citizens.*



# Method

Research questions and activities for Chapter 7

This chapter explores the context, the third step of the Frame creation process. In this step, the paradoxes are deliberately put aside, to start this new phase with a fresh perspective and enable a shift in the problem situation. The context step aims to create an overview of the key stakeholders and their drivers to get a feel for potential new scenarios and practices that could contribute to a solution (Dorst, 2015, p. 76). In line with the Frame creation method, the research question for this step is:

*Who are the inner circle of key stakeholders and what are their drivers?*

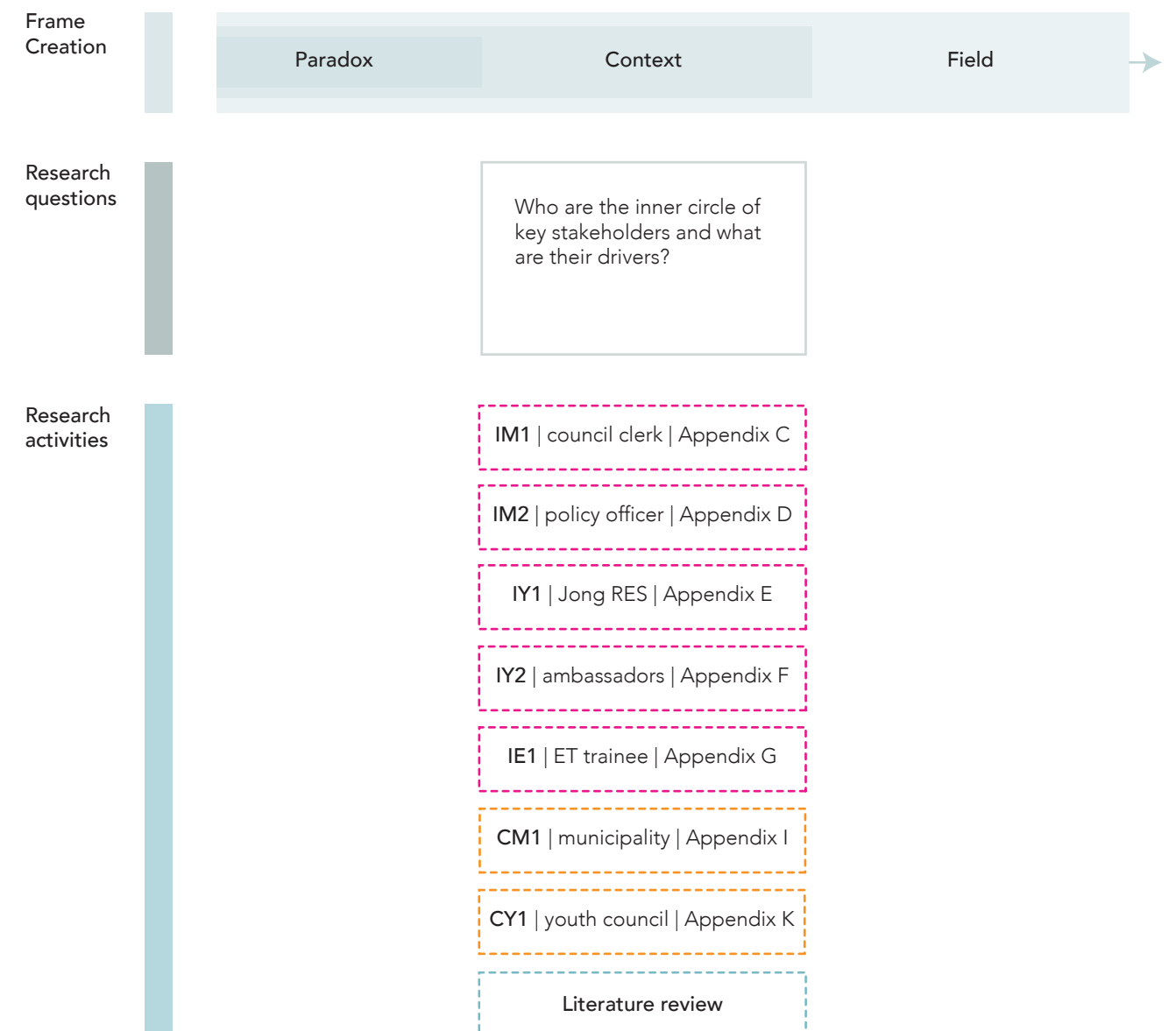
Key stakeholders are clearly involved in the situation, or necessary participants in possible solutions (Dorst, 2015, p. 76). In this project, the inner circle of key stakeholders are the youngsters, the city council, the mayor and aldermen, the civil service and Citizens. The municipality is not seen as one single stakeholder, as the analysis in Section 3.1 showed these three different internal stakeholders have distinct roles and responsibilities.


Similarly to the previous step, paradox, the combined insights from the problem archaeology form the basis of the drivers of the five main stakeholders. This step therefore also required no new sources or research activities.

Figure 16: Research questions and activities for Chapter 7

- Figure 16 shows the activities that yielded the insights that the paradoxes were based on:
- An interview with a council clerk (IM1, Appendix C)
  - An interview with a policy officer sustainability (IM2, Appendix D)
  - An interview with a Jong RES representative (IY1, Appendix E)
  - An interview with the initiator of a youth ambassador program (IY2, Appendix F)
  - An interview with a national energy trainee (IE1, Appendix G)
  - Co-creation activities at the Necker Parade with mayors, registrars, city councillors and aldermen (CM1, Appendix I)
  - A co-creation session with a youth council (CY1, Appendix K)
  - Insights from literature


The remainder of this chapter will provide an overview of the key stakeholders and their drivers in Figure 17, explore each stakeholders' drivers in more detail in subsections and end with a comparison of the drivers.





## Citizens

- All different views heard and taken into account
- ▬ Citizenship education
- ▽ Satisfied client




## Civil Service

- Understanding the views of every group in society
- △ Activating citizens to start their own initiatives
- ✚ Supporting the Mayor & Aldermen




## Youngsters

- Having decision-makers listen to your concerns and opinions
- ⚡○ Having decision-makers act on your concerns and opinions
- △ Having a positive impact on matters you care about
- 🌐 Collaborating in a group and networking
- ▬ Personal development



## Mayor & Aldermen

- Understanding what young people want and care about
- ▬ Citizenship education
- Not relinquishing any direct decision-making power
- △ Activating citizens: what can you contribute yourself?
- ⦿ Keeping the City Council happy



## City Council

- Understanding what young people want and care about
- ▬ Citizenship education
- Not relinquishing any direct decision-making power
- △ Activating citizens: what can you contribute yourself?

Figure 17: Key stakeholders and their main drivers



## 7.1 Drivers of youngsters

There are five main drivers for youngsters to participate:

1. The first driver is having decision-makers listen to your concerns and opinions, having a “voice” in the municipality (CY1, 2021; Crowley & Moxon, 2017).
2. Secondly, youngsters are driven by having decision-makers actually act on their concerns and opinions and seeing the impact of their input (CY1, 2021; Crowley & Moxon, 2017).
3. A third motivation is having an impact on a matter in their own environment that they care about (CY1, 2021; Crowley & Moxon, 2017; IE1, 2021; IY2, 2021).
4. Another driver is acting together and being part of a group, meeting new young people as well as building a network within the municipality (CY1, 2021; Crowley & Moxon, 2017; IY2, 2021).
5. A final driver is personal development: learning new skills and going out of your comfort zone (CY1, 2021; RAND Europe, 2021).



## 7.2 Drivers of the city council and mayor & aldermen

The city council and mayor & aldermen have largely overlapping drivers related to youth participation:

1. Understanding what young people care about (CM1, 2021). For some municipalities, this is motivated by a drive to prevent youngsters from leaving the municipality for their studies and, in many cases, not coming back afterwards (CY1, 2021; IY2, 2021).
2. Generally speaking, youth participation can play an important role in involving youngsters in the local democracy and fostering active citizenship (Crowley & Moxon, 2017).
3. A third important driver that generated a lot of discussion during the Necker Parade (CM1, 2021), is not relinquishing any direct decision-making power, that is: the city council/mayor & aldermen will always make the final decision and never blindly implement the outcomes of a participation process.
4. A final shared driver that was frequently mentioned at the Necker Parade (CM1, 2021) is activating citizens. What can citizens do themselves to contribute to the energy transition?

A driver that only drives the mayor & aldermen is keeping the city council happy, as they are the supreme body of the municipality. They are the commissioners and auditors of the mayor and aldermen and can ultimately dismiss aldermen if they are not happy with their performance (IM1, 2021).



## 7.3 Drivers of the civil service

The civil service has four main drivers that are related to participation:

1. First of all, civil servants want to know how every group in society views the transition, what they consider important and what motivates them to go along or not. This means they want to involve both supporters and opponents, both youngsters and adults, etc. (IM2, 2021).
2. Another motivation is encouraging citizens to start bottom-up initiatives themselves. The municipality can facilitate and support these initiatives (IM2, 2021).
3. The civil service exists to support the mayor and aldermen: they prepare and implement new policies (IM1, 2021). In some cases, this might make them risk-averse, as they can be punished for overstepping (IY1, 2021).



## 7.4 Drivers of Citisens

Citisens has 3 main drivers related to participation:

1. First of all, Citisens is driven by bridging the gap between citizens and municipalities through participation. They care about getting an overview of all opinions, ensuring those opinions are heard and a substantiated decision is made (CC1, 2021; IC1, 2021).
2. The second driver, especially related to youth, is citizenship education: informing youngsters not just about the energy transition, but also about citizenship and local democracy (IC1, 2021).
3. Finally it is key that municipalities are satisfied with the outcomes of Citisens' projects. There are approximately 350 municipalities in the Netherlands, so always making a good impression is crucial in this relatively small, limited market (IC1, 2021).







## 7.5 Comparing drivers

In Figure 13 all similar drivers are indicated with the same symbol. Interestingly quite a few interests are shared by many of the key stakeholders: having the opinions of youngsters listened to (white square), citizen initiatives that have a positive impact (orange triangle) and citizenship education/personal development (black equals symbol) are all shared by at least four stakeholders.

One clearly clashing driver is having decision-makers act on the outcomes of a participation process. While this can be a driver for youngsters to participate, this is something that municipalities can never promise. Interestingly however, much more youngsters from the youth council that participated in my creative session were driven by making impact themselves (e.g. by contributing to the municipality). Just one person mentioned that they were motivated by letting the municipality implement their ideas (CY1, 2021), and youngsters taking action themselves were also central to the youth ambassadors program's approach (IY2, 2021).

It therefore seems the interests of the key stakeholders are quite aligned when it comes to youth participation. In this light, it is surprising that municipalities do not seem to be able to make youth participation work (CM1, 2021). This is nicely illustrated by the quote below from the interview with Pelle Meurink (IY1, 2021).

*"If it was a case of unwillingness on the part of one of the parties, it would have been considerably easier. But it is more a process, as far as I am concerned, of general misery than anything else. Everyone is trying to get participation done, but it's difficult."*

Translated quote from an interview with Pelle Meurink, Jong RES representative in RES region Rotterdam Den Haag (IY1, 2021)



## Key insights

The circle of inner stakeholders that will be key for any solution to the challenge are youngsters, the city council, mayor and aldermen, civil servants and Citizens.

They have many similar drivers:

- Having the opinions of youngsters listened to
- Encouraging citizen initiatives with a positive impact
- Citizenship education/personal development

A driver that clearly clashes is having decision-makers act on the outcomes of participation, which is something that the municipality can never promise. During a creative session and interview however, young people seemed to be motivated mostly by making impact themselves, instead of implementation of their ideas by the municipality.



## 8. Field

*While the previous chapter outlined the context of key stakeholders for this project, this chapter explores the wider field. This field consists of frontrunners in the area of (youth) participation and/or climate issues and is created to explore underlying values that could help find new directions for solutions.*





# Method

Research questions and activities for Chapter 8

The fourth step of the Frame creation process radically widens the context, including all (potential) players that are connected to the problem or solution. The aim of this step is creating an overview of initiatives and organisations that are frontrunners in the areas related to the problem. Looking at the deeper patterns in the underlying values from the field brings to light new, unconsidered opportunities (Dorst, 2015, p. 76-77). The research question for this step therefore is:

*“Which organisations and initiatives are frontrunners in the areas of participation and sustainability?”*

Participation and sustainability were chosen as the relevant areas (as opposed to youth participation and the energy transition) to slightly widen the scope and enable learning from a broader variety of initiatives. The initiatives that are part of the resulting field were selected to represent a wide range of approaches to (youth) participation and/or sustainability that are relatively novel and successful according to the sources they were derived from.

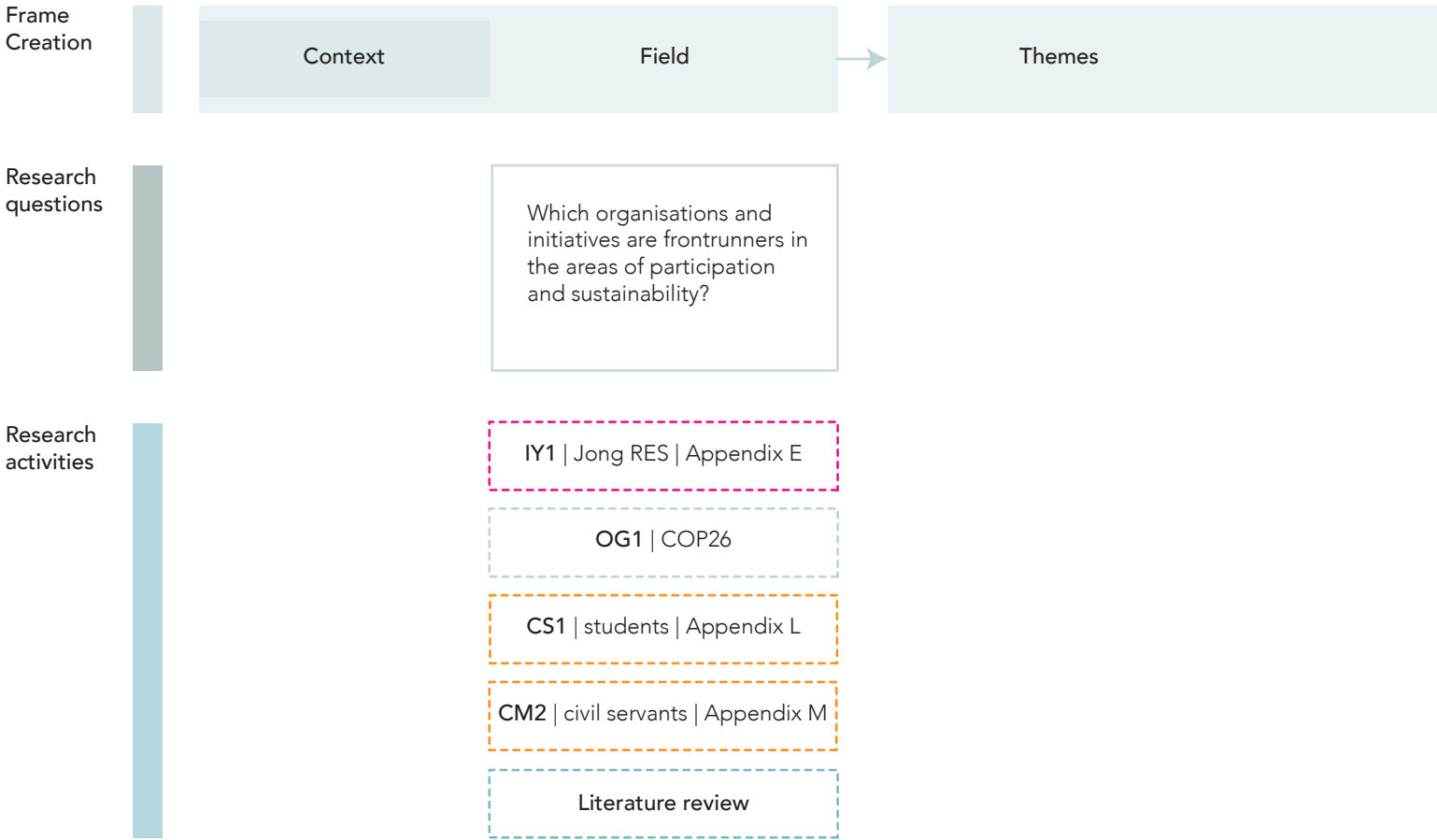
The initiatives in the field were derived from several sources, as shown in Figure 18. First, frontrunners that were found during the literature review and interviews for the previous steps were used as a basis. This initial field was enriched through:

- Initiatives known from previous experience such as the Nationale DenkTank, Terra Nova and the Mbo Talent Challenge.
- A visit to the Dutch Design Week, at which initiatives such as Olifantenpad CS and the Autonomous Tree were represented.
- A four-day visit to the events around the UN COP26 in Glasgow, including a panel discussion with the Advocacy

Figure 18: Research questions and activities for Chapter 8

- Academy, talks and documentaries on/from the ecocide and rights of nature movements, and a protest with Fridays for Future (OG1).
- A creative session with fellow graduation students (CS1, Appendix L). During the session, an initial field was supplemented with new frontrunners, after which participants explored potential themes and frames (the next two steps of the Frame creation process). This session also served as a try-out for the next session with civil servants (CM2).
  - A creative session with civil servants from the municipality of Alphen aan den Rijn (CM2, Appendix M). During this session, participants first created a field of frontrunners, including the lessons we can learn from them, from which themes were derived that were further explored.

This chapter first gives an overview of the frontrunners in the field, and secondly elaborates on a first exploration of underlying values.





## 8.1 Initiatives in the field

The field consists of frontrunners in the areas of (youth) participation and/or climate issues. These frontrunners were selected from a group of potential frontrunners derived from literature, a 4-day visit to the events around the UN COP26 in Glasgow, a visit to the Dutch Design Week, creative sessions (CM2, 2021; CS1, 2021) and previous experience. The initiatives that are part of the resulting field were selected to represent a wide range of approaches to (youth) participation and/or climate that are relatively novel and successful according to the sources they were derived from.

The field consists of the following initiatives:

### **No waste challenge**

*Crowd sourcing bold solutions to reduce waste*  
(No waste Challenge, n.d.)

### **Olifantenpad CS**

*Facilitating participation in VR and using neurofeedback*  
(Olifantenpad CS, 2021)

### **Ichmache>Politik**

*Digital youth participation platform*  
(Crowley & Moxon, 2017)

### **Jongerendanktank Alphen aan den Rijn**

*Youth think tank for local challenges*  
(CM2, 2021)

### **Lego: building instructions for a better world**

*Over 6000 kids co-created 10 building instructions for world leaders at the COP26*  
(Lego, 2021)

### **Nationale DenkTank**

*Yearly think tank of students working on a social challenge and implementing their own solutions*  
(Nationale DenkTank, 2019)

### **Green Office of the Ashram College**

*A team of high school students that e.g. organises an energy buddy program*  
(CM2, 2021)

### **Mbo Talent Challenge**

*Talent program in which Mbo students work on a social challenge*  
(Mbo Talent, n.d.)

### **Studio Moio**

*Solving social challenges with the people who experience them*  
(CM2, 2021; Studio Moio, n.d.)

### **ExpEx**

*Young people that experienced youth care mentor young people in youth care*  
(CM2, 2021; ExpEx, 2021)

### **KAAOS**

*Project initiated to create new approaches to youth participation, encourages experimentation*  
(Crowley & Moxon, 2017)

### **Terra Nova**

*A game and discussion tool that facilitates the discourse on social topics*  
(Lisa Hu, 2016)



### Community Fund Toolkit

*Enables communities to tell stories, listen and imagine better futures*

(Community Fund, n.d.)

### Autonomous Tree

*Art project imagining: "what if nature could speak up against injustice caused by mankind?"*

(Wronski, n.d.)

### Dive Maky - Wild Poppies

*Project that supports young Roma to be advocates for their community*

(Crowley & Moxon, 2017)

### Advocacy Academy

*Activist youth movement, giving powerless groups the ability to act*

(Advocacy Academy, n.d.; OG1, 2021)

### Rights of Nature Movement

*Advocates for ecosystems to bear legal rights, similarly to humans*

(Challe, 2021; OG1, 2021)

### Jonge Klimaatbeweging

*Youth advocacy organisation uniting the voices of young people in the climate debate*

(CM2, 2021; Jonge Klimaatbeweging, 2021)

### Coalitie-Y

*Coalition of youth organisations advocating for young people's interests*

(CM2, 2021; Coalitie-Y, n.d.)

### Fridays for Future

*Pupils & students on strike for the climate*

(FridaysForFuture Nederland, n.d.; OG1, 2021)

### JongRES

*Youth advocacy organisation focusing on the RES*

(CM2, 2021; IY1, 2021)

### Ecocide Movement

*Movement advocating for the criminalisation of ecocide as the fifth crime against humanity*

(Kusnetz et al., 2021; OG1, 2021)

### Extinction Rebellion

*Worldwide movement using creative actions to force governments to take climate action*

(Extinction Rebellion, n.d.; OG1, 2021)

## 8.2 Patterns and underlying values

At a first glance, several patterns and underlying values stand out when looking at the initiatives from the previous section:

- Quite some of the organisations and initiatives are youth-led, or give youngsters a say in steering their organisation. Examples of this are the Jonge Klimaatbeweging, Jong RES and the Green Office of the Ashram College.
- Numerous initiatives advocate for the rights and interests of groups from less privileged backgrounds, such as the Dive Maky, Wild Poppies project or the Advocacy Academy, by empowering those same groups.
- Several initiatives speak up for nature, e.g. by advocating for giving nature rights, such as the ecocide and rights of nature movement, or by giving nature a voice such as the Autonomous Tree art project.
- Collaboration is key in many initiatives, most notably in coalitions such as Coalitie-Y and crowd sourcing initiatives such as the No waste challenge and the Lego project.
- Initiatives such as the Nationale DenkTank and KAAOS do not just come up with ideas, but take the lead themselves to experiment and implement their own solutions.

This exercise of looking at common factors in the field forms the basis of the next step: the themes.





## 9. Themes

*This chapter elaborates on the themes that emerged from the frontrunners in the field. The themes are derived from the field by exploring the common factors or underlying values of the frontrunners. The four resulting themes will be explored in this chapter, illustrated by the frontrunners they were based on.*



# Method

Research questions and activities for Chapter 9

This chapter explores the themes: the universal values that underlie the motivations, needs and experiences of frontrunners in the field. Themes that are shared by many players in the field, could form the basis for new frames or ways of looking at the problem situation (Dorst, 2015, p. 77-78). Frames will be explored in the next chapter.

Taking the field as a starting point, this chapter aims to answer the question:

*“Which common themes do the frontrunners in the field share?”*

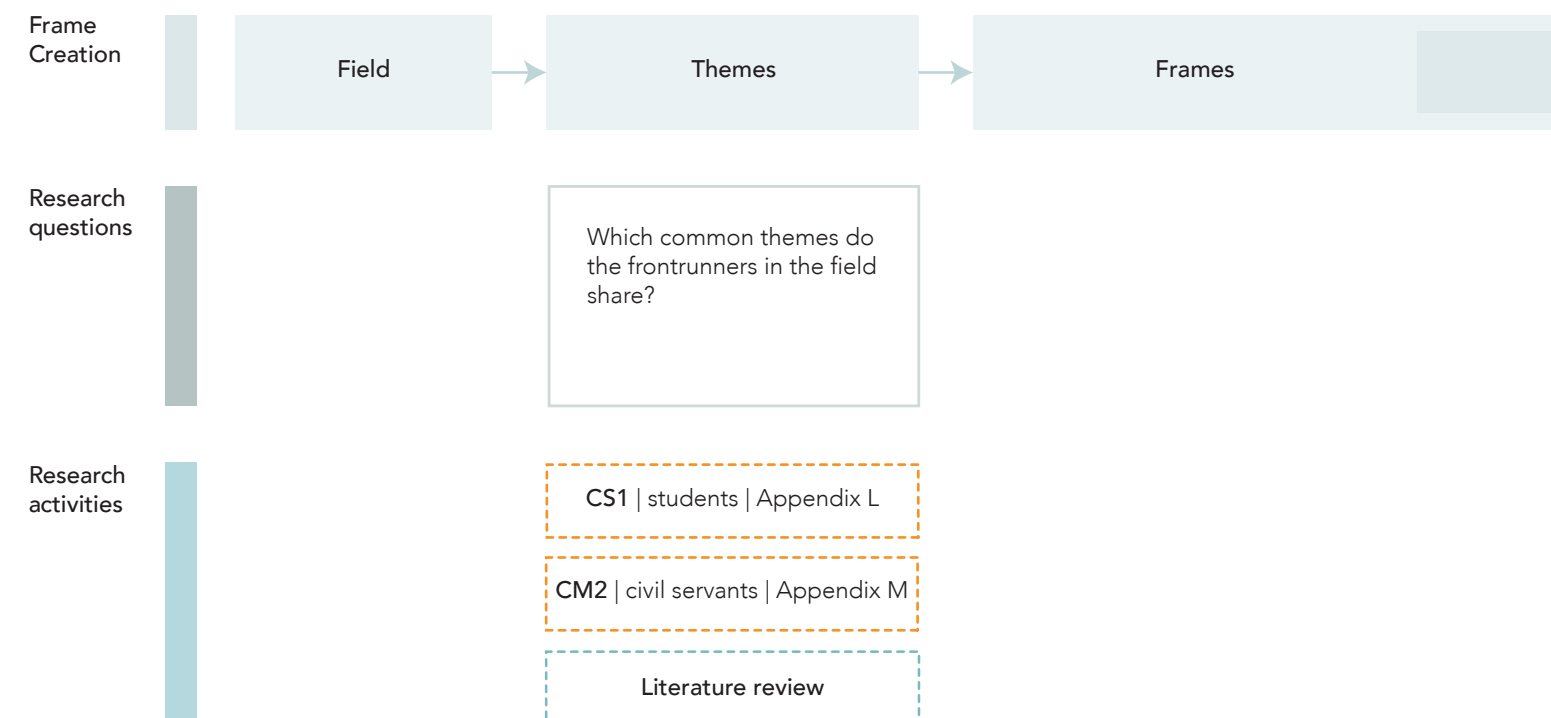
These common themes were derived from the frontrunners in the field by closely studying them, while looking for common factors. Section 8.2 provided a first exploration of the field, which was enriched through:

- The creative session with fellow graduation students (CS1, Appendix L). During this session, after enriching the field with new initiatives, the universal values underlying the initiatives were clustered into potential themes, which were then explored in groups.
- The creative session with civil servants from the municipality of Alphen aan den Rijn (CM2, Appendix M). In this session participants individually brainstormed to create a field of frontrunners and their universal values, which were collectively clustered into potential themes and further explored in groups.
- An analysis of the frontrunners and their underlying values through literature review.

Figure 19: Research questions and activities for Chapter 9

From these activities, which are shown in Figure 19, four main themes were derived: equity, ownership, collaboration and action. Figure 20 on the following pages shows the connection between the field and themes. Each initiative in the field shares at least one theme, or underlying value, with a large group of other initiatives.

This chapter explores the four main themes in more detail, showing the different ways in which these underlying values are present in the initiatives in the field. The final section of the chapter explores the combination of and relationship between the four different themes.



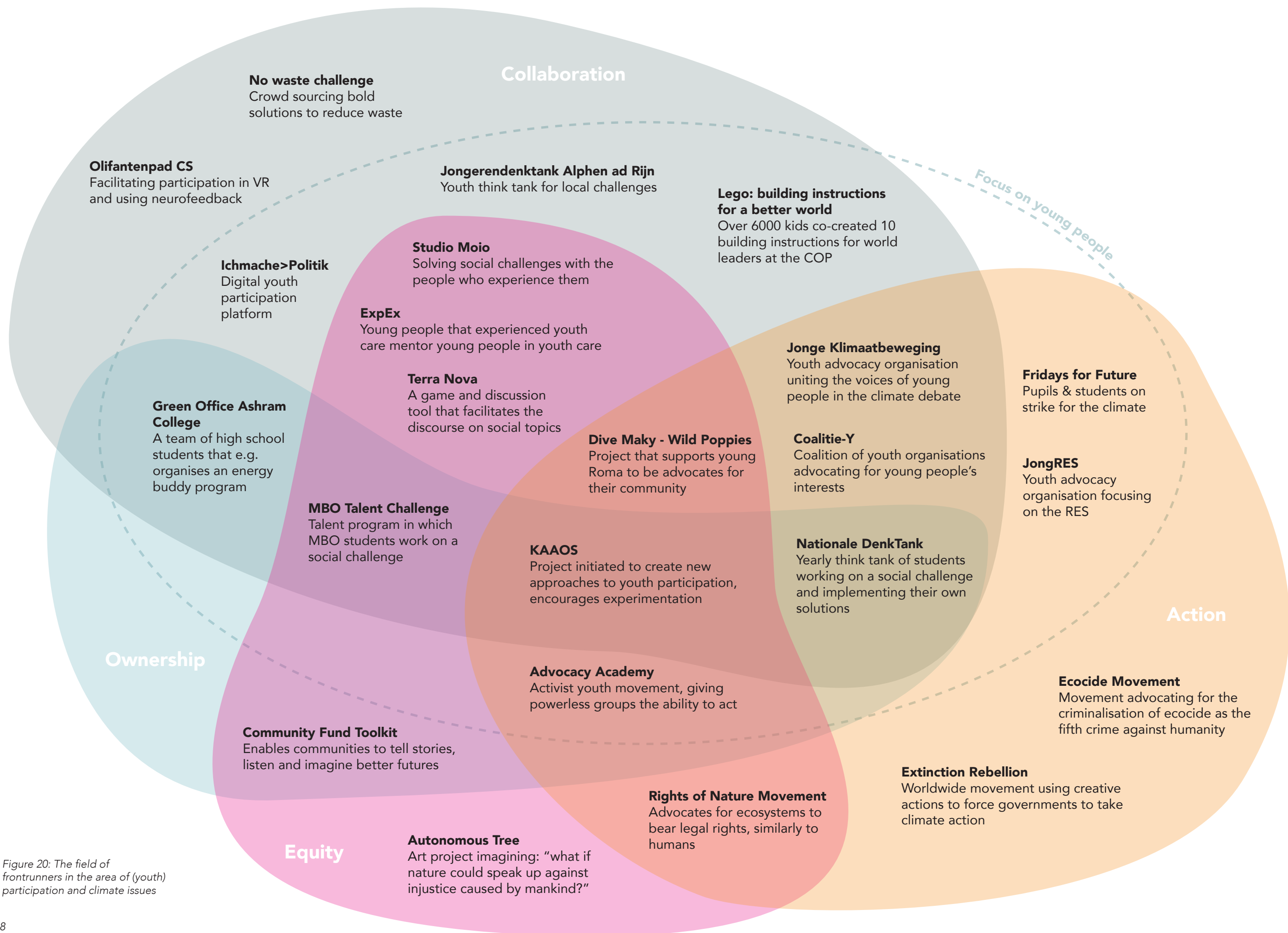


Figure 20: The field of frontrunners in the area of (youth) participation and climate issues



## 9.1 Equity

The first factor that is shared by several frontrunners is equity. All initiatives in this group have a strong focus on empowering those who do not have a voice, truly allow everyone to participate and/or speak up for things that cannot speak.

### Equity through empowerment

Several frontrunners in the equity group focus on empowering young people that are in some way disadvantaged and often overlooked in current society. Two examples of this group are The Advocacy Academy (UK) and Dive Maky - Wild Poppies (Slovakia). These initiatives focus on empowering young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and young Roma respectively. The focus of these projects is training those who are powerless and not heard by people in power to be activists or advocates for their own communities (Advocacy Academy, n.d.; Crowley & Moxon, 2017).

### Equity through inclusivity

Other frontrunners that contribute to the theme equity have a strong focus on inclusivity and truly allow everyone to participate. An example of this group is Terra Nova, a game in which you get to design your own society on a fictional island, encouraging the discourse on social and political topics. As this game can be played by primary school children and politicians alike, and is relevant and interesting for both, it clearly shows an inclusive approach to equity (Lisa Hu, 2016).

### Equity through speaking up for things that cannot speak

A final group of frontrunners contributes to the theme of equity by speaking up for things that cannot speak. An example of this is the Rights of Nature Movement, that advocates for legal rights for ecosystems, such as mountains, rivers and lakes (Challe, 2021). Another example is the art project 'Autonomous Tree' by Wronski (n.d.). The Autonomous Tree is a tree that has been transformed to represent living beings that are non-human and act on their behalf.

### The theme of equity

From these initiatives the theme equity was derived. While equality means giving everyone the same opportunities and resources, equity goes beyond that in recognizing that, due to differing circumstances, people need different opportunities and resources to reach an outcome that is equal (Milken Institute School of Public Health, 2020). The frontrunners in this group all aim for this, either by empowering marginalized young people, speaking up for non-human living things, or by designing inclusive approaches that are accessible for (almost) anyone, regardless of their age and background.

Figure 21 illustrates the difference between equality and equity. The left side shows that the same opportunities (in a system that is inequitable) do not necessarily lead to the same outcome. By creating custom tools these inequalities could be addressed, leading to more equal outcomes (Milken Institute School of Public Health, 2020).

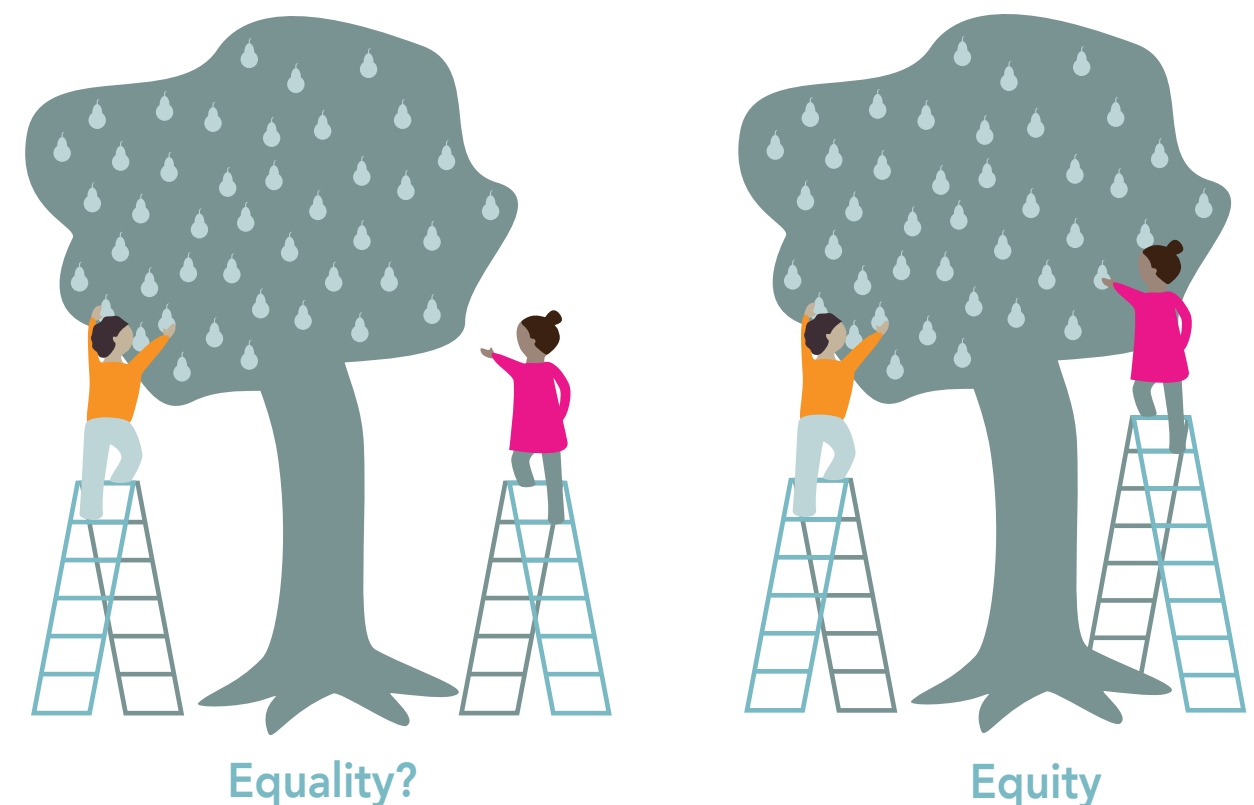


Figure 21: The difference between equity and equality, based on Erdmann (2021).

## 9.2 Ownership

Ownership is the second factor that is shared by several frontrunners. The initiatives in this group put the participants almost completely in charge in designing and implementing solutions and/or give participants a strong voice in steering the program itself.

### Ownership of solutions

Several frontrunners support young people to come up with and implement their own solutions to social problems. An example of this is the Nationale DenkTank. The Nationale DenkTank organizes a yearly thinktank for young people on a social challenge. Participants design their own solutions and are encouraged and supported to implement those solutions themselves when they have completed the four-month program (Nationale DenkTank, 2019). Another example is the Finnish project KAAOS, which translates into Chaos. This is a project that aims to develop new public services in the city through youth participation. They encourage experimental projects and enable quick implementation by taking a light touch approach to commissioning (Crowley & Moxon, 2017).

### Ownership of the program

Another element that is present in several of the frontrunners in this group is a degree of ownership of the program itself. The Green Office of the Dutch high school Ashram College in Alphen aan den Rijn is one of them. Students of the Ashram

College collect money with an energy buddy program in which they give advice on saving energy to family and friends. The money they earn is used to make their school more sustainable, and the students get to decide how the money is used (CM2, 2021). The element of ownership of the program can also be found in the Advocacy Academy (Figure 22) and the Nationale DenkTank. These initiatives both strongly rely on alumni to design, support and steer the program in the years following their own participation (Advocacy Academy, n.d.; Nationale DenkTank, 2019).

### The theme of ownership

The theme that all frontrunners in this group have in common is a degree of ownership for participants. Participants get ownership of the direction they take within the initiatives, are the ones that implement their own solutions and often play a key role in supporting and steering the initiatives itself, now and in the future. This underlying theme represents a valuable lesson in the field of youth participation and climate issues. It is closely related to one of the key ingredients of youth participation mentioned in Chapter 4: truly starting from the youngsters themselves.

Figure 22: Advocates from the Advocacy Academy (Advocacy Academy, n.d)





## 9.3 Collaboration

The third factor that is shared by a large group of frontrunners is a strong focus on collaboration. Collaboration in these initiatives is a means to co-creating better solutions, a way to unite voices to get your message across and/or a goal in itself.

### Collaboration for better solutions

There are quite a lot of frontrunners that leverage collaboration with young people as a source to find creative solutions. Examples of this are the Mbo Talent Challenge, de Jongeren denktank Alphen aan den Rijn and the Nationale DenkTank. These initiatives are all thinktanks that specifically work with young people for their fresh insights and creative solutions (CM2, 2021; Mbo Talent, n.d.; Nationale DenkTank, 2019). The crowd sourcing initiative 'No waste challenge' is another initiative, that called upon dreamers, creatives and hackers to submit their bold, waste-reducing solutions (No Waste Challenge, n.d.).

### Collaboration to unite voices

A second way of looking at collaboration is as a way to unite voices en ensure you are heard. Initiatives such as the Jonge Klimaatbeweging and Coalitie-Y (Figure 23) unite the voices of many youth organisations to create one strong voice that governments cannot ignore (Coalitie-Y, n.d.; Jonge Klimaatbeweging, 2021). The German online platform Ichmache>Politik enables young people to participate in policy making on a national level. It allows young people to give input, as well as vote on the inputs they consider relevant. You could argue that young people's voices are united in the inputs that get the most votes (Crowley & Moxon, 2017).

### Collaboration to build bridges

For some initiatives, collaboration is a goal in itself. The Nationale DenkTank for example was founded to build a bridge between the government, science and businesses. This collaboration is created as well as leveraged by the group young people that participate in the yearly thinktank (Nationale DenkTank, 2019). Dive Maky - Wild Poppies aims to promote the dialogue between young Roma, policymakers and practitioners, through their training program for young Roma. This dialogue ultimately helps effect change in the authorities that are responsible for preparing and implementing programs for improving living conditions and opportunities for young people at risk (Crowley & Moxon, 2017).

### The theme of collaboration

The overarching theme that all frontrunners in this group share is collaboration. They leverage collaboration for finding better, creative solutions, to unite the voices of smaller initiatives or individuals or even see more collaboration within society as their goal. In Chapter 4 facilitating the participation of groups of youngsters was already mentioned as a key ingredient. This theme therefore seems to represent a valuable element for youth participation.

Figure 23: Coalitie-Y presents their ideas to the Dutch Prime Minister (Coalitie-Y, n.d)





## 9.4 Action

The final factor that many frontrunners share is a focus on action. For most initiatives, this means not just giving your opinion, but taking action to demand change from governments. A few frontrunners take action in the sense that they implement solutions to the problems they are working on themselves. In all cases, it means not waiting around for something to change, but taking action to make change happen.

### Action to demand change

Many frontrunners in the action group take action to raise awareness and demand change from governments. The students from Fridays For Future have been striking since 2018, demanding climate action from governments (FridaysForFuture Nederland, n.d). Extinction Rebellion, shown in Figure 24, uses creative, daring actions to get the attention of media and society (Extinction Rebellion, n.d.). De Jonge Klimaatbeweging takes action to give young people a voice in shaping a more sustainable future (Jonge Klimaatbeweging, 2021). In 2020, they were the first movement ever to be awarded a first place in the Trouw Sustainable 100, in part for their willingness to take action (NOS, 2020).

### Action to implement solutions

For some frontrunners, action is central to what they do as they design and implement their own solutions to the challenges they work on. KAAOS and the Nationale DenkTank both support their participants in designing and implementing their own solutions.

Both initiatives allow participants to experiment and take actions themselves, rather than just providing input and asking the government to make changes (Crowley & Moxon, 2017; Nationale DenkTank, 2019).

### The theme of action

The shared theme of these frontrunners is taking action. A lot of the initiatives in this group take action to attract attention to their cause and demand change from governments, while some take action to implement their own solutions to the social challenges they perceive. In Chapter 4, youngsters taking action was one of the key ingredients of youth participation. This theme shows how frontrunners use the potential of taking action, which is a valuable learning for designing new solutions.

Figure 24: Extinction Rebellion taking action  
(Extinction Rebellion, n.d)





## 9.5 The themes combined

Figure 25 illustrated the frontrunners in the field as well as the themes that can be derived from these initiatives. The areas of the themes in the image clearly overlap, showing that many initiatives contribute to multiple themes. You could even say that each initiative relates to each theme to some degree, and that Figure 14 highlights the themes that the frontrunners can be most strongly associated with.

Looking at the themes more closely, there seems to be a connection to self-determination theory (SDT). SDT states that the basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness need to be satisfied to enable intrinsically motivated behaviour (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

The three basic psychological needs relate to three themes:

- The innate need for competence means “to engage optimal challenges and experience mastery or effectance in the physical and social worlds ” (Deci & Ryan, 2000). This need overlaps with the theme of equity, as equity means creating

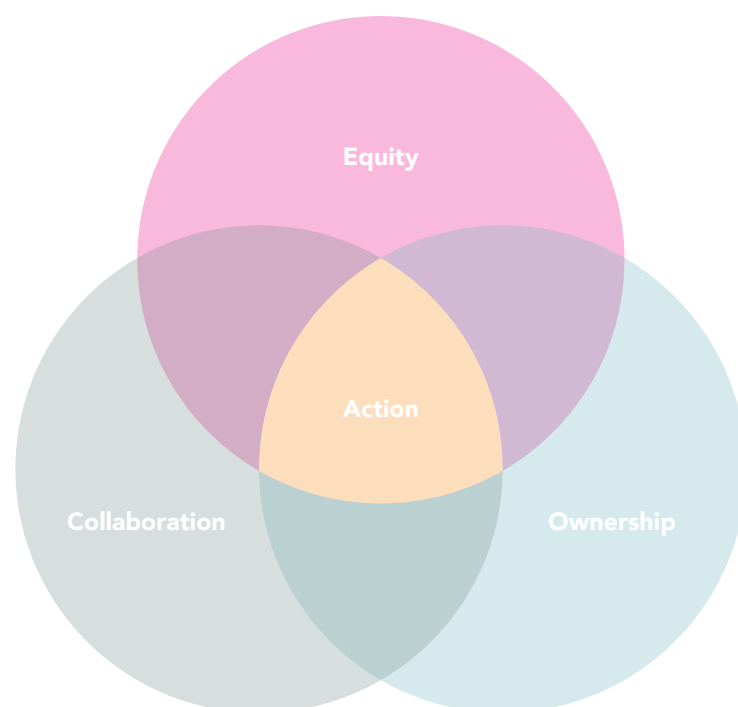


Figure 25: The relationship between the 4 themes

opportunities that are suitable for people’s circumstances leading to equal outcomes - which could be seen as optimal challenges.

- The innate need for autonomy means “to self-organize and regulate one’s own behavior (and avoid heteronomous control), which includes the tendency to work toward inner coherence and integration among regulatory demands and goals” (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The need for autonomy relates to the theme of ownership, as ownership gives participants more autonomy within the initiatives to work towards their own goals.
- The innate need for relatedness means “to seek attachments and experience feelings of security, belongingness, and intimacy with others” (Deci & Ryan, 2000). This need connects to the theme of collaboration, as collaboration helps satisfy the need of relatedness.

The final theme, action, seems to be missing in the comparison. However, SDT states that satisfying the three psychological needs enables intrinsically motivated behaviour (Deci & Ryan, 2000). This could be seen as the theme of action.

Comparing the themes to SDT helps us to see the relationship between the four themes. As satisfying the psychological needs enables intrinsically motivated behaviour, satisfying the three themes of equity, ownership and collaboration might enable the fourth theme: action. Figure 19 visually shows how collective action could be enabled by combining equity, ownership and collaboration.

## Key insights

The four themes that emerged from the field are:

1. **Equity:** providing everyone with the right opportunities and resources to create equal outcomes through empowerment, inclusivity and speaking up for things that cannot speak.
2. **Ownership:** giving participants a degree of ownership in the direction they take, implementing solutions and steering the initiatives themselves.
3. **Collaboration:** creating and leveraging collaboration to come up with better solutions, unite voices and build bridges between different groups in society.
4. **Action:** not waiting around for something to change, but taking action to demand change or implement solutions yourself.

Taking inspiration from self-determination theory, equity, ownership and collaboration might be seen as necessary ingredients for enabling action





# Part 3

## Towards new solutions





## 10. Frames

*In this chapter three potential frames are explored. These frames were based on the four themes that the previous chapter elaborated on. In line with Dorst (2015, p. 78), the frames are written down as "If the problem situation is approached as if it is ..., then ....". The three frames explored in this chapter are Holacracy, crowdacting and Burning Man.*



# Method

Research questions and activities for Chapter 10

This chapter focuses on the sixth step of the Frame creation process: frames. In this step, the themes are used as a basis for creating new frames for approaching the problem (Dorst, 2015, p. 78). These new frames are a key step in the process, as they open up a new solution space for solving the problem. The question that this chapter therefore addresses is:

*“Which frames, derived from the themes, open up a new solution space?”*

The frames were created by thinking about real-life situations in other domains in which the four themes are present. In line with Dorst (2015, p. 78), the frames are written down in the form of “If the problem situation is approached as if it is [themes], then [frame]”:

*“If youth participation in municipalities in the context of the energy transition is approached as if it is a challenge of equity, ownership, collaboration and taking action, then ...”*

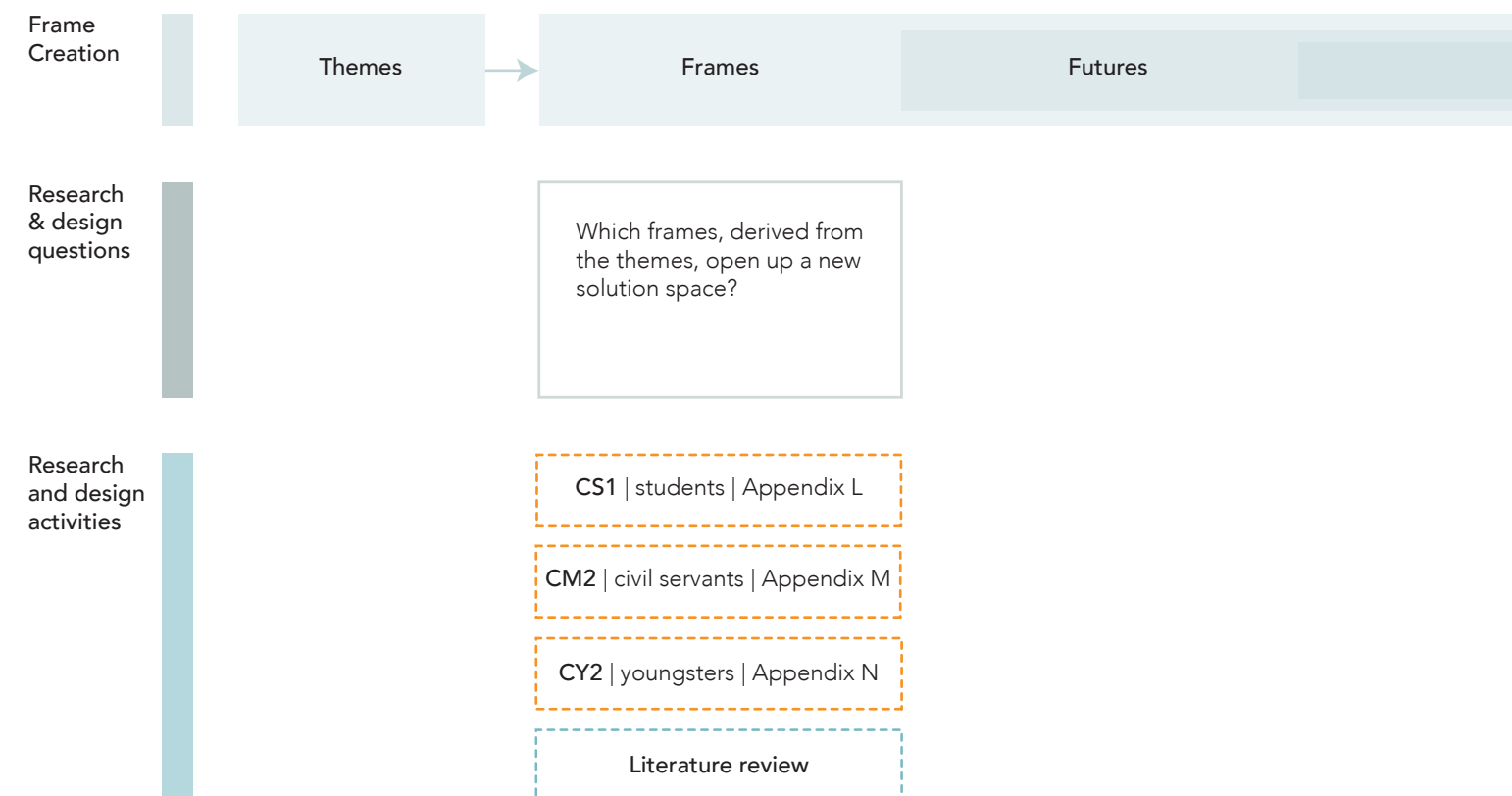
The final three frames were eventually created through individual brainstorming and thinking on it over the course of several weeks, as it is mostly a creative leap to ideate on new frames (Dorst, 2015, p. 78). However, as shown in Figure 26, this process was informed and inspired by:

- The creative session with fellow graduation students (CS1, Appendix L). During this session, after enriching the field with new initiatives and detailing potential themes, the final part of the session was dedicated to exploring potential frames.

Figure 26: Research questions and activities for Chapter 10

- The creative session with civil servants from the municipality of Alphen aan den Rijn (CM2, Appendix M). Besides the field and themes, participants explored potential frames connected to those themes in the final part of the session.
- The creative session with youngsters at Mbo Rijnland (CY2, Appendix N). During this session, participants thought about potential frames connected to the four themes from the previous chapter, as well as new solutions (futures) inspired by those frames.

The remainder of this chapter will present the three resulting frames and their connection to the four themes in more detail.





# 10.1 Holacracy

Holacracy is a way to structure and run an organisation that is an alternative to conventional management. It distributes power throughout the organisational structure, empowering everyone through a set of concrete rules (HolacracyOne, 2021).

The resulting frame can be written down as:

*If youth participation in municipalities in the context of the energy transition is approached as if it is a challenge of equity, ownership, collaboration and taking action, then it should be organised like Holacracy.*

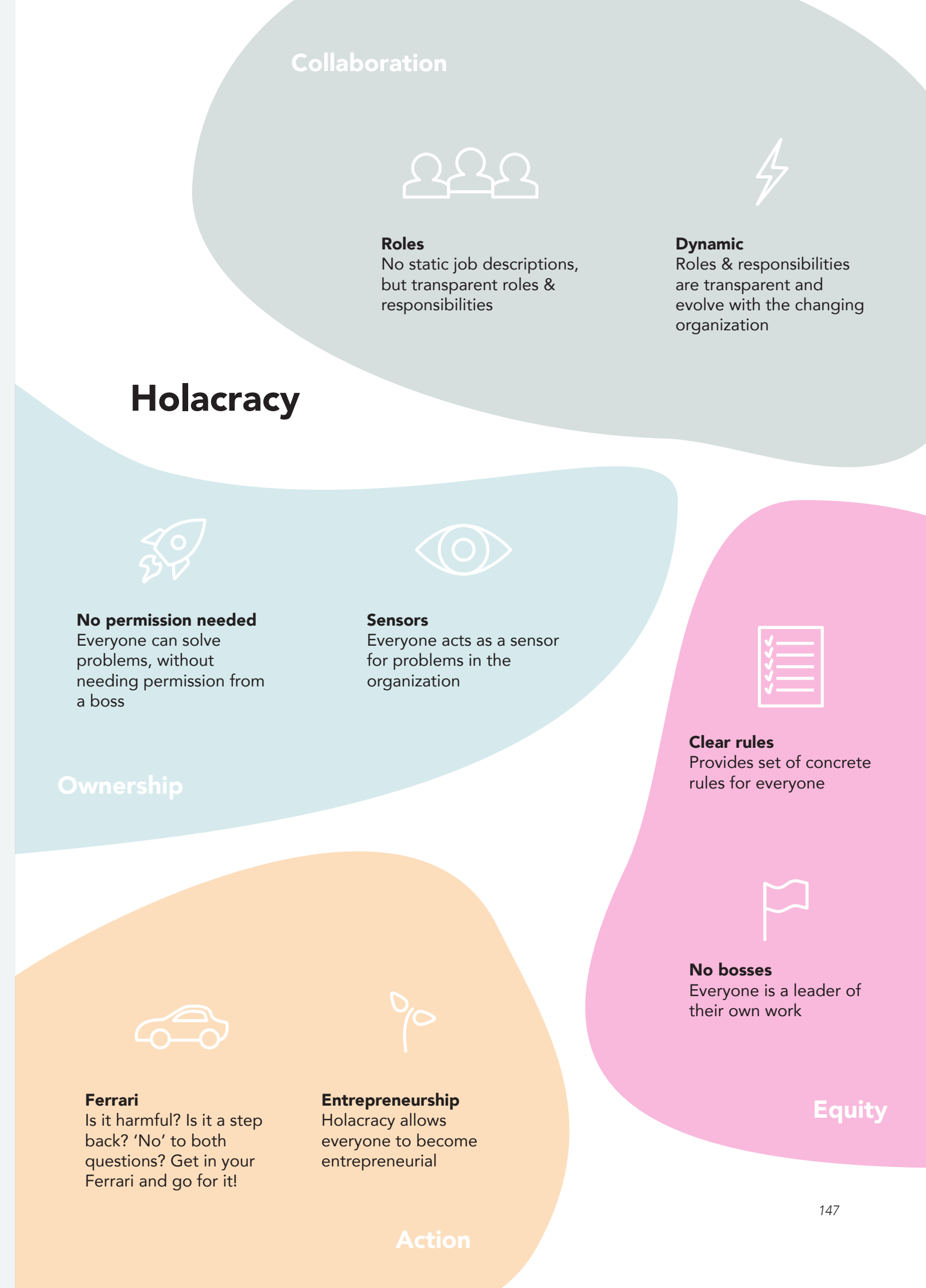
Figure 27 on the next page visualizes Holacracy within the framework of the four themes.

Holacracy means that the company is run by everybody in the team, and there are no bosses (Pater, 2017). Clear rules ensure that everyone knows their own authority and becomes a leader of their work (HolacracyOne, 2021). Senior people who traditionally gave orders now support and coach others (Hogenhuis, 2019).

Everyone in the organisation acts as a sensor for problems, while the governance structure ensures you can safely solve them yourself without needing permission. There are no job descriptions, only roles with responsibilities that are transparent and dynamic (HolacracyOne, 2021). People can create their own roles, propose changes to roles or give them back, ensuring that everyone feels they contributes in a meaningful and impactful way (Hogenhuis, 2019).

Holacracy encourages action, because "Everyone can take any initiative, at any time". Only when you can prove something is a step back or harmful, you can stop someone. This encourages entrepreneurship throughout the organisation (Hogenhuis, 2019).

Figure 27 (next page):  
Holacracy visualized within the  
framework of the four Themes



## 10.2 Crowdfunding

Crowdfunding means taking action together with other like-minded people to solve Collective Action Problems such as climate change. CollAction, the first crowdfunding platform in the world, will be used as an example for this frame (CollAction, 2021).

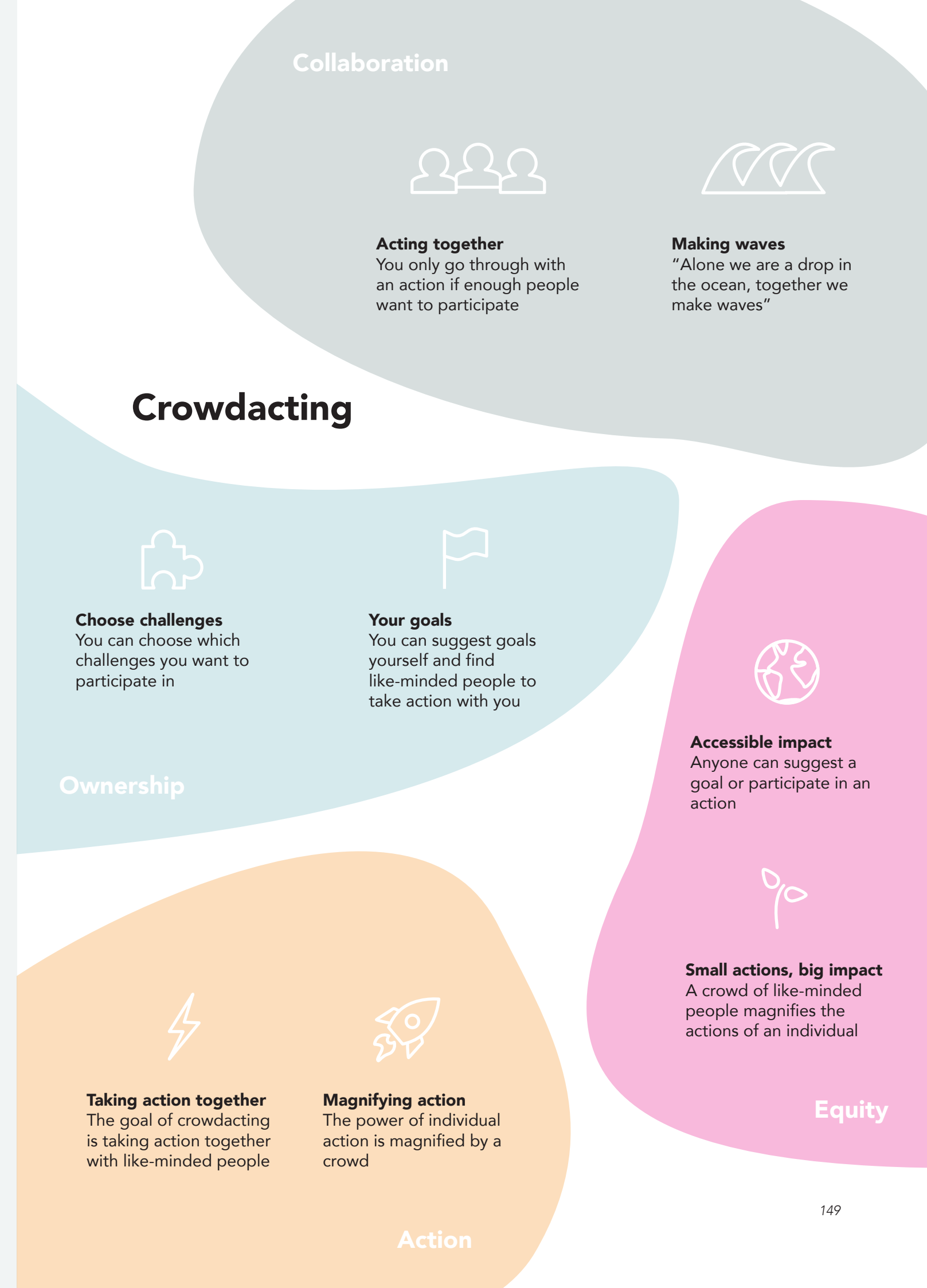
The resulting frame can be written down as:

*If youth participation in municipalities in the context of the energy transition is approached as if it is a challenge of equity, ownership, collaboration and taking action, then it should be organised like crowdfunding.*

Figure 28 on the next page visualizes crowdfunding within the framework of the four themes.

CollAction is a platform that allows anyone to suggest or choose a goal that you would want to participate in. By bringing like-minded people together, it magnifies the actions of individuals. You decide yourself in what challenges you want to participate, and you only go through with it if enough people want to participate. This ensures your individual impact is amplified through a crowd that is acting together with you. Examples of crowdfunding challenges are being vegan for a month, switching to a green energy provider and meeting with elderly once a week (CollAction, 2021).

Figure 28 (next page):  
Crowdfunding visualized within the  
framework of the four Themes





## 10.3 Burning Man

Burning Man is "a global ecosystem of artists, makers, and community organizers who co-create art, events, and local initiatives around the world." Every year "Burners" gather in the desert in Nevada to build the participative and temporary Black Rock City (Burning Man Project, n.d.a).

The resulting frame can be written down as:

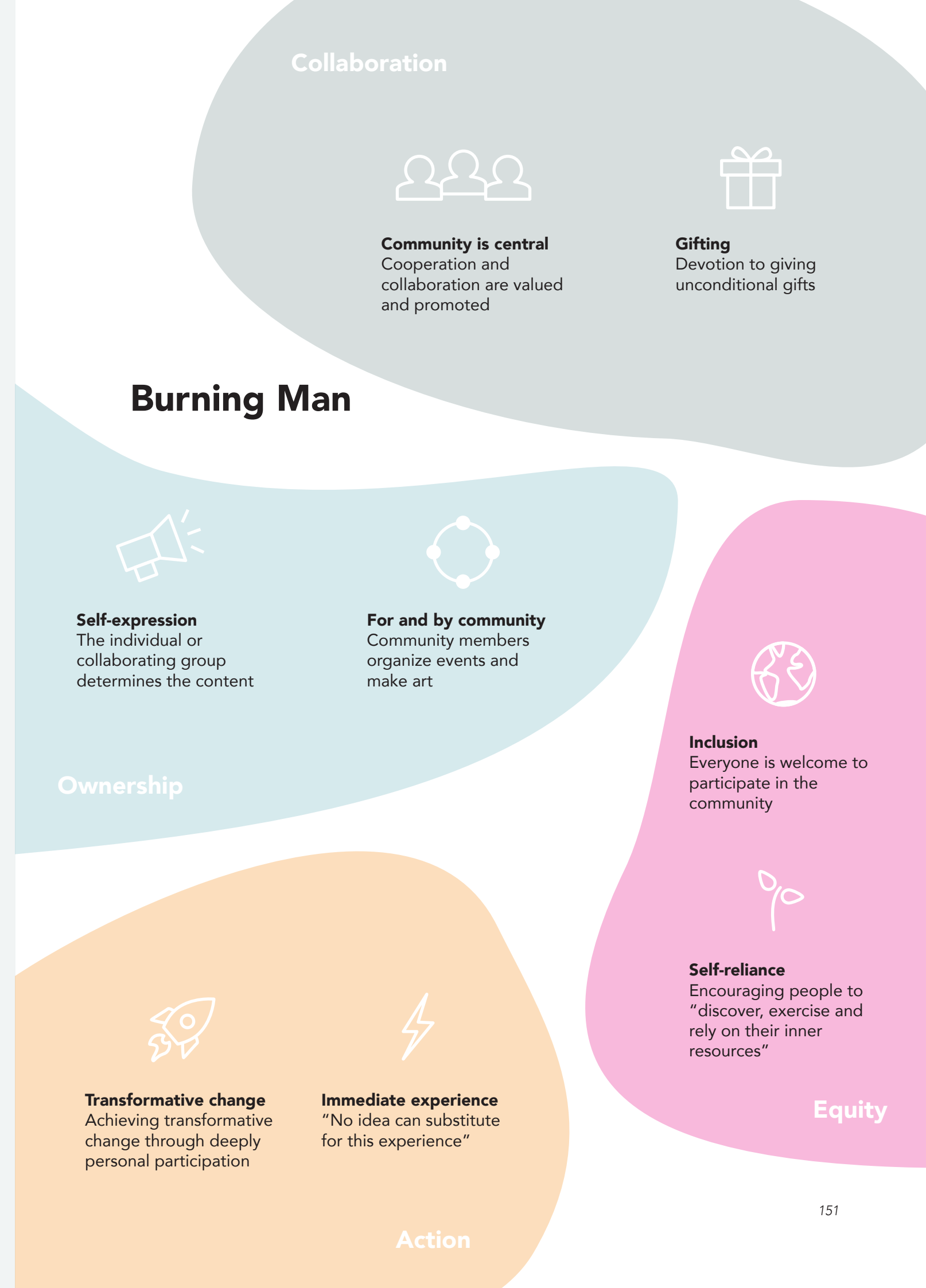
*If youth participation in municipalities in the context of the energy transition is approached as if it is a challenge of equity, ownership, collaboration and taking action, then it should be organised like Burning Man.*

Figure 29 on the next page visualizes Burning Man within the framework of the four themes.

Burning Man is radically inclusive and welcomes anyone to participate in their community. It has a strong focus on self-reliance, which means encouraging people to "discover, exercise and rely on their inner resources". Furthermore, there is a strong focus on self-expression and communal effort. Creative collaboration and cooperation are valued, promoted and supported and there is a devotion to unconditional "gifting" (Burning Man Project, n.d.b).

Burning Man believes transformative change, in the individual or society, is achieved through deeply personal participation. Immediate experience is seen as the "most important touchstone of value" in Burning Man culture (Burning Man Project, n.d.b).

Figure 29 (next page):  
Burning Man visualized within the  
framework of the four Themes





## Key insights

The three potential frames based on the themes of equity, ownership, collaboration and action are:

1. **Holacracy:** a way to structure and run an organisation that distributes power and empowers everyone through a set of concrete rules.
2. **Crowdacting:** taking action together with other like-minded people to solve Collective Action Problems.
3. **Burning Man:** a radically inclusive community with a focus on participation, creative collaboration and self-reliance.

These three frames are applied to the problem situation, leading to the futures in the next Chapter.



A photograph of three people sitting around a wooden table in a meeting room. On the left, a woman with curly brown hair and glasses, wearing a blue cardigan over a patterned scarf, is smiling and looking towards the center. In the middle, a woman with blonde hair, wearing a black and white patterned jacket, is also smiling and looking towards the right. On the right, a young man with blonde hair and glasses, wearing a brown hoodie, is looking towards the center. The table in front of them has several sheets of paper, a microphone, a container of pens, and a set of colorful markers. A large, semi-transparent teal circle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the chapter title and a short paragraph.

# 11. Futures

*By applying the frames from the previous chapter to the problem situation, several potential futures were created. This chapter presents three concepts, illustrated in short scenarios. The first concept is connected most to the first frame (Holacracy), the second concept to the second frame (crowdacting) and the third concept to the third frame (Burning Man). The concepts however also take inspiration from the other frames.*



# Method

Research questions and activities for Chapter 11

This chapter is about the seventh step of the Frame creation process: futures. In this step, the frames from the previous chapter are applied to the problem situation to explore possible solutions (Dorst, 2015, p. 78). The main question addressed in this chapter is therefore:

*“Which futures, derived from the frames, are promising solutions to the challenge?”*

First, several potential futures were created. While the final three futures were eventually created through individual brainstorming and thinking on it over the course of several weeks, this process was informed and inspired by:

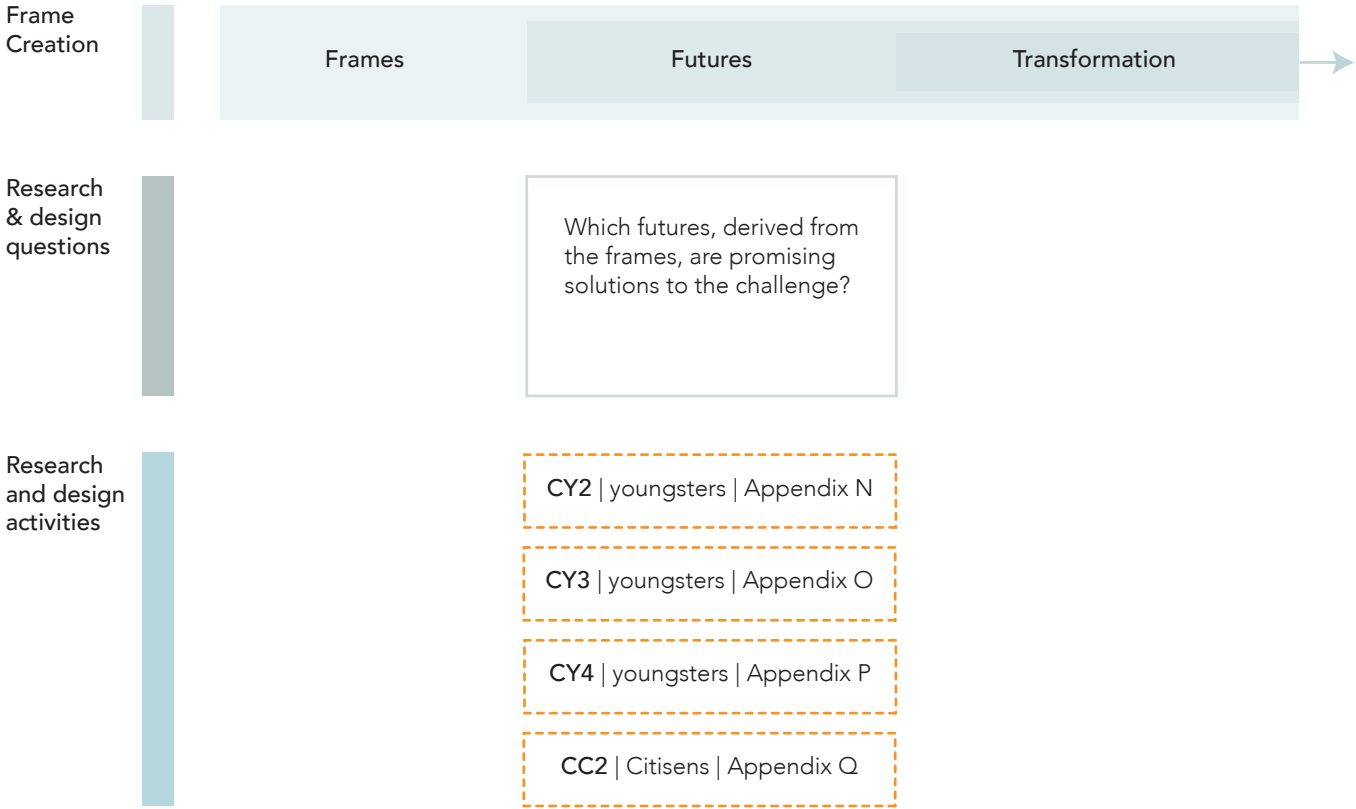
- The creative session with youngsters at Mbo Rijnland (CY2, Appendix N). During this session, after brainstorming on potential frames based on the four themes from Chapter 9, participants brainstormed new solutions (futures). Besides that, participants (1) provided their view on sustainability and a sustainable future, as well as (2) a day in the life through context mapping exercises. The outcomes of these activities further informed the potential futures, as the first of these activities can be seen as a small prototype for youth participation on sustainability, and the second informs how youth participation could fit into youngsters’ lives.
- The creative session with a vwo class from CSG Willem de Zwijger (CY3, Appendix O). During this session, participants individually brainstormed on challenges they believe the municipality should work on, and further detailed in groups how they would go about solving those challenges together with the municipality. Insights from this session include the youngster’s own approach to participation.

- The three futures presented in this chapter were further improved and evaluated during:
- The creative session with another group of students at Mbo Rijnland (CY4, Appendix P). In the session, participants brainstormed in groups on things they would like to change in their municipality and ways in which the municipality could involve youngsters in those challenges. Furthermore, they provided feedback on a first version of the three futures presented in this chapter.
  - The creative session with Citisens employees (CC2, Appendix Q). During the session participants first brainstormed on ideas to involve youngsters in the energy transition, then provided feedback on the three ideas presented in this chapter and finally thought about important criteria for the final direction, as well as choosing a direction for the project.

Figure 30 shows the four sessions that informed this Chapter.

The remainder of this chapter will present the three resulting futures, an evaluation of those futures informed by sessions CY4 and CC2, and the final direction for the project.

Figure 30: Research questions and activities for Chapter 11



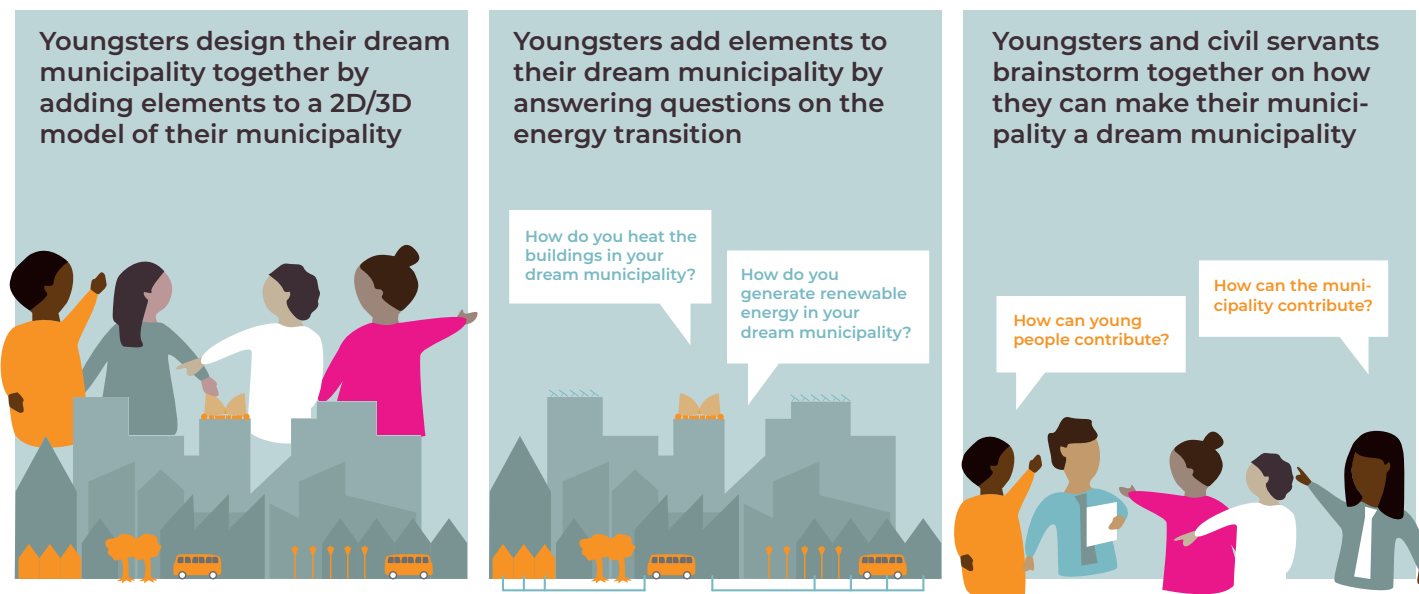


## 11.1 Concept 1: Your dream municipality

The first concept, which was derived from the frame Holacracy, revolves around young people designing their own dream municipality as shown in Figure 31.

First, youngsters add elements (orange in the Figure) to a 2D/3D representation of their municipality. This is an open invitation for the youngsters to share what the municipality would look like if it were up to them. In the second step, youngsters are asked to add elements (blue in the Figure) to the dream municipality they designed by answering questions from the municipality about the energy transition. This allows the municipality to find out how the youngsters feel about topics related to the energy transition, but in the context of the dream municipality that the youngsters created themselves. The final step involves a brainstorm, in which both youngsters and civil servants participate, on how the municipality can get closer to the dream municipality that the youngsters created. Two questions that are central in this brainstorm are "How can youngsters contribute?" and "How can the municipality contribute?".

Figure 31: Concept 1 |  
Your dream municipality

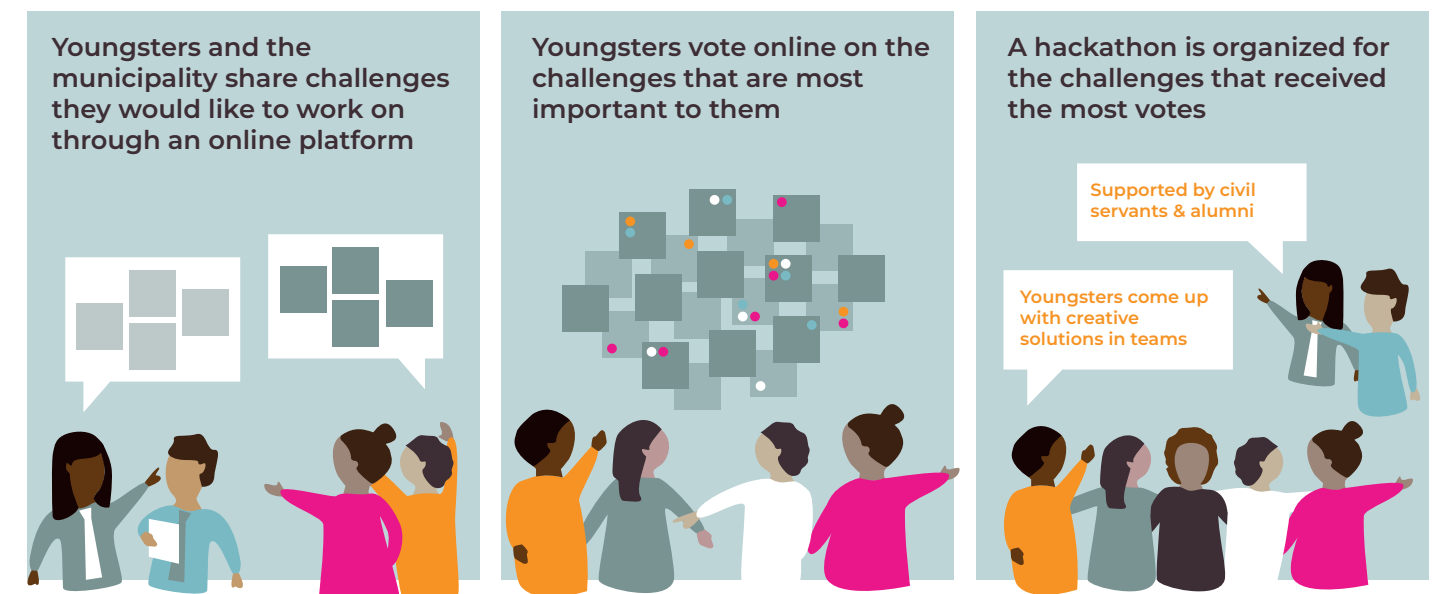


## 11.2 Concept 2: Hack your municipality

The second concept was inspired by the second frame, crowdfactoring. Figure 32 illustrates the concept, which is a hackathon on challenges young people care about.

First, both young people and the municipality share challenges they believe are important in their municipality on an online platform. In the second step, youngsters vote on the challenges they believe are most important or urgent. The challenges that received the highest number of votes will then be the focus of a hackathon. In the hackathon, young people create creative solutions for the challenges in teams, supported by civil servants that can bridge the gap to the municipality and alumni of the program that act as coaches to the teams.

Figure 32: Concept 2 |  
Hack your municipality

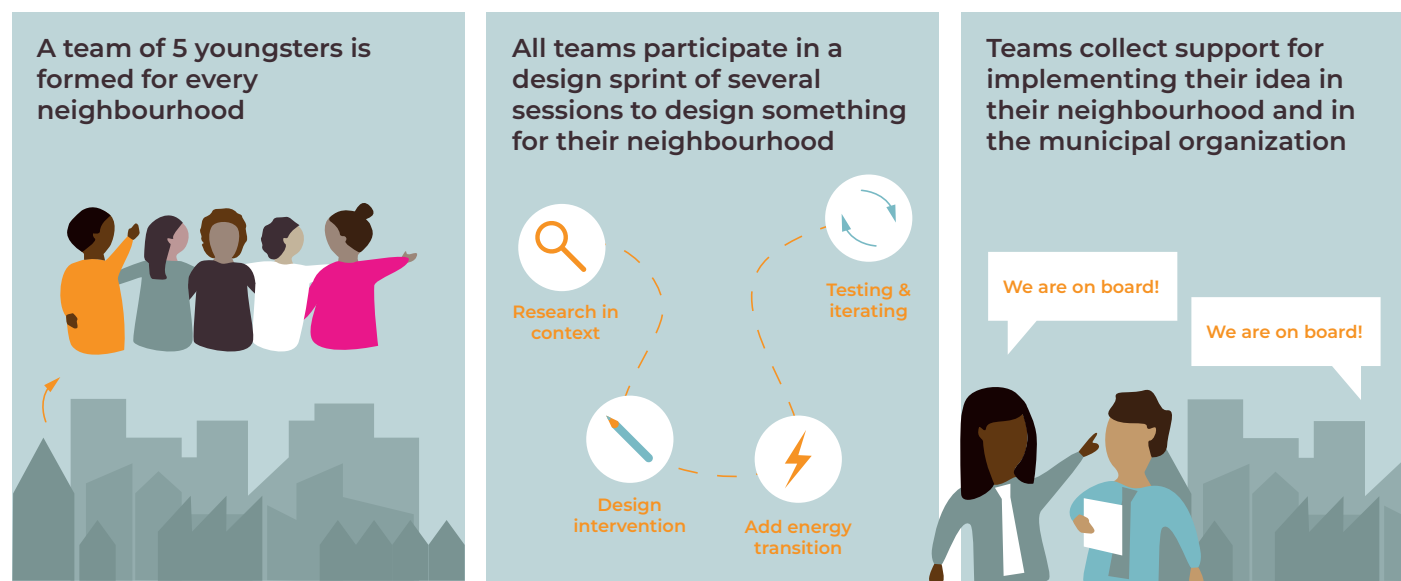


## 11.3 Concept 3: Design for your neighbourhood

The third concept, which was inspired by the frame Burning Man, is shown in Figure 33. In this concept, young people design something for their neighbourhood, taking into account the energy transition in the final design.

First, from each neighbourhood a team of around 5 young people is formed. All teams participate in a design sprint, over the course of several sessions, to design something for their neighbourhood. They do research in their neighbourhood and design an intervention based on their findings. In the third step, the energy transition is incorporated in the design. If they for example want to design a new community centre, they create a plan to make it an energy neutral and sustainable building. In the final step, teams collect support for their idea both in the neighbourhood and in the municipal organisation, to increase the chances of successful implementation.

Figure 33: Concept 3 | Design for your neighbourhood



## 11.4 Evaluating the concepts

The three concepts were evaluated during a co-creation session with mbo students (CY4, 2021) and with representatives from Citisens (CC2, 2021). Figure 34 shows a summary of the feedback participants gave. For each concept participants shared which elements they would **keep** the same, which elements they would get rid of (**kill**), and which elements they would **build** to improve the concept.

### Concept 1: Your dream municipality

Looking at the first concept, participants in both sessions liked the fact that it involves young people working together with the municipality. The mbo students furthermore liked that it was an interactive way to involve young people. In the Citisens session participants liked the positive approach of thinking about your dream municipality and involving youngsters with a broad, open question.

Some mbo students believed this concept should not necessarily focus on the municipality you live in. Some participants in the same session would further improve the concept by making sure there is a clear agreement between the municipality and young people as well as guidelines on what the young people can and cannot do. Participants in both sessions thought it would be interesting to involve more people, either more disciplines, other citizens or city councillors and aldermen. Participants in the Citisens session stressed the importance of educating young people about the energy transition and the different ways of implementing it to ensure their ideas go beyond just windmills and solar panels.

### Concept 2: Hack your municipality

Moving on to the second concept, the mbo students liked the element of working together with other young people and the municipality as well as the voting element that gives young people a voice. Participants in the Citisens session similarly liked that concept 2 puts young people in charge from the beginning, but also liked the fact that it focuses on actively working on solutions to the challenges of young people.



However, mbo students were not fond of the words “coach” and “mentor” that were used to describe the civil servants and alumni that would support young people in the second concept, because it reminded them of a school environment. They were also worried that people would submit unrealistic or weird ideas, but thought this might be solved by having moderators on the platform. Furthermore, they wanted young people to be sincerely involved in the follow-up after the participation trajectory.

In the Citisens session, participants disliked that the concept focused on challenges only, while it would be more positive to look at opportunities as well. Besides that, they would improve the connection to the challenges of the municipality and implementation. Finally, they stressed the importance of involving a diverse group of young people, to which this concept could cater to more.

### Concept 3: Design for your neighbourhood

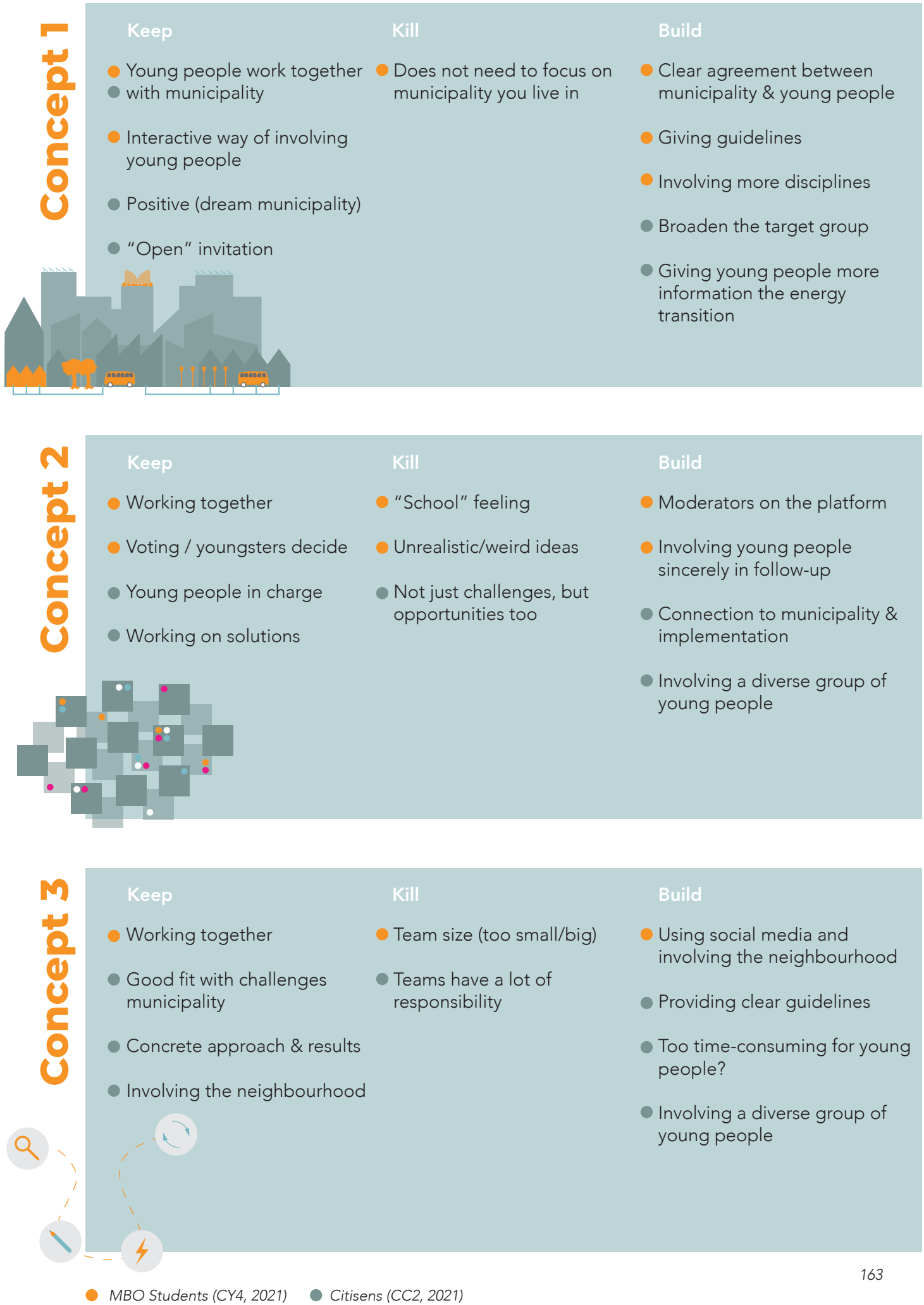
The mbo students liked that the third concept focused on young people working together. According to the participants from the Citisens session, this concept would fit well with the challenges of municipalities and lead to concrete results. They liked the fact that youngsters are encouraged to involve their neighbourhoods, although they also worried this responsibility might be too much for them.

Interestingly, the mbo students strongly disagreed about the right team size: some thought the teams of 5 young people from each neighbourhood were too big, while others thought teams of 8 would enable them to share more ideas. Furthermore, they would like to use social media and involve the neighbourhood more. Participants in the Citisens session would improve the idea by providing clear guidelines to the teams. Besides that, they were wondering whether participating in this concept would be too time-consuming for young people. Lastly, they would like to add something to ensure diversity in the teams of young people.

### Towards a final design direction

Since Citisens is the client for this project, participants in the Citisens session were asked to share their criteria for choosing a design direction as well as their preferred direction. The criteria inclusivity, feasibility of the outcomes of the participation approach, a positive approach, and working together with the municipality were mentioned most often by participants. All participants preferred the first concept, although two participants would like to incorporate small elements of the other two concepts. One of these elements was the voting step of the second concept. As all mbo students preferred the second concept because of the voting element, the resulting design direction takes the first concept as a basis but adds the voting of the second concept.

Figure 34 (next page):  
Feedback on the concepts  
(CC2, 2021; CY4, 2021)



# Key insights

Based on the frames Holacracy, crowddacting and Burning Man, three futures were created:

1. **Your dream municipality:** youngsters design their dream municipality, add elements related to the energy transition and brainstorm with the municipality about implementation
2. **Hack your municipality:** youngsters and the municipality share challenges, youngsters vote on the challenges most important to them and participate in a hackathon on these challenges.
3. **Design for your neighbourhood:** teams from each neighbourhood design something for their neighbourhood, taking the energy transition into account in their design.

The concepts were evaluated in two creative sessions with young people and Citisens employees. Based on their feedback, the **first concept** was chosen as the basis of final design direction. The voting of the second concept, which was the youngsters' favourite, was added to the final design direction.





## 12. Transformation

*In this chapter “Your dream municipality”, the future that was chosen as the final design direction in the previous chapter, is detailed through several iterations. Each iteration focuses on a subset of steps in the participation trajectory and involves a co-creation session with a group of key stakeholders: young people, civil servants or politicians. After 5 iterations the final design is presented. The chapter ends with insights from the evaluation of the final design during the pilot session.*



# Method

Research questions and activities  
for Chapter 12

This chapter focuses on the eighth step of the Frame creation process: transformation. The transformation is a critical evaluation and iteration of the proposed frame and future, to make it all come together (Dorst, 2015, p. 79). While the implementation plan is part of this step of the Frame creation process, it is discussed in the next chapter to keep the focus of this chapter on the final design proposition itself.

The main question addressed in this chapter is:

*“How would stakeholders like to participate in the proposed future?”*

In this step, the proposed future was tested and improved over the course of five iterations and a pilot session, as shown in Figure 35:

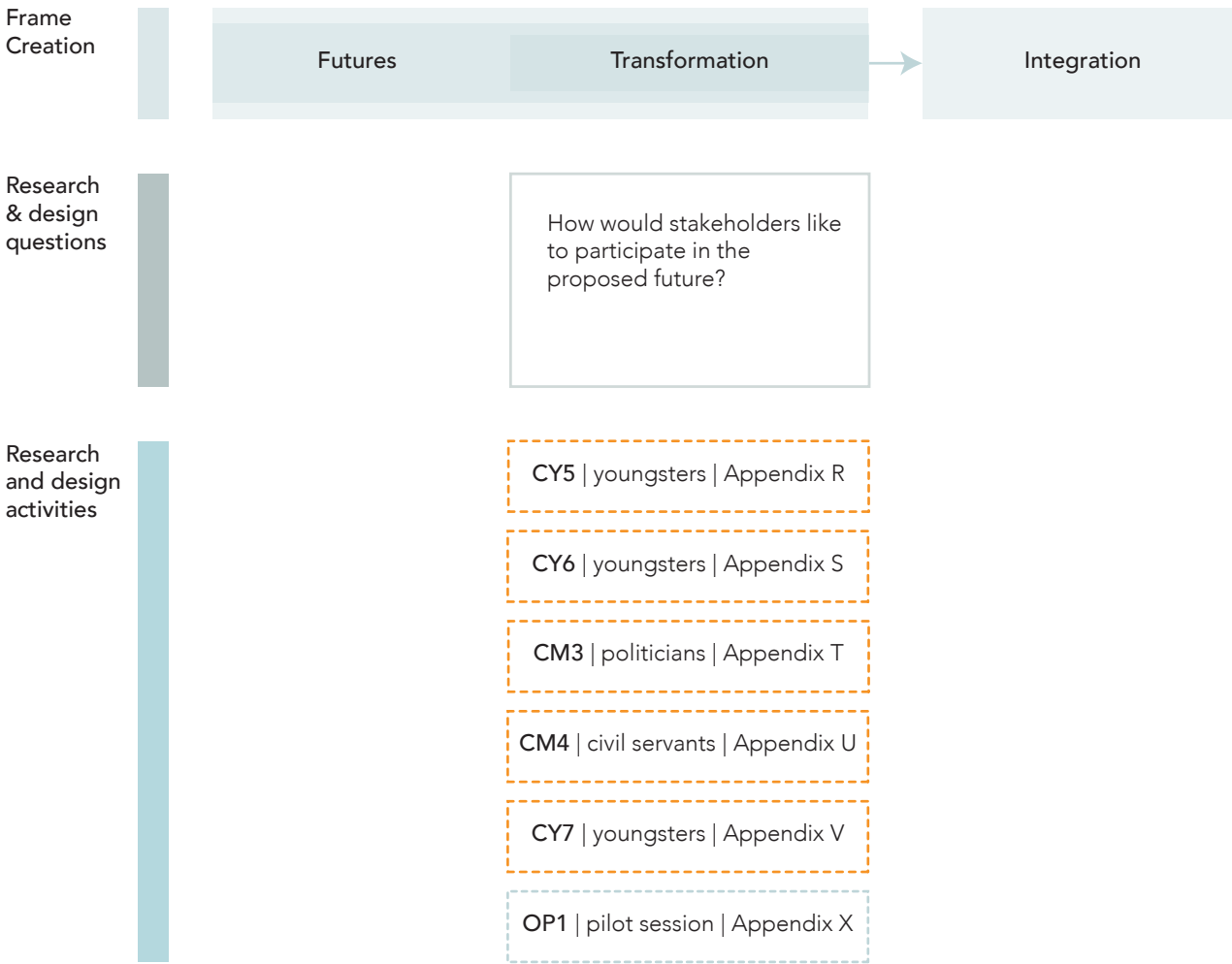
- A creative session with students from Mbo Rijnland (CY5, Appendix R). This was largely the same group as session CY2. During this online session, participants provided feedback on the concept as a whole and tested and gave input on several steps of the proposed youth participation process.
- A creative session with a vwo 5 class from CSG Willem de Zwijger (CY6, Appendix S). This was largely the same group as session CY3. During this session, participants provided feedback on the concept as a whole, tested a more elaborate prototype and gave input on several steps of the proposed youth participation process.
- A creative session with politicians (CM3, Appendix T). During this online session, participants provided general feedback on the concept as a whole and more detailed feedback on several steps of the proposed youth participation process from the perspective of municipal politicians and administrators.
- A creative session with civil servants (CM4, Appendix U). This

was partially the same group as session CM2. During this online session, participants provided general feedback on the concept as a whole and more detailed feedback on several steps of the proposed youth participation process from the perspective of civil servants.

- A co-creation session with students from Mbo Rijnland (CY7, Appendix V). This was largely the same group as session CY4. During the session, participants tested a more elaborate and improved prototype of several steps and provided feedback on these as well as other steps of the proposed youth participation process.
- A pilot session with youngsters, civil servants, a city councillor and Citisens employees in the municipality of Alphen aan den Rijn (OP1, Appendix X). During the pilot session, a prototype of several key steps of the proposed participation process was tested and evaluated.

The remainder of this chapter first describes the five iterations. Figure 36 shows the steps of the proposed youth participation process on which the five iterations described above focused. Secondly, the seven steps of the proposed final design are elaborated on in more detail. The chapter ends with the insights from the evaluation in the pilot session.

Figure 35: Research questions and activities for Chapter 12





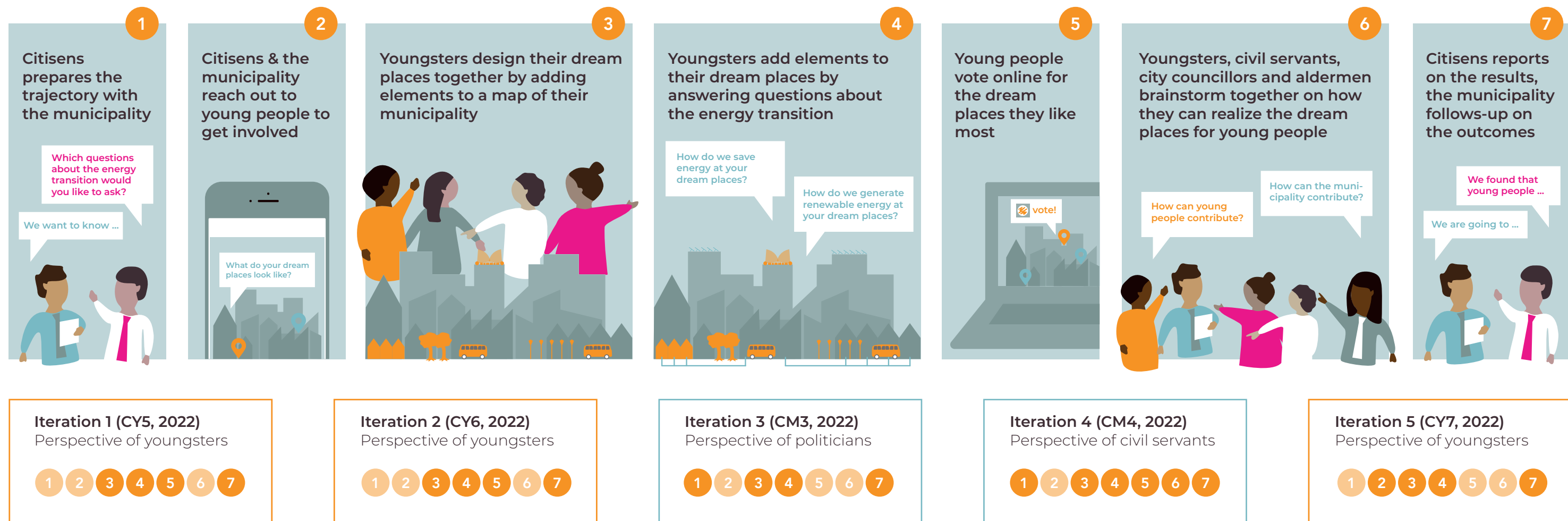


Figure 36: The seven steps of the proposed design direction and the five iterations including the steps they focus on

Before detailing the design direction, an overview was created of the different steps that the participation trajectory would consist of. Figure 36 gives an illustrated overview of these steps.

Step 3, 4 and 6 are similar to the three steps that the original concept consisted of in the previous chapter, with one major difference. Instead of designing their dream municipality in step 3, youngsters are asked to design their **dream places** in the municipality. This small change was inspired by one of the pillars of generative design: "people are particularly creative with regard to experiences that they are passionate about." (Sanders & Stappers, 2012, p. 15). Keeping this in mind, it seems more likely young people will be passionate about experiences at specific places in the municipality, while they might not be passionate or even have specific experiences connected to the municipality as a whole.

Taking further inspiration from generative research, the idea of a **path of expression** was taken as a starting point for the activities that young people would do in step 3. The path of expression supports participants in a generative design session to express their hopes, fears and dreams for the future in three steps (Sanders & Stappers, 2012, p. 56):

1. Participants describe and reflect on their current experiences  
*What places in the municipality are important to you?*

2. Participants then reflect on previous experiences  
*Reflect on what you (dis)like about those places*
3. The underlying values and needs help participants explore their dreams for the future  
*Redesign the places to create your own dream places*

Taking the dream places as a starting point, the two questions in step 4 were reformulated to make them applicable to specific places as well as easy to understand. While the previous questions focused on heating buildings and generating renewable energy in the municipality, the questions now focus on the two main ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions on specific locations that involve energy, saving energy and generating renewable energy, in line with the goals of the energy transition.

The fifth step in Figure 36, voting, was added to the concept because this was a favourite element of the mbo students in creative session CY4 as explained in the previous Chapter (2021). The first and second step in Figure 36 were added as necessary preparation for the other steps. The final step, which involves reporting and follow-up, taps into one of the key elements of participation as described in Chapter 3, influence, as well of the final part of the design brief that refers to a strategy to translate input to policy level and visualise how it has been used.

# 12.1 Iteration 1: Step 3-5 & 7 with mbo students

The first iteration of the design direction was done during a co-creation session with mbo students (CY5, 2022). Figure 37 on the following page shows the activities and questions that steered the session, as well as the insights and ideas from the session.

To iterate the third step, which was the main focus of the session, participants were asked to go through the steps of designing their dream places individually using a simple (digital) prototype. In the discussion after this small test, several ideas were generated to improve this step:

- Add a search function to support navigation on the map.
- The preferred map type was either something similar to Google Maps or a map that highlighted landmarks. These two types can easily be combined (resulting in something similar to the map used in the prototype).
- Adding illustrations or drawing on the map did not allow participants to easily design their dream places. Instead, they would rather use pictures as a basis.

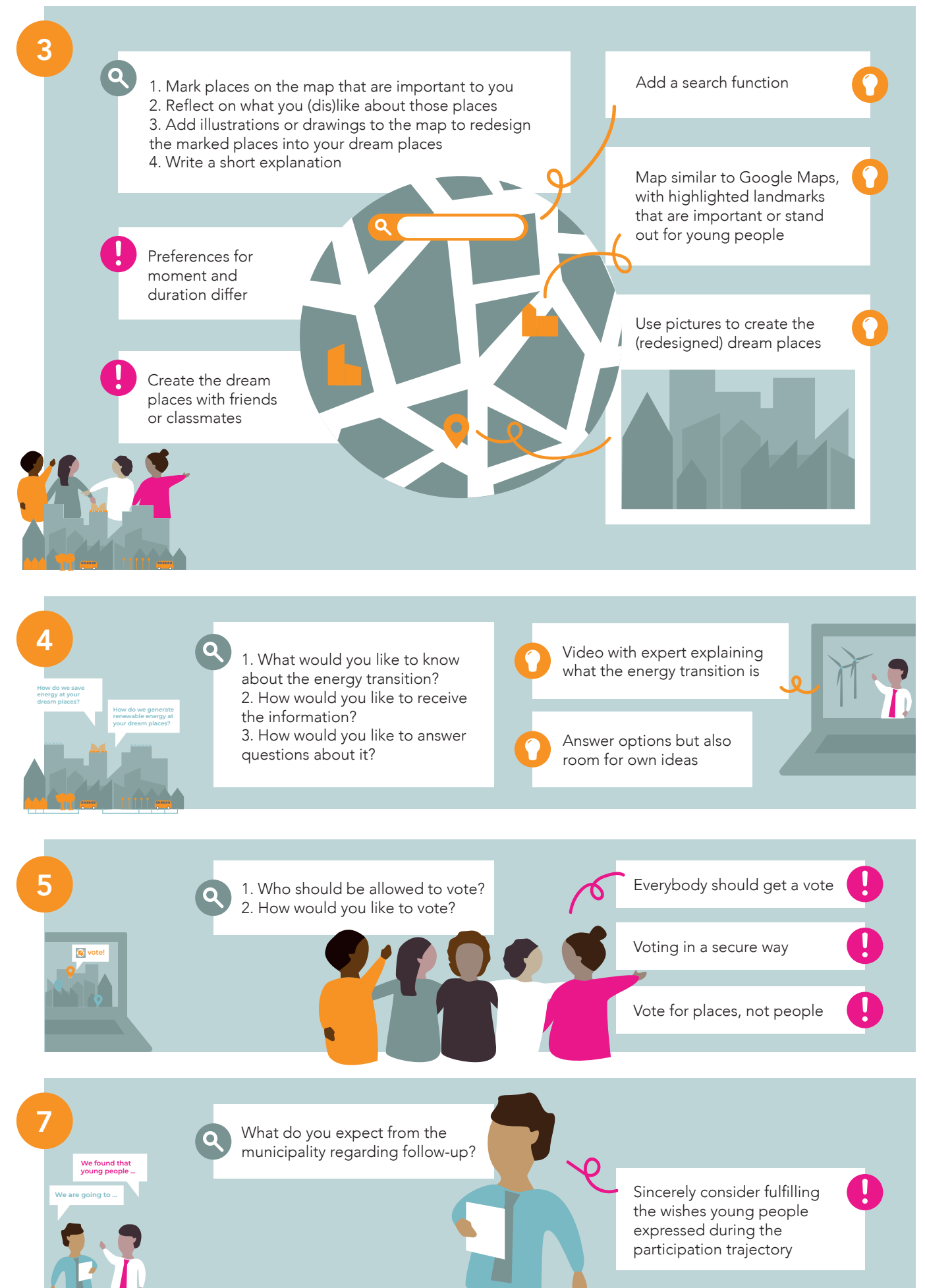
When reflecting on the individual activity, participants all agreed they would prefer to do this in groups instead. When they would like to do the activity and how much time they would spend on it greatly differed between participants.

Secondly, the fourth step of the participation trajectory was discussed. In this step, participants mostly wanted to know what the energy transition referred to exactly, and they would all want to receive this information in the format of a video. Most participants then wanted to incorporate the energy transition elements in their dream places through their own ideas, while some preferred to have some options to choose from.

When discussing the fifth step, participants unanimously believed everyone in the municipality should be allowed to vote, as changes those places would not just affect young people. Some participants were worried that online voting would be less secure, and most participants would like to have several ways of voting (both online and offline). Furthermore, people wanted to choose the places to vote on while not seeing who created them.

Finally, participants expected the municipality to sincerely consider fulfilling the wishes young people expressed, but did understand that the municipality would make the final call.

Figure 37 (next page):  
Infographic showing the  
questions, activities and  
results of the first iteration





## 12.2 Iteration 2: Step 3-5 & 7 with vwo 5 students

The second iteration involved a co-creation session with vwo 5 (high school) students (CY6, 2022). Figure 38 on the following page shows the activities and questions that steered the session, as well as the insights and ideas from the session.

During the creative session, participants tried out an improved prototype of the third and fourth step of the participation process. They marked places important to them on a map, redesigned their school(yard) by drawing on a picture and adding elements related to the energy transition in the picture. When reflecting on their experience, they had several ideas to improve these steps:

- Allow people to upload their own pictures of the places they redesign to help them to express themselves more effectively.
- Add a more detailed, zoomed in map to which people can add improvements (from a helicopter view).
- Add some extra space that participants can use to either write notes, add additional pictures or a mind map. This helps them express themselves, generate ideas and prevents the picture from becoming too cluttered over the course of step 3 and 4.
- Participants liked doing this activity offline, so having this as an option could be a nice addition to the final design.

Other input that participants provided was that they enjoyed the process of improving a place that was important to them together. Furthermore, they would prefer to do these activities during their geography class, just like this session. Finally, they would like to learn more about the options to achieve the goals of the energy transition and the likelihood of us achieving these goals.

Participants were then asked to reflect on step 5: voting. They all agreed this was a good idea, although one group thought not just the most popular ideas should be implemented. All participants thought not only young people should get a vote, but two groups did think people younger than 11 or 16 were too young to vote. Most participants preferred to vote online.

Finally, there was a short discussion on the follow-up of the participation trajectory and the motivation of young people to participate. Participants thought it was important that the municipality would consider their input and try to implement it. In line with this, actual influence was mentioned by several participants as their main reason to participate in the first place.

Figure 38 (next page):  
Infographic showing the  
questions, activities and  
results of the second iteration



## 12.3 Iteration 3: Step 1, 3, 4 & 7 with politicians

For the third iteration, a creative session with people who have experience as politician or administrator in the municipality was organized (CM3, 2022). Figure 39 on the following page shows the questions that steered the session, as well as the insights and ideas from the session.

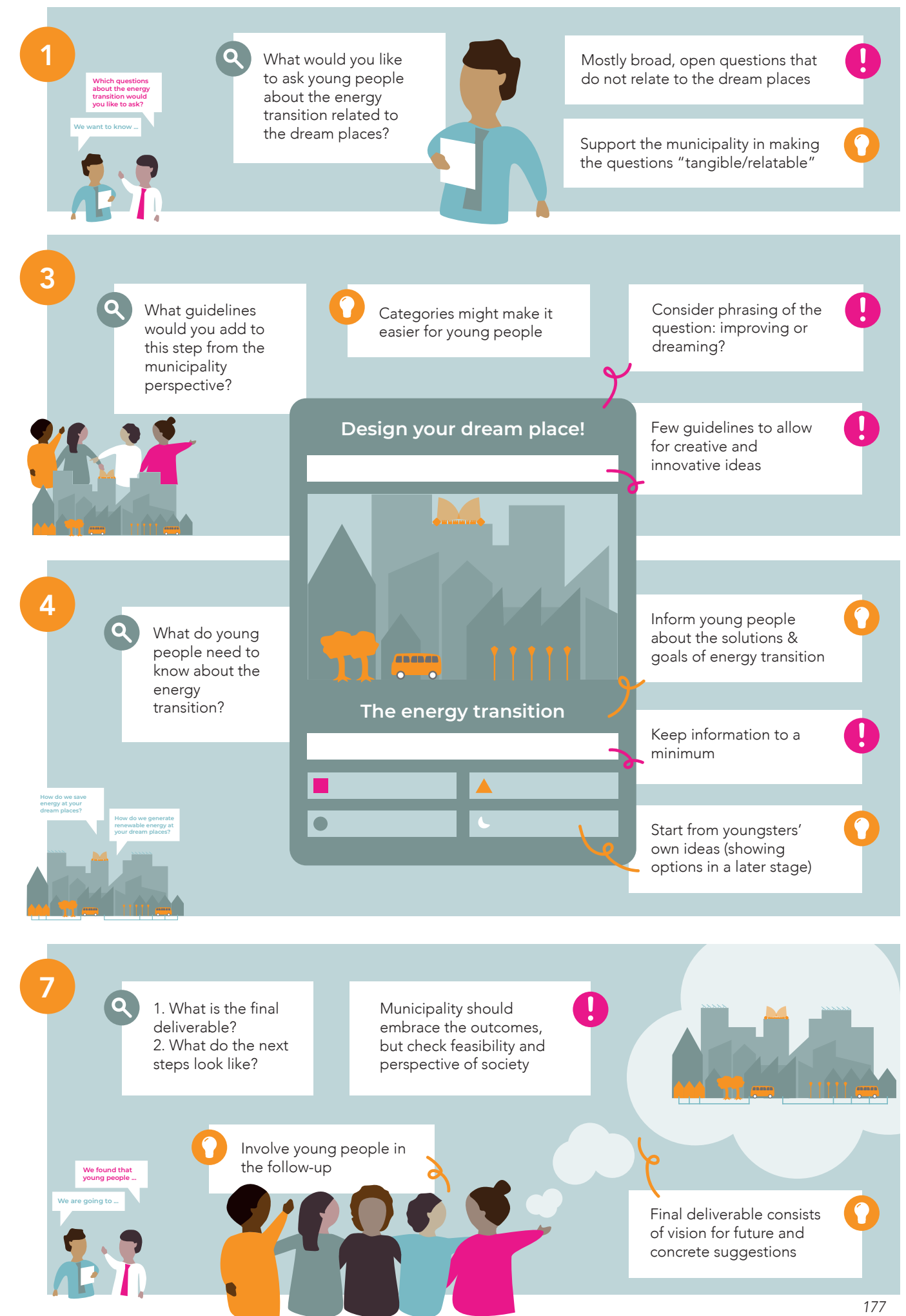
The first step of the participation process, in which Citisens prepares the trajectory with the municipality, the central question is: "what would the municipality like to ask young people about the energy transition?". When participants were asked to answer this question, most questions they wanted to ask were very broad and did not directly relate to the dream places. It might therefore be valuable to have guidelines to support the municipality to make the questions well-suited to the participation trajectory.

When discussing the third step, participants agreed there should be room for creativity and big ideas. An interesting comment that a participant made regarding this was the importance of the phrasing of the question: "improving" a place will result in minor changes, while "dreaming" will more likely result in big, creative ideas (and more valuable input). Some participants thought using categories might make it easier for people to come up with ideas.

Moving on to the fourth step, participants were asked what they thought young people should know about the energy transition. All participants agreed that there should be information about the possibilities and options to generate and save energy. Some thought people should also be informed on the goals of the energy transition, while others would keep the information to a minimum to see what people come up with themselves. In line with this, they would first let young people come up with their own ideas to answer the questions related to the energy transition. Showing several options could be part of a later stage.

Finally, the seventh step, reporting and follow-up, was discussed. The final deliverable, according to participants, should consist of both a vision for the future, as well as concrete suggestions for projects that can be implemented in the near future. Participants thought that the municipality should embrace the outcomes, but check the feasibility and take the perspective of the society as a whole into account before implementation. Interestingly, most participants thought that young people should also be involved in the follow-up, for example as an ambassador.

Figure 39 (next page):  
Infographic showing the  
questions, activities and  
results of the third iteration





## 12.4 Iteration 4: Step 1 & 3-7 with civil servants

The fourth iteration involved a creative session with civil servants from the municipality of Alphen aan den Rijn (CM4, 2022). Figure 40 on the following page shows the questions that steered the session, as well as the insights and ideas from the session.

Looking at the first step in the participation process, participants were asked to come up with questions about the energy transition that relate to the dream places. Similarly to the previous iteration (with politicians), although asked to be specific and focus on the dream places, participants mostly came up with broad, open questions that did not necessarily relate to the dream places. It might help to provide a standard format for the questions, such as “How would you [...] at your dream place?”.

Secondly, participants came up with guidelines for the third step of the participation process, in which young people design their dream places. A large majority of the participants thought the question should be an open invitation, that gives young people the opportunity to be creative. They did think young people should be informed on the process and goals of the participation, to manage expectations about the outcomes.

Participants then thought about what young people need to know about the energy transition. They mostly thought young people should have some background knowledge, such as the urgency, the “why” and the climate agreement it originates from. They thought young people should come up with their own ideas when answering the questions about the energy transition, optionally inspired by a video or inspiring examples.

The fifth step, voting, was proposed to the participants as an addition to the main concept. Participants liked this addition and thought it was an opportunity to involve a wider audience, but also stimulate participants by making the process feel more official.

In the sixth step, the municipality brainstorms with young people about implementing the dream places. Participants saw this as an opportunity to involve a wider audience from the municipality, such as youth workers, energy advisors and coaches, schools and sports associations.

The final deliverable, according to participants, should in the first place be attractive and visual. They would like it if young people would be involved in presenting the outcomes.

Figure 40 (next page):  
Infographic showing the  
questions, activities and  
results of the fourth iteration



## 12.5 Iteration 5: Step 2-4 & 7 with mbo students

The fifth iteration involved a creative session with mbo students (CY7, 2022). Figure 41 on the following page shows the activities and questions that steered the session, as well as the insights and ideas from the session. During the session, participants gave input on the second and seventh step, and tried out and iterated on the third and fourth step.

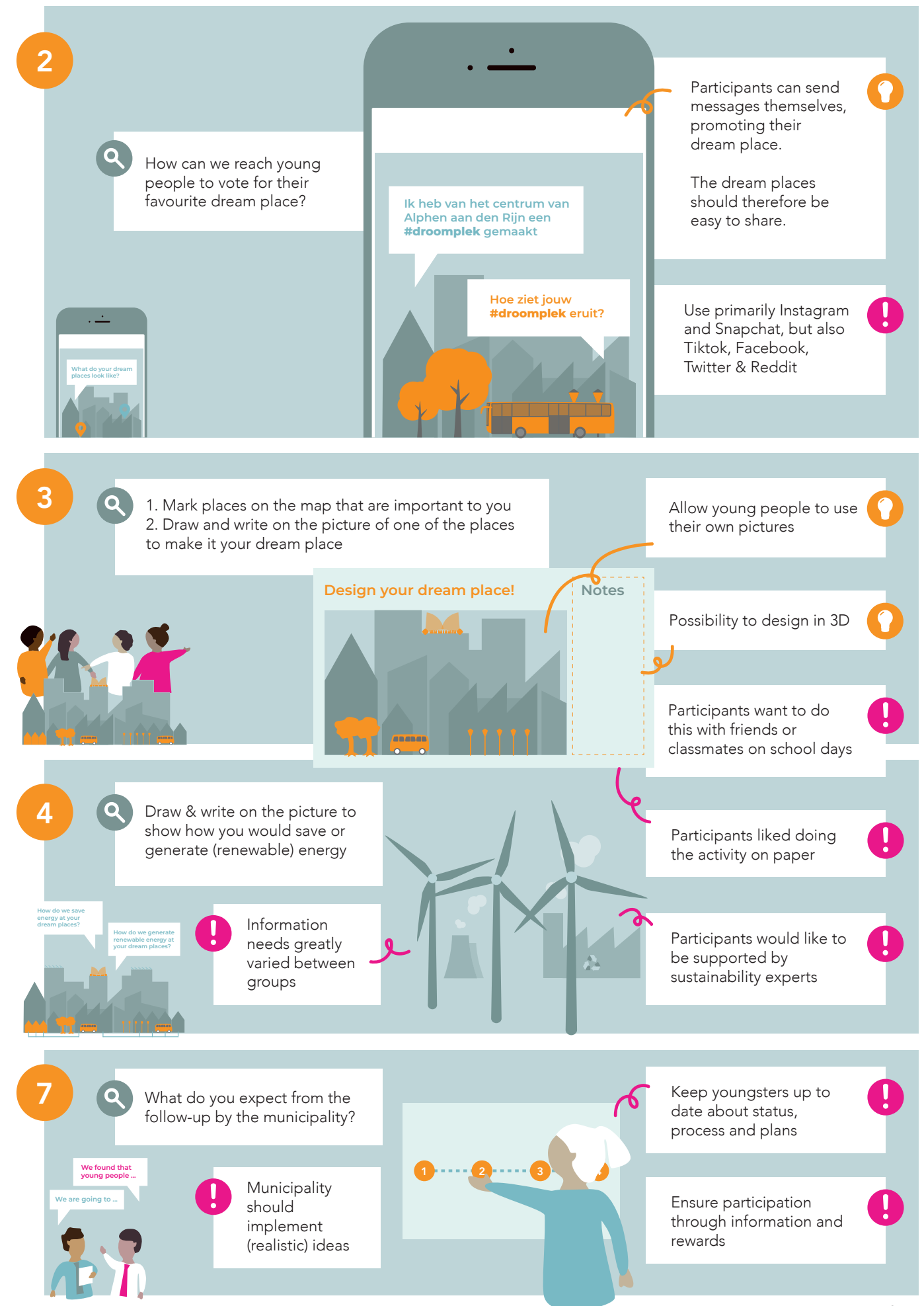
For the second step, participants came up with ideas to reach young people to design their own dream place of vote for one. They designed their own posts, which all promoted the dream place they just designed to potential voters. They would primarily use Instagram and Snapchat to reach young people.

Participants tried and evaluated both the third and fourth step during the session. Two out of three groups would want to use their own pictures for these steps, while the other group came up with the idea to design the places in 3D (digitally). Participants all wanted to do the activities in groups on school days and they liked doing it on paper (even the group that wanted to design in 3D).

For the fourth step, participants got an inspiration sheet with information about saving energy and generating renewable energy. Participants' responses to this sheet varied greatly: one group liked it as it was, one group wanted more information and examples, and one group thought it was completely unnecessary. The final design should cater to this variety of needs. Furthermore, two groups mentioned they would like to collaborate with sustainability experts on their ideas.

Finally, participants gave input about their expectations from the municipality in the seventh step. They expected or hoped that the municipality would implement their ideas and keep them up to date about the status, process and plans. Participants however did not agree about the method: one group wanted updates once a week via mail (so not digitally), the second group every day via social media and the third group whenever there was new progress via a dedicated app. The final topic of the session was ensuring every youngster would and could participate. Participants thought the municipality could ensure this by giving rewards such as discounts or days off, and by informing youngsters and showing their input would sincerely be considered.

Figure 41 (next page):  
Infographic showing the  
questions, activities and  
results of the fifth iteration





# 12.6 Final Design

Based on the insights and ideas from the five iterations, a final design was created. This section elaborates on the final design of the seven steps of the participation process.

## Step 1: Citisens prepares the trajectory with the municipality

The first step consists of a creative session with civil servants from the municipality, facilitated by two Citisens employees. Figure 42 shows the 4 main steps of this creative session. The structure of this process aims to support the municipality to come up with good questions for the youngsters that fit the participation process (i.e. questions that are interesting for youngsters and can be linked to their dream places), as this appeared to be challenging during the third and fourth iteration with politicians and civil servants (CM3, 2022; CM4, 2022).

During the session, civil servants first brainstorm individually on topics that they want to learn more about related to youth and the energy transition. This step serves as a warming-up, to get participants thinking about the topic of the session, and helps to get an extensive overview of the topics that will be relevant to formulate questions about.

After a few minutes, participants are asked to present their three most important topics, which facilitators from Citisens write on post-its and cluster on the wall. Besides those topics, civil servants most probably collected a list of relevant topics from the responsible alderman and/or city council before the session. This list can be used to check whether any important topics are missing.

Participants then split up in groups of around 4 people. Each group chooses one or two (different) clusters to work on in the next step.

In the third step, the groups fill out the (A3) work sheet in Figure 43. First, participants discuss why this topic is interesting for the municipality, to have the reason why they want to learn more about it on top of mind when formulating the questions. Secondly, they discuss why this topic is interesting for youngsters, or how it could become interesting for them. This aims to ensure that the resulting questions are relevant for the youngsters. The final step before creating the questions is thinking about the relevance of the topic

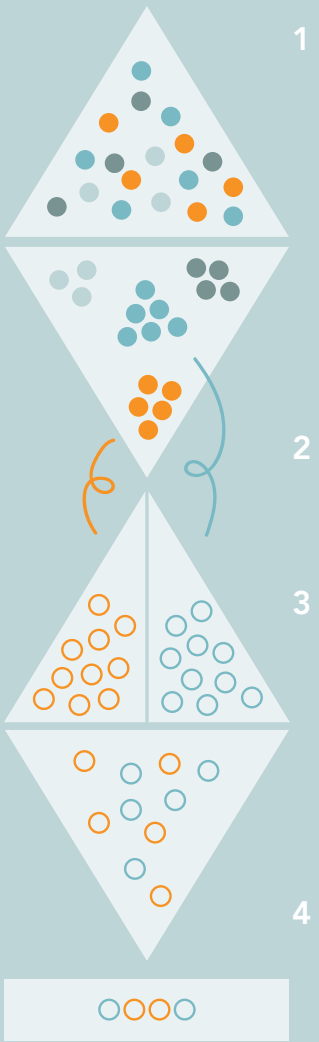
Figure 42 (next page):  
Step 1, Citisens prepares  
the trajectory with the  
municipality

Figure 43 (next page):  
Work sheet for step 1.3

## 1 Citisens prepares the trajectory with the municipality

During a creative session, facilitated by Citisens

- 1 Civil servants brainstorm on topics that they want to learn more about related to youth and the energy transition.
- 2 Each participant presents their 3 most important topics, which are clustered on the wall by Citisens. Previously collected topics are used to check if any topics are missing. The most important clusters are the starting point of step 3.
- 3 In groups of +/-4, participants fill in the work sheet below to get from topics to concrete questions.
- 4 Each group presents their 4 favourite questions. Participants then vote on the questions that were presented. The 4 questions with most votes are used in the participation process.



### Vragen over de energietransitie

Cluster .....

#### Waarom is dit interessant voor de gemeente?

#### Waarom is dit interessant voor jongeren?

#### Waarom is dit relevant voor de droomplekken van jongeren?

#### Welke vragen zou je jongeren willen stellen?

Gebruik het format: "Hoe zou je ... op je droomplek?"

Hoe zou je ..... op je droomplek?

Hoe zou je ..... op je droomplek?

Hoe zou je ..... op je droomplek?

Hoe zou je ..... op je droomplek?

Hoe zou je ..... op je droomplek?

Hoe zou je ..... op je droomplek?

Hoe zou je ..... op je droomplek?

for the dream places that the young people will apply it to. If it is not relevant yet, how can it become relevant and applicable to those places?

Keeping the three questions on the left in mind, participants then move on to formulating the questions for the youngsters. The work sheet provides a format for the questions, namely “How would you ... at your dream place?”, to ensure that the questions are not too generic and focus on the dream places.

After filling out the work sheet, each group presents their four favourite questions to the other groups. Following these presentations, all participants vote on their favourite questions out of all the questions from the different groups to get to four final questions that will be used in (step 4 of) the participation process.

Following the creative session, the questions will probably be checked with the responsible alderman and/or the city council (depending on the context), potentially leading to some final changes.

Figure 44:  
Step 2, Citisens & the  
municipality reach out to  
young people to get involved

2

Citisens or the municipality reaches out to young people to get involved



Guest lessons at schools



Replacing a class about citizenship, sociology or geography

50 minutes

Going through step 3 and 4 in 50 minutes

**Step 2: Citisens or the municipality reaches out to young people**  
In step 2, either Citisens or the municipality reach out to young people to get involved in the participation process. Figure 44 shows the main approach in this step: guest lessons at schools.

In the second and fifth iteration, youngsters agreed they wanted to do the third and fourth step of the participation process at school (CY6, 2022; CY7, 2022). Participation at schools supports the interaction of participating in groups with friends or classmates, which was also a clear preference of all iterations with youngsters (CY5, 2022; CY6, 2022; CY7, 2022). Besides being able to collaborate, this would also make it easier to fit participation into their busy schedules, as mapped in a previous co-creation session (CY2, 2021). Furthermore, it could contribute to the representativeness, which is one of the main challenges of representation as explained in Section 6.4, as all youngsters can be reached through schools.

Since the first of August 2021 there is a new, clarified law about citizenship education at primary and high schools, in part because schools struggle to incorporate topics such as democracy and freedom of speech in their curriculum. The new law states students should learn about values such as freedom of speech, equality and responsibility, but also acquire competences such as debating and forming your own opinion (Ministerie van OCW, 2021).

Youth participation could present an opportunity to practice those values and competences in a real-life situation, as European institutions emphasise that it fosters active citizenship, inclusion and integration, and strengthens their contribution to our democracy. Moreover, young people learn about participation by doing it (Crowley & Moxon, 2017). Lastly, the experiences throughout this project as well as the experience of Theresa Leimpek, director of Stichting Mbo Talent (personal communication, 24 March 2022), are that mbo schools are actively searching for content related to current affairs for their citizenship education, which provides an opportunity for youth participation.

Reaching youngsters aged 14-17 through schools would mainly mean reaching out to high schools and mbo schools. In principle, the municipality should take the lead in reaching out to schools, both to reduce the costs and to simplify the process, as they might already be in touch with schools. However, in sometimes (e.g. when the municipality feels they are already asking a lot from schools) it might be preferable that an external party reaches out, in which case Citisens could play this role.

To fit into the schedules of schools, step three and four of the participation process would become one “package” for one guest lesson of around 50 minutes. 50 minutes is still the most common length of a class at high schools, although some schools are experimenting with classes of 60-80 minutes (Van Gaalen, 2018). This guest lesson would replace a (part of a) single class about for example citizenship, sociology or geography.



## Youngsters design their dream places together

During a guest lesson, facilitated by Citisens

- 1 Youngsters watch a short video from the municipality that explains the participation trajectory and its goals
- 2 Youngsters divide in groups and mark places on a map of the municipality that are important or interesting to them (such as where they go to school, relax, shop, live etc.)
- 3 Each group redesigns one of the places they marked on the map to make it their dream place by writing and/or drawing on and around a picture of that place



### Step 3: Youngsters design their dream places

In the third step youngsters design their dream places together, during a guest lesson at school (as explained in the previous step). Figure 45 shows the three main steps of this part of the guest lesson.

First, the youngsters watch a short video in which someone from the municipality explains the participation trajectory and its goals. The importance of providing youngsters with this information was stressed in both the third and fourth iteration (CM3, 2022; CM4, 2022). A video was the preferred medium to receive information by the youngsters in the first iteration (CY5, 2022), and having the municipality explain the importance of the trajectory themselves could emphasise commitment and a willingness to truly listen to youngsters, both key ingredients of youth participation (Section 4.3).

After watching the video, the youngsters get to work on an (A3) work sheet with a map of their municipality. Figure 46 shows an example of such a sheet for the municipality of Alphen aan den Rijn. In groups, they mark the places on the map of their municipality that are important to them, such as the places where they go to school, shop, relax, live or work. The second and fifth iteration showed that, although there are individual differences

Figure 45:  
Step 3, Youngsters design  
their dream places together

Figure 46 (next page):  
Work sheet for step 3.2

Figure 47 (next page):  
Work sheet for step 3.3



### Ontwerp je droomplek

Door te tekenen of schrijven op of om de foto van de plek

Naam plek .....

plak hier een foto van de  
plek die je wil verbeteren

in the places that are important to the youngsters, they will have enough common ground to find a place to work on in the third step that they all care about.

In the third step, they use the (A3) work sheet in Figure 47 to make that place their dream place. In the middle of the work sheet, they can paste one or more pictures of the place that they would like to redesign. From the first iteration (CY5, 2022), it became clear that improving the places directly on the map of the previous step did not work well, and participants rather used pictures. In the second iteration participants worked on an A3 picture with no white space around it, which made the picture too crowded and chaotic after the fourth step in which they add elements related to the energy transition (CY6, 2022). In the fifth and final iteration participants worked on a picture with some white space on the right. This significantly reduced the chaos, but sometimes created a disconnect between their drawings on the picture and the things they wrote in the white space for notes (CY7, 2022). The final design therefore places the picture in the middle, with white space all around for additional drawings and notes to make it easier to connect the notes to the picture.

The pictures can be:

1. Taken and printed by participants themselves. In both the second and fifth iteration (CY6, 2022; CY7, 2022) all but one group (out of 3/4) said they would like to use their own pictures. They thought being able to choose their own angle would help them explain their ideas more clearly and easily.
2. Screen shots from Google Street View taken and printed by participants themselves. This could be more time-efficient, as you do not have to go to the place yourself, while still being able to choose your own angle.
3. A set of pre-printed pictures. Throughout the different iterations, participants usually chose to work on the areas around their schools, the city centre, recreation areas or public transport nodes such as train stations. Through a short survey beforehand it should be quite easy to find out which places are important to young people in the municipality, and this would be even more time-efficient than the second option.

The third option would also allow the municipality to influence which places young people can work on, which may be desirable in some cases (when the municipality has decided to make changes to certain places, while keeping others the same), although ensuring the relevance of those places for young people will still be key.

For the step of designing the dream places, there are no predefined boundaries or guidelines: youngsters can come up with any idea they want. In none of the iterations (CY5, 2022; CY6, 2022; CY7, 2022) youngsters seemed to struggle with this freedom - they always came up with many ideas - and stakeholders from the municipality agreed that the open invitation would stimulate creativity and innovative ideas (CM3, 2022; CM4, 2022).

## 4

# Youngsters add elements to their dream places by answering questions about the energy transition

During the same guest lesson, facilitated by Citisens

- 1 Youngsters watch a short video in which a sustainability expert explains the cause, goals and solutions of the energy transition
- 2 The groups answer 4 questions from the municipality about the energy transition by adding elements to the design of their dream place
- 3 All groups upload a picture or scan of their end result to the online platform, which allows them to easily share it with friends on social media

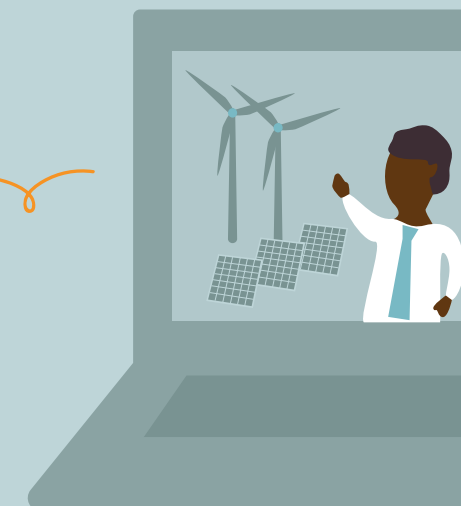


Figure 48:  
Step 4, Youngsters design sustainable dream places

## Step 4: Youngsters design sustainable dream places

The fourth step forms the second and final part of the same guest lesson that the third step was part of. In this step, youngsters start to think about solutions that fit the energy transition, in the context of their dream place. Figure 48 shows the three main steps of the fourth step.

First, youngsters watch a short video in which an expert explains the goals and solutions of the energy transition. The information about the energy transition that youngsters require to participate has been discussed in all five iterations. Youngsters want to know:

1. What does the energy transition mean and entail (CY5, 2022), and are we going to succeed (CY6, 2022)?
2. What are the different solutions and which ones are the best (CY6, 2022)? What are examples of these solutions (CY7, 2022)?

Stakeholders from the municipality came up with similar topics, but also wanted youngsters to know the causes and reasons for making this transition in the first place (CM3, 2022; CM4, 2022). Interestingly, the politicians in the third iteration stressed that youngsters often already know a lot about the topic, and should not be overwhelmed with legal frameworks or the ins and outs of the municipal authority (CM3, 2022). A short introduction about the



cause of energy transition, its goals and solutions should therefore suffice.

The medium, a video, was chosen for similar reasons as the video in the previous step. Additionally, in both the second and fifth iteration there was a group that would like to involve experts in this activity (CY6, 2022; CY7, 2022). Although an information sheet with the goals and solutions of the energy transition seemed to work quite well in the fifth iteration, a video might be a more engaging medium that could show some of the solutions in their actual context. Furthermore, the video would only have to be recorded once, as the information it provides on the energy transition can be the same across different municipalities.

After this short video, the facilitator from Citisens asks the youngsters the four questions about the energy transition from the municipality. These four questions were the output from the first step of the participation process. The youngsters answer the questions by writing and drawing ideas on the work sheet from the previous step. Answering the questions by coming up with your own ideas was preferred by most participants in the first and second iteration (CY5, 2022; CY6, 2022). A few participants in the first iteration would rather choose from several options, but showing some examples in the video could already provide this group with some inspiration (CY5, 2022). The stakeholders from the municipality also preferred youngsters coming up with their own ideas (CM3, 2022; CM4, 2022).

At the end of the guest lesson, all groups upload a picture or scan of their dream place, including their ideas from both the third and fourth step, to the online platform. This will enable them to share their dream place easily with friends on social media, and is necessary for enabling the fifth step of the participation process: voting.

5

## Inhabitants of the municipality vote online for the dream places they like most

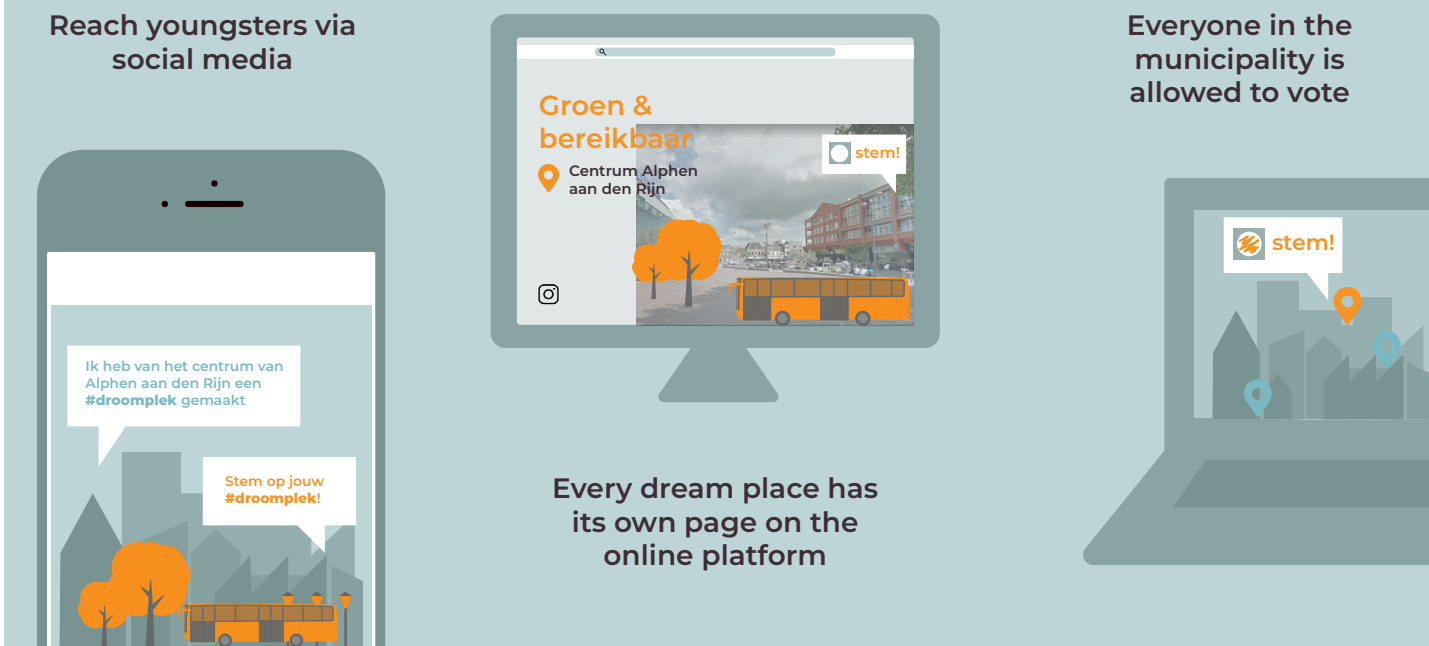


Figure 49:  
Step 5, Inhabitants of the municipality vote online

### Step 5: Inhabitants of the municipality vote online

In the fifth step, inhabitants of the municipality vote online for their favourite dream places. Figure 49 shows the main elements of this step.

During the fifth iteration, participants designed their own Instagram post to reach youngsters to vote. They all used their own dream places as starting points, which led to the idea to support this interaction (CY7, 2022). On the platform, after youngsters upload a picture or scan of their dream place, they should therefore be able to share their dream place on social media, mainly instagram and snapchat (CY7, 2022), with a simple press of a button. This way, they could encourage their friends or family to vote for the dream place they designed. Additionally, advertisements on social media could help reach people to vote. Optionally people could be further encouraged by a discount at a local store if they vote, which is something youngsters in the fifth iteration came up with (CY7, 2022).

The online platform could provide an overview of the dream places by showing them as pins on a map of the municipality. Each pin could link to a dream place, which is shown in more detail on a separate page of its own. On that page there should be:

1. A name of the place

2. The location of the place
3. The picture or scan of the ideas that the youngsters uploaded after the fourth step.
4. A short explanation of the ideas
5. A button to vote for that place
6. A button to share that place on social media

In the first iteration, participants were asked whether the person or group who created the dream place should be visible, but they all agreed it should be anonymous (CY5, 2022).

Finally, virtually all youngsters in first and second iterations agreed that everyone in the municipality should be able to vote, as changing those places in the municipality would impact all inhabitants (CY5, 2022; CY6, 2022). This also provides an opportunity to involve other inhabitants in the participation process, while still keeping the focus on the youngsters. Civil servants in the fourth iteration appreciated that this would create an opportunity to compare voting behaviour of older and younger inhabitants. They also thought the voting might make the process feel more official for the youngsters, which would stimulate them to really make an effort (CM4, 2022).

Besides through social media, these other groups could be reached through advertisements in apps. This could be done in a similar manner as the way Citisens advertised for their voting aid application in 2022 across platforms of DPG Media.

Figure 50 (next page):  
Step 6, Youngsters and the  
municipality work together on  
implementation

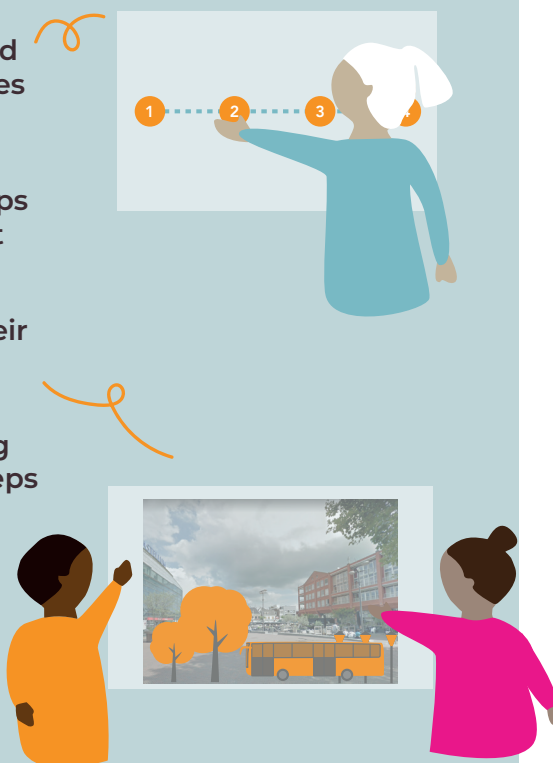
Figure 51 (next page):  
Work sheet for step 6.4

6

## Youngsters, civil servants and city councillors brainstorm on how they can realize the dream places for young people

During a creative session, facilitated by Citisens

- 1 The municipality shortly presents the background of the participation trajectory and their challenges
- 2 Civil servants, city councillors and other local stakeholders divide themselves among the groups of youngsters that created the dream places that got the most votes.
- 3 The youngsters present their dream places to their new team members from the municipality
- 4 All teams create a plan for implementation, using the work sheet below, by thinking about next steps and the role of the municipality, youngsters and other important stakeholders
- 5 All teams present their plans to each other, after which the municipality closes the session by explaining the next steps of the trajectory



### Van dromen naar werkelijkheid

Naam droomplek .....

#### Wat is de droomplek?

Omschrijf (de belangrijkste elementen van) de droomplek

#### Wat kan de gemeente doen?

Om dichterbij de droomplek te komen

#### Hoe komen we dichterbij de droomplek?

Welke stappen kunnen we daarvoor morgen al nemen?  
En welke stappen kunnen we op de lange termijn nemen?

#### Wat kunnen jongeren doen?

Om dichterbij de droomplek te komen

#### Wie hebben we verder nodig?

En hoe krijgen we hen aan boord?

Slogan .....



### Step 6: Youngsters and the municipality work together on implementation

Step six consists of a creative session with civil servants, who bring in expertise, city councillors, as elected representatives for the municipality as a whole, and the (groups of) youngsters that created the dream places that got the most votes. Figure 50 shows the four main steps of the creative session.

The five groups that created the dream places that got most votes get to participate in the session. Besides that, two or three more groups could be selected by a jury of experts and/or the municipality to ensure innovative (e.g. that could really help address a challenge of the municipality), but less popular ideas also get a chance. The other participants in the session are stakeholders from the municipality, such as civil servants and city councillors. Depending on the dream places, it could be interesting to also invite other local stakeholders that are connected to those places (e.g. a school, if one of the places is their school yard), according to the civil servants in the fourth iteration (CM4, 2022).

During the session, the municipality first presents the background of the trajectory and their challenges related to the energy transition, to help the youngsters understand their perspective. Secondly, the stakeholders from the municipality divide themselves among the groups of youngsters, adding 1-2 people from the municipality to each group. The youngsters then present their dream places to their new team members from the municipality, to ensure they are up to speed about the dream place they will be working on.

In the fourth step of the session, the teams create a plan for implementing the youngsters' ideas using the work sheet in Figure 51. First, they describe the most important elements of the dream place, to ensure they are all on the same page about what those elements are. They then start thinking about steps that could be taken in the near future as well as in the long run to get closer to the dream place. Thirdly, they think about how the municipality, youngsters and other stakeholders could contribute to the dream places.

When all groups finished their plans, they shortly present their ideas to each other. The municipality closes the session by explaining the next steps of the trajectory.

7

## Citizens reports on the results, the municipality follows-up on the outcomes



Citizens makes an online & offline report with the dreams of youngsters and concrete next steps



1-2 youngsters per dream place stay involved to advise the municipality and communicate to other youngsters

Figure 52:  
Step 7, Citizens reports results,  
municipality follows-up

### Step 7: Citizens reports on results, municipality follows-up

Step seven is the final step of the participation trajectory. In this step, Citizens reports on the results of the trajectory and the municipality follows-up on the outcomes. The two main elements of this step are shown in Figure 52.

The first element of the final step is the report Citizens creates to show the results of the participation trajectory. According to the politicians and civil servants that participated in the third and fourth iteration, this report should consist of the concrete ideas or dream places and next steps for implementation. The report itself should be very visual and accessible, using a lot of images, a map or a digital world, or even a podcast/video in which the youngsters present their ideas themselves (CM3, 2022; CM4, 2022).

Combining these ideas, Citizens could make both an online and offline report. In the online report, all dream places could be shown on the map and a separate page, similar to the online platform that was used for voting. Additionally, the online report could include short videos of the dream places that the mixed teams worked on in step 6. In those videos, the youngsters could present their ideas as well as next steps from the session. This would make the process more transparent for other people who participated, but were not part of this creative session. These short

videos could be recorded at the end of the session in step six to reduce work load for all parties involved.

The main next steps for the municipality were discussed in the third iteration (CM3, 2022):

1. Testing the dream places and plans for implementation on feasibility and budget, and looking at the plans from the perspective of society as a whole.
2. Embracing the (tested) plans and providing a budget and facilitation for implementation.

Civil servants would be in the lead for taking the next steps, while the aldermen and city council monitor the project from a distance and ensure progress is being made towards implementing the youngsters' ideas.

In the follow-up there could still be a role for youngsters. Participants in the third iteration thought youngsters should continue to be involved to advise the municipality about implementation and communicate the progress to other youngsters. (CM3, 2022). As the main focus in the follow-up would be on the dream places that were part of the session in step six, this role could very well be taken up by one or two youngsters from each dream place. This group of 10-15 youngsters could then stay involved, advising the municipality and monitoring progress. Naturally, there should be a clear agreement beforehand about the time investment and period of their involvement, as well as a small (financial) compensation for their time and effort. To ensure a manageable work load, this group could meet up at least (but not much more often than) three times:

1. One meeting to further detail the plans and potentially discuss and resolve any issues related to feasibility, budget or interests of other groups in the municipality that came up in the meantime.
2. Secondly, youngsters should be involved when the ideas are actually implemented.
3. Finally, there could be an evaluation moment some time after implementation, to reflect on the effects of the implemented ideas.

Citisens could potentially support the municipality in the facilitation of these meetings. This would be an optional extension of the project.

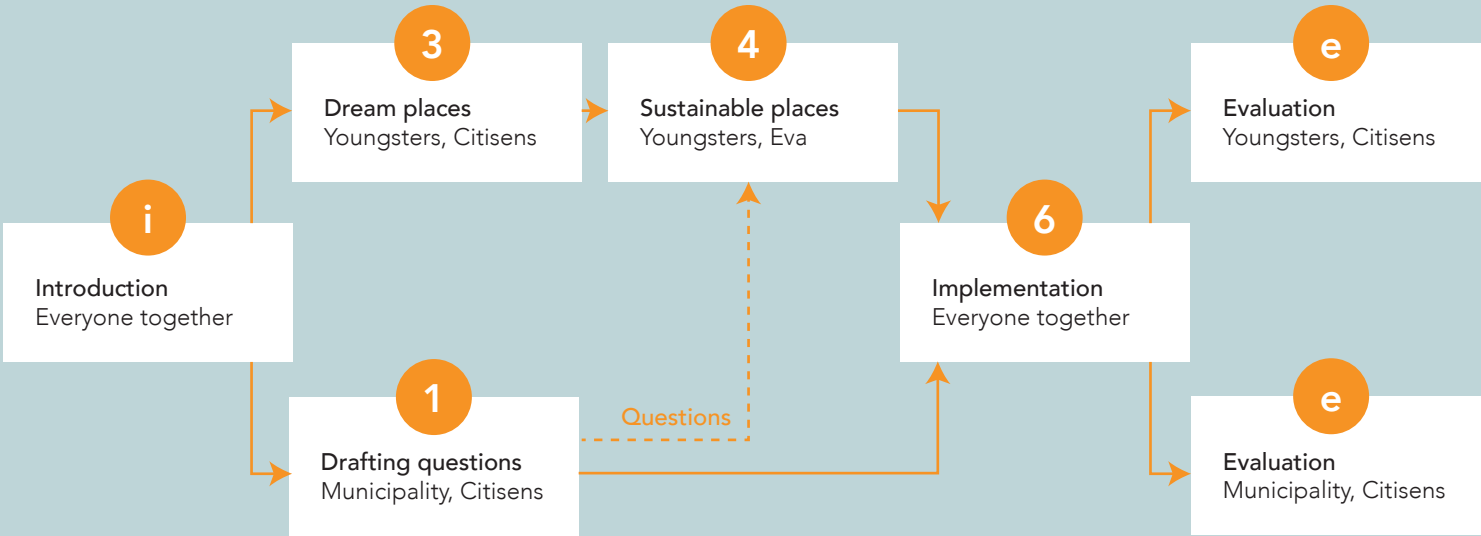
# 12.7 Pilot

The final design was tested and evaluated in a pilot session with key stakeholders. The pilot focused on step 1, 3, 4 and 6 of the participation trajectory, because the other steps were more difficult and/or less useful to test in a two-hour pilot session with a small group.

- The people who participated in the session were
- 6 youngsters from Alphen aan den Rijn (age 14-17)
  - 3 civil servants from the municipality of Alphen aan den Rijn
  - 1 city councillor from Alphen aan den Rijn
  - 2 Citisens employees

The pilot consisted of two main parts: testing and evaluation. Figure 53 shows the lay-out of the session. In the first part, participants tested step 1, 3, 4 and 6. To make the program fit within two hours, the first and sixth step were shortened. The youngsters tested step 3, 4 and 6, and stakeholders from the municipality step 1 and 6. The Citisens employees took the lead in facilitating step 1 and 3, while providing support in the other steps.

Figure 53:  
Lay-out of the pilot session





In the second part participants evaluated the trajectory. They first evaluated the separate steps using the Keep-Kill-Build method, and subsequently evaluated the process as a whole by filling out evaluation forms. The remainder of this section will focus on the results from those two evaluation activities.

Evaluation and ideas for improvements per step

Figure 54 shows a summary of participants’ evaluation of the different steps. The colours of the dots indicate the stakeholder groups responses came from.

The first step was quite a challenge for participants, not in the least because they had only 25 minutes to go through the first step that would ideally be done in a separate session of around 1,5 hours. One of the things that proved difficult was the clustering of topics from the initial brainstorm. Looking at the output of that brainstorm, they brainstormed not so much topics that they wanted to ask youngsters questions about, but challenges of or reasons for involving youth in the energy transition (such as “Their future!”, or “Difficult word ‘energy transition’”). This shows that being precise in your instructions is key. Instead of brainstorming on anything that comes to mind related to youngsters and the energy transition, the brainstorm should be about topics they want to learn more about from the youngsters related to the energy transition. This focus should also be more clear for the facilitator from Citisens, to ensure they can steer the brainstorm in the right direction when it’s going off track.

Besides this challenge, the work sheets that were used to get to the questions after the brainstorm worked well, and participants appreciated the points of attention on it such as ensuring the relevance for youngsters and the dream place they will answer the questions about. A final remark was that some participants required more information about the energy transition. While one participant was a civil servant focusing on the energy transition, the others had a focus on (youth) participation or the social domain. A more diverse group of civil servants and city councillors could contribute to the quality of the questions, but also requires a more extensive introduction to get them up to speed about the topic.

Moving on to the third step, youngsters appreciated the room for creativity in the activity and had enough time to create their dream places. The only remark about the activity itself, was that the youngsters would like more places to choose from. In the final design, youngsters should be able to choose to redesign any place they want, but in the pilot for practical reasons the places had to be printed, and therefore chosen, before the session. In both the second and fifth iteration, participants also expressed this wish, showing the value of supporting them to use their own pictures (CY6, 2022; CY7, 2022). A final remark, that was also made by youngsters about the final step, was the use of paper in the session. This was partly due to the many activities that were merged into one session, including evaluation, and the necessity of printing several places beforehand to give youngsters some

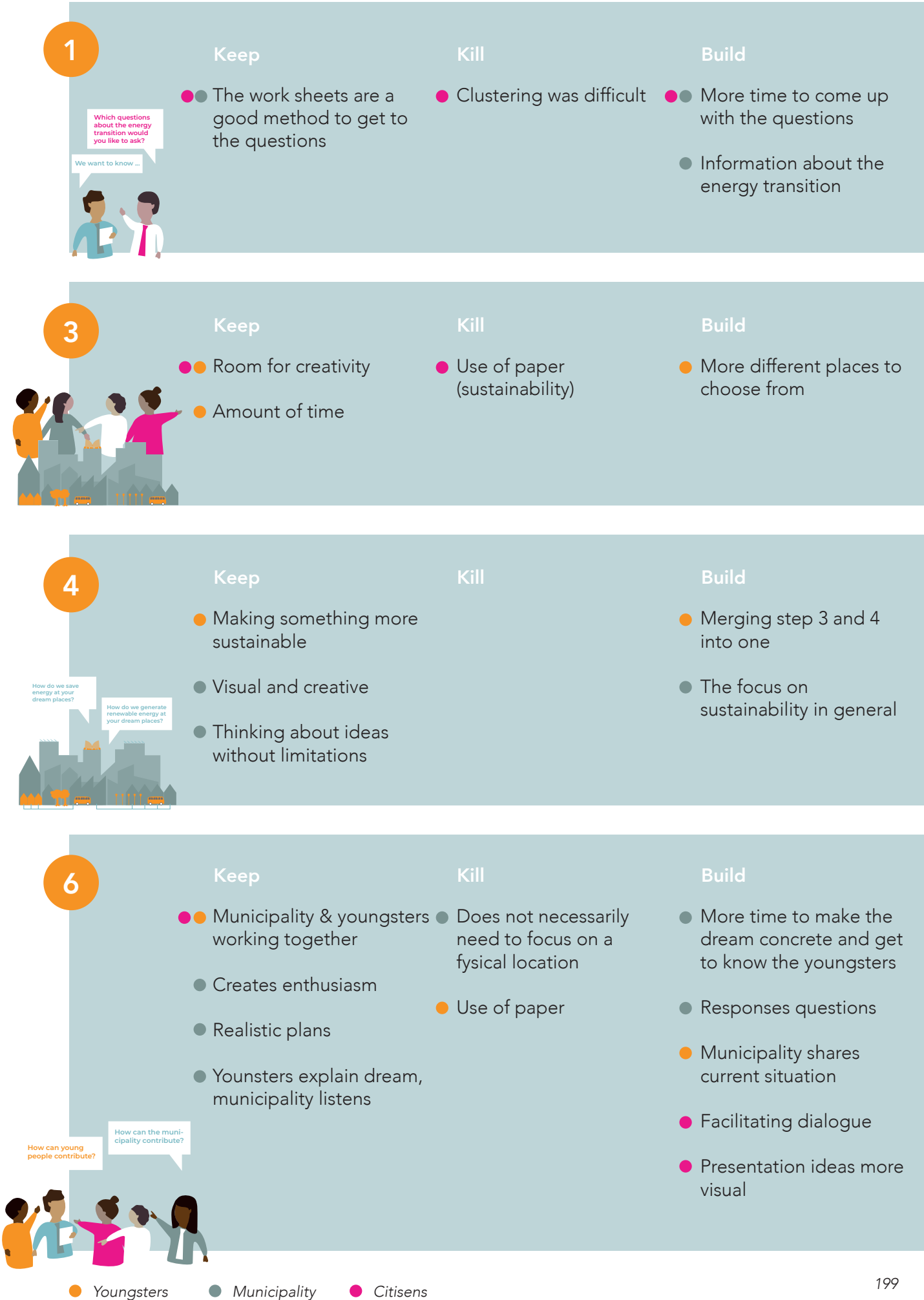


Figure 54 (next page): Evaluation of the separate steps using Keep-Kill-Build

places to choose from. However, with sustainability as a main focus for participation, this will remain a point of attention that was a topic of discussion in several creative sessions throughout the project.

In step four, the youngsters enjoyed making their dream place more sustainable, while the municipality appreciated their visual, creative ideas that were created without thinking about limitations. Some youngsters mentioned they would like to merge step three and four into one, so they could take the questions from the municipality into account from the start. While this may be a preference for youngsters that already think about sustainability in the third step, such as this group, it might not be for youngsters that do not, such as the group in the fifth iteration (CY7, 2022). Merging the steps might make youngsters think they should mainly focus on the energy transition, while one of the key elements of the design is the fact that they can come up with their own ideas about (other) things that are important to them as well. This is something that could be tested in further iterations.

Finally, a participant from the municipality thought the focus of this step was more on sustainability in general, as opposed to the energy transition. This can partly be explained by the three questions they chose to ask the youngsters, from which one was about sustainable travel. On one hand, the municipality can steer the focus with these questions, while on the other hand the youngsters will always be able to apply their own focus to their dream place so not all ideas they come up with will be related to the energy transition.

Looking at the sixth step, participants appreciated the fact that the municipality and youngsters were working together, the enthusiasm it created and realistic plans they came up with. Interestingly, while one participant liked listening to the youngsters explaining their ideas, another participant from Citisens thought this should be more of a dialogue. This could for example include the municipality sharing more about the current situation, as one youngster remarked. Again, the municipality would have liked to have more time with the youngsters, which is understandable as there were only 30 minutes to complete this step which would otherwise take a full session of around 1,5 hours.

Participants from the municipality furthermore would have liked to more clearly see the responses youngsters gave to their questions, as they were incorporated in the design of their dream place, and thought their ideas did not necessarily need to focus on one physical location. These two points can however be seen as consequences of the focus on dream places as a context for thinking about the energy transition, which has the benefit of making it relevant and relatable to youngsters' own experiences as explained at the beginning of this chapter (Sanders & Stappers, 2012, p. 15). A possible partial solution could be adding a final step in this implementation session to think about the generalizability of the ideas.

A final remark about the sixth step was that the presentations of the groups at the end of this step could be more visual. This might be improved by encouraging participants to (for example schematically) draw their plan for implementation, or using the work sheets from the third and fourth step to connect the implementation plan to the visualised ideas from those steps.

### General evaluation of the process

In the second part of the evaluation, all participants filled in evaluation forms on which they could score statements on a seven-point Likert scale. The statements evaluated:

- The presence of key ingredients of participation: space, voice, audience and influence (Section 4.3)
- The fit with Citisens' Ikigai (Section 5.3)
- The extend to which challenges from the paradoxes were addressed (Chapter 6)
- The fit with drivers of stakeholders (Chapter 7)
- The presence of the themes: equity, ownership, collaboration and action (Chapter 9)
- The willingness to participate (of youngsters)
- The ease of facilitation of the session (for Citisens)

Due to the small sample size, the results should not be seen as a quantitative evaluation of the final design, but an indication or exploration of the extend to which the elements above have been addressed or used.



Evaluation results youngsters  
Figure 55 shows the results of the youngsters’ evaluation form. This section will now dive deeper into the most striking results, complemented with quotes from the same evaluation forms.

For each key ingredient, participants evaluated two or more elements. According to their ratings, the elements contributing to space (1.1, 1.2 and 1.4) and voice (2.1-2.4) were present in the session to quite a strong extent. One participant wrote:

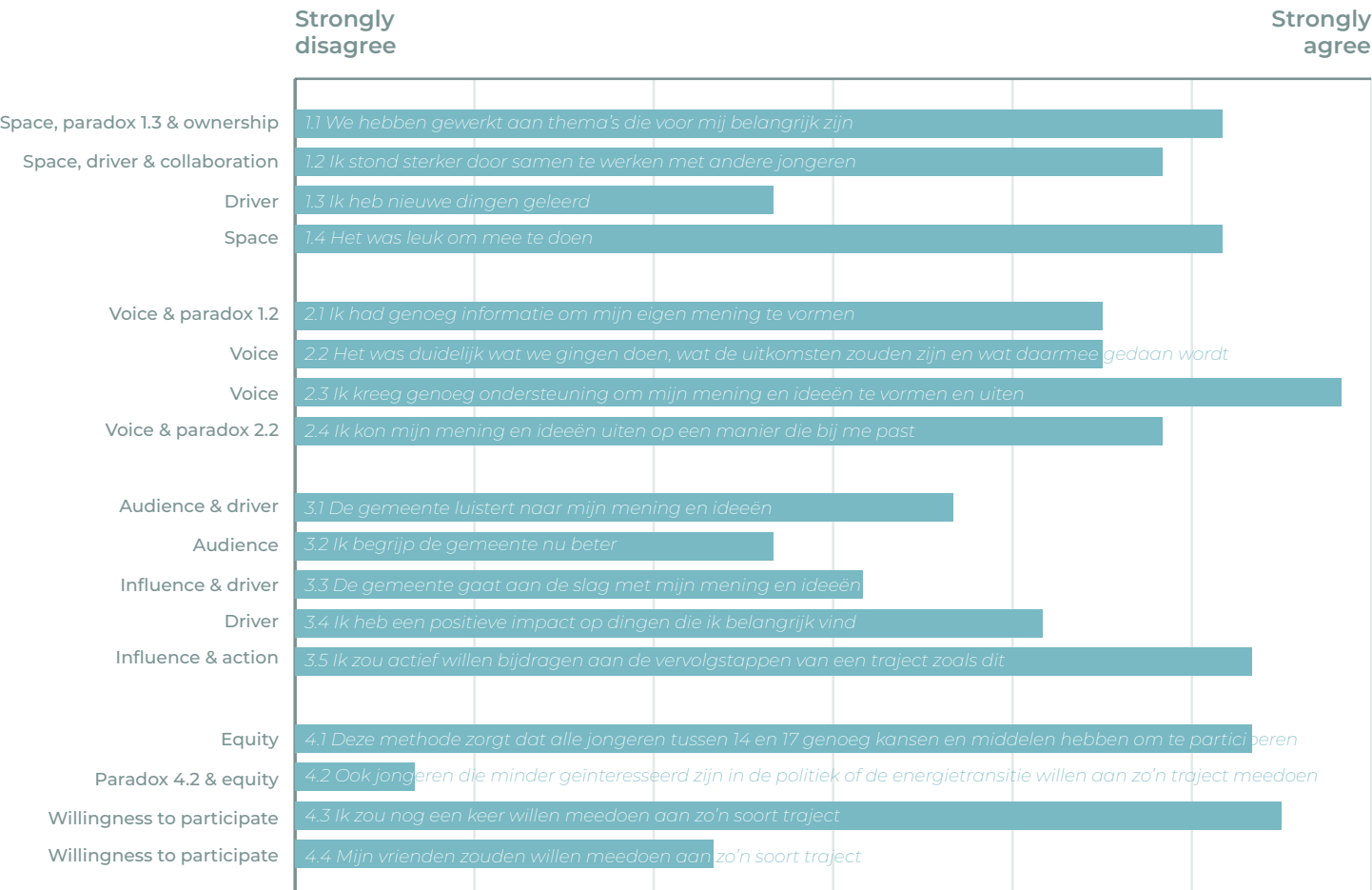
Great space for creative thinking!  
Translated quote from a youngster, 17 years old, vwo

The elements related to audience (3.1-3.2) and influence (3.3 & 3.5) were rated less positively. Two participants reported two very different experiences in collaborating with the municipality:

It’s great how the municipality takes us seriously.  
Translated quote from a youngster, 17 years old, vwo

The women from the municipality gave little response to our ideas.  
Translated quote from a youngster, 14 years old, twwo

Figure 55: Results evaluation form youngsters on a seven-point Likert scale (n=6)



As explained in Section 4.3, many studies report a need to train adults in listening skills (Crowley & Moxon, 2017; Lundy, 2007). It might therefore be valuable to give the people from the municipality that participate in the session with youngsters a short explanation about the importance of their response to the youngsters’ ideas, and how they can show they are truly listening to them. The low rating for statement 3.3, about whether the municipality will implement their ideas, should also be seen in the light of this being a pilot for a graduation project, instead of an actual participation process.

The response to statement 3.2, about whether their understanding of the municipality had improved, was relatively low. One participant had an idea to improve this:

More involvement from the municipality, e.g. ideas and plans, to learn more.  
Translated quote from a youngster, 15 years old, twwo

This also connects to the driver that was rated lowest: learning new things. During the pilot, the municipality did not share anything about the background of the trajectory or their plans, mostly because it was a pilot instead of an actual participation process. However, this shows that the youngsters did experience a need to learn more about how the municipality is approaching the transition, which is indeed part of the final design explained in Section 12.6.

Looking at the ratings of the statements related to the themes (equity, ownership, collaboration and action), all themes seem to be present to quite a strong degree. One theme that is a bit more ambiguous however, is equity. Participants quite strongly agreed this method provides the opportunity and means for all youngsters between 14 and 17 to participate (4.1), but did not think youngsters that are not interested in politics or the energy transition would want to participate (4.2). Similarly, while they would want to participate in such a trajectory in the future (4.3), they did not think their friends would (4.4).

Interestingly, this aligned with experiences in the final stage of this project. Throughout especially the second and fifth iteration, participants (mbo and vwo classes) were to be able to design their dream places, even enjoying themselves, while it was very difficult to find interested (other) youngsters to join the pilot. The participants in those iterations were not necessarily very interested in politics, and knew nothing about the energy transition before the session, so if they would have been approached outside school they probably would not have wanted to participate. After one session however, one mbo student said she would have liked to join the pilot, but did not live in the right municipality. Young people, according to research, learn about participation through participation (Crowley & Moxon, 2017). Participation at school would provide them with an opportunity to do so.

Evaluation results municipality

The results of the evaluation form that was filled in by three civil servants and one city councillor from the municipality are shown in Figure 56.

Similarly to the youngsters, participants from the municipality rated several statements related to the key ingredients of youth participation. While participants moderately to strongly agreed to statements related to space (1.1) and influence (3.1, 3.3, 3.4 and 3.7), the statement related to voice (1.2), about realistic expectations, was rated a bit lower. One participant wrote:

Item 1.2. That requires a bit more explanation beforehand.

Translated quote from a civil servant, working on the energy transition

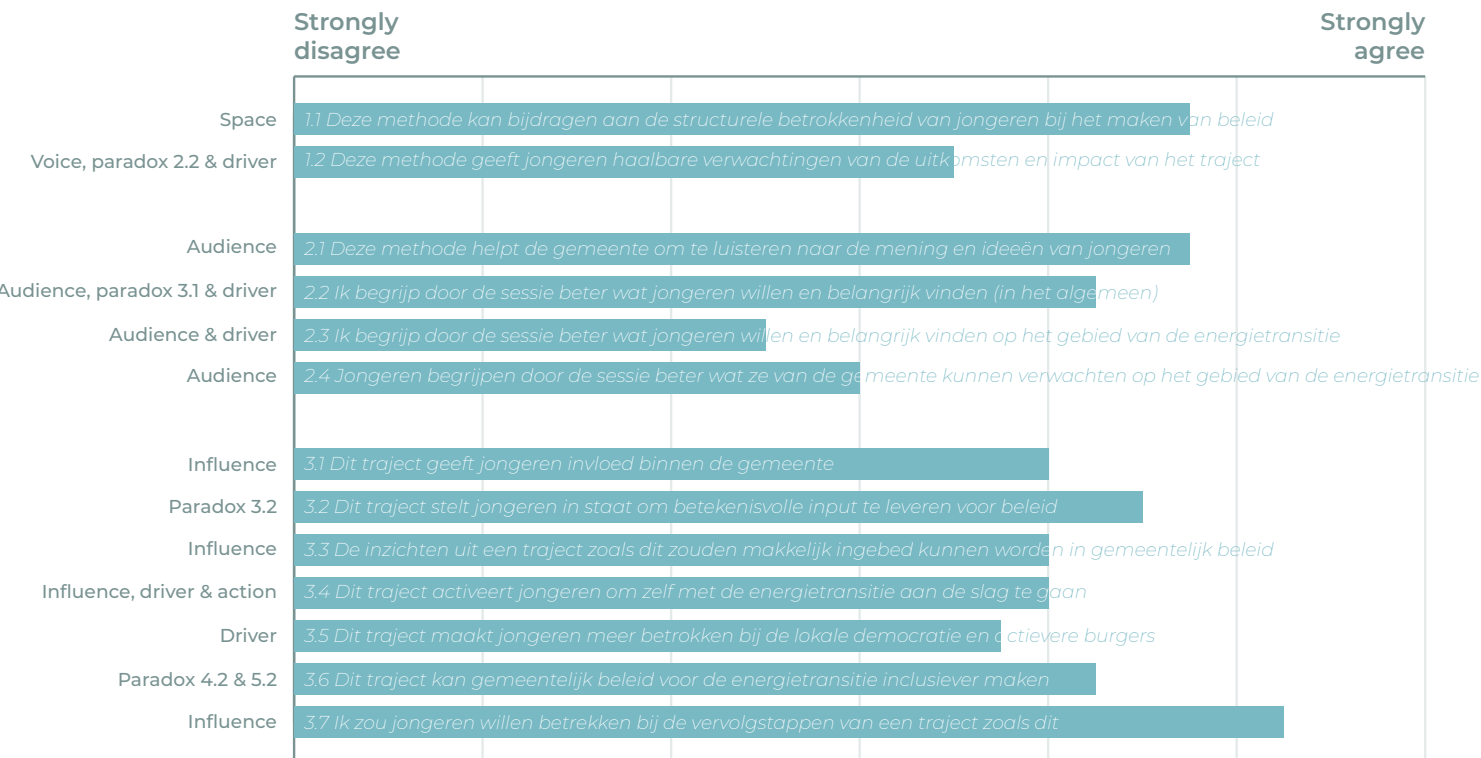
As this was a pilot, this explanation was lacking because there would be no next steps from the municipality following the session. This however does stress the importance of this element, that is part of the final design explained in Section 12.6.

The elements related to audience that were rated a bit lower (2.3 & 2.4) were about expectations concerning the energy transition for both parties. Possibly related to this, one participant wrote:

It's more about sustainability and less about the energy transition

Translated quote from a civil servant, working in the domain of youth participation

Figure 56: Results evaluation form municipality on a seven-point Likert scale (n=4)



While participants did gain a better understanding about what youngsters want and care about in general (2.2), they did not get a much better understanding about their views on the energy transition (2.3). This point was already addressed in the section about the results from the Keep-Kill-Build exercise, and can partially be solved by drafting questions that closely relate to the energy transition in the first step. However, as the circular transition and the energy transition are more and more often addressed together, as explained in Section 3.3, this more holistic approach might actually be an opportunity.

Another participant wrote down an idea that might contribute to the youngsters’ understanding of the municipality and their approach to the energy transition:

Creating space for risks/costs, impact and obstacles so that it becomes more realistic -> good to actively involve young people in the next steps

Translated quote from a city councillor, working in the social domain

This again was not part of the pilot session, but is part of the final design, and could contribute to a better understanding and more realistic input. Another thing this participant mentions is actively involving youngsters in the next steps. The statements about this in the evaluation forms got a very high rating from both the municipality (item 3.7) and the youngsters (item 4.3). As this is also part of the final design, as explained in Section 12.6, it is encouraging to see such an interest from both parties in this involvement.

All participants from the municipality left enthusiastic final remarks on the evaluation form, such as this one:

It is good to let young people fantasise this way and to discuss it. Creates energy and a support base for both parties

Translated quote from a city councillor, working in the social domain



Evaluation results Citisens  
Figure 57 shows the results of the evaluation form that was filled in by the two Citisens employees that participated in the session.

The first four elements on the form (2.1-2.4) related to Citisens' drivers. Most of these elements were scored moderately to very positively. One participant wrote:

*I really felt that young people went into it super enthusiastically and positively and also really liked it. Nice to see!*

Translated quote from a Citisens employee, that facilitated the youngster group

Driver 2.2, about taking the views of youngsters into account in the decision making process, was scored more neutrally. A comment from one participant related to that was:

*I'm a bit missing the step where the influence on decision-making is included. Does that originate from the involved councillors and civil servants? Maybe make that a little more clear.*

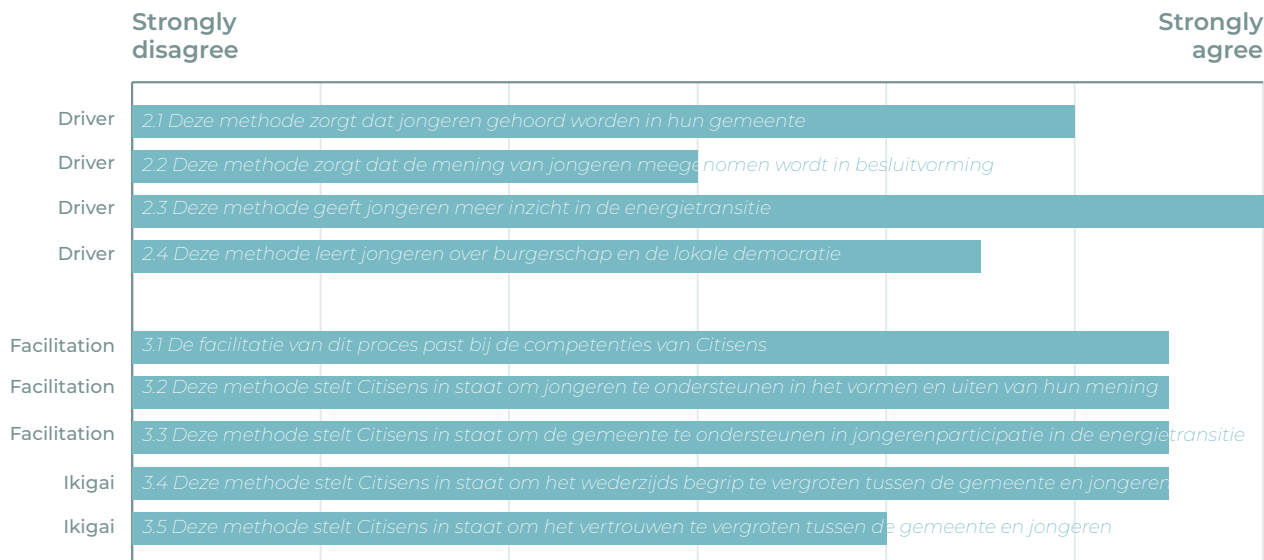
Translated quote from a Citisens employee, that facilitated the municipality group

Since this was a pilot session, there were no next steps from the municipality, but this comment shows the importance of thinking about those next steps and communicating them as well. Interestingly, a comment from the other Citisens participant closely related to this issue:

*I think you've designed a great process and it's really cool how this brings young people and the municipality together. I think that to increase trust you need some feedback -> what happens to the ideas?*

Translated quote from a Citisens employee, that facilitated the youngster group

Figure 57: Results evaluation form municipality on a seven-point Likert scale (n=2)



This comment shows the importance of the follow-up for increasing trust between the municipality and youngsters, item 3.5, which was also scored relatively low.

Besides (the communication about) the next steps, both participants thought the process fits well with Citisens' drivers and Ikigai, and enables them to support both youngsters and municipality throughout the process.

Concluding, while these results are encouraging and show the importance of some elements that were missing in the pilot, it can not be seen as a conclusive evaluation of the final design. This is due to both the small and not very representative sample size and the fact that this being a pilot makes it difficult to evaluate the (effects of) actual intentions on both sides, next steps and actual influence. These elements should therefore be important points of attention if this process would ever be implemented.

## Key insights

Through five iterations with youngsters and stakeholders from the municipality, the final design direction was detailed into a final design proposal, consisting of 7 main steps:

1. In a creative session, facilitated by Citisens, the municipality drafts 4 questions for youngsters about the energy transition.
2. Youngsters are involved through guest lessons at schools.
3. During first part of the guest lesson, youngsters design their dream places.
4. In the second part of the lesson, youngsters add elements to their dream places by answering the questions from step 1.
5. All inhabitants from the municipality can vote for their favourite dream place on an online platform.
6. The youngsters who created the winning places participate in a session with the municipality on implementation.
7. Citisens reports on the outcomes, youngsters stay involved to advise the municipality and communicate to other youngsters.

Step 1, 3, 4 and 6 were tested in a small pilot session with all key stakeholders. The results were generally encouraging, but showed the importance of several elements that are difficult to simulate or try out in a pilot session such as actual intentions, plans and next steps, as well as actual influence.





## 13. Implementation & integration

*This chapter presents the final step of the Frame creation process: integration. First however, it elaborates on a plan for implementation in three horizons, which is the final step of the transformation phase. Both the implementation and integration plan were informed by a co-creation session with Citisens employees.*



# Method

Research questions and activities for Chapter 13

This chapter describes the integration, the final step of the Frame creation process, as well as the implementation plan. The aim of this step is ensuring that the new frame and solution are integrated into the involved organisations (Dorst, 2015, p. 79). Although the implementation plan is part of the transformation step, it was added to this chapter as it is closely related to the integration and made for a clearer storyline. This chapter therefore presents both the implementation and integration of the final design.

The main question addressed in this chapter is:

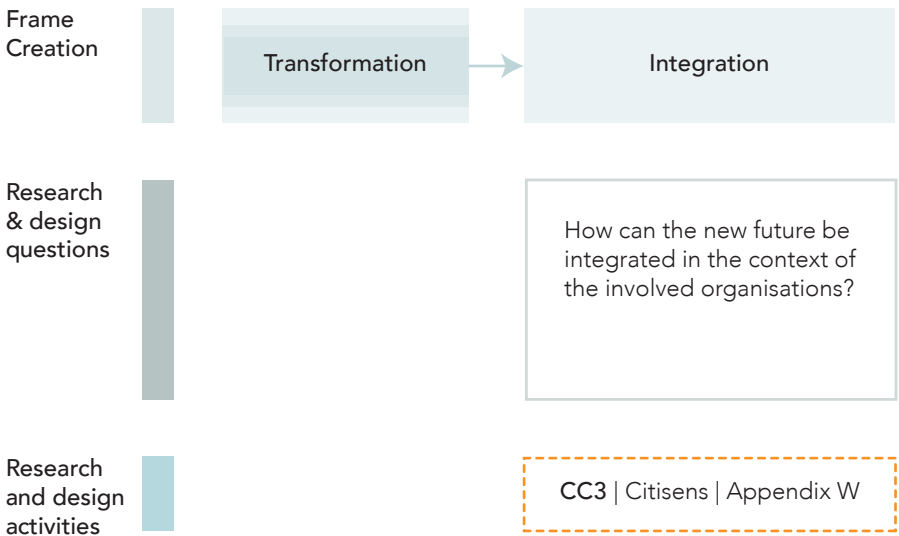
*“How can the new future be integrated in the context of the involved organisations?”*

A first version of the implementation plan was based on insights from the previous step (transformation). Then, as Figure 58 shows, a creative session with Citisens employees was organised (CC3, Appendix W). During this session, the final design and several insights from the pilot were presented to participants, after which they could provide a last round of feedback on the final design. Secondly, participants created implementation plans in groups,

using the three horizons model by McKinsey (De la Kethulle de Ryhove, 2020). Thirdly, the new frame of a colony of ants (similar to the frame of Holacracy, but created for communication purposes) was presented to them, after which they thought about integrating the new roles, activities and capabilities of the involved stakeholders. Finally, they provided feedback on the first version of the implementation plan that was created previous to the session.

The remainder of this chapter first describes the implementation plan, and secondly elaborates on the new frame as well as integration: the new roles, activities and capabilities of the three key stakeholders.

Figure 58: Research questions and activities for Chapter 13



# 13.1 Implementation

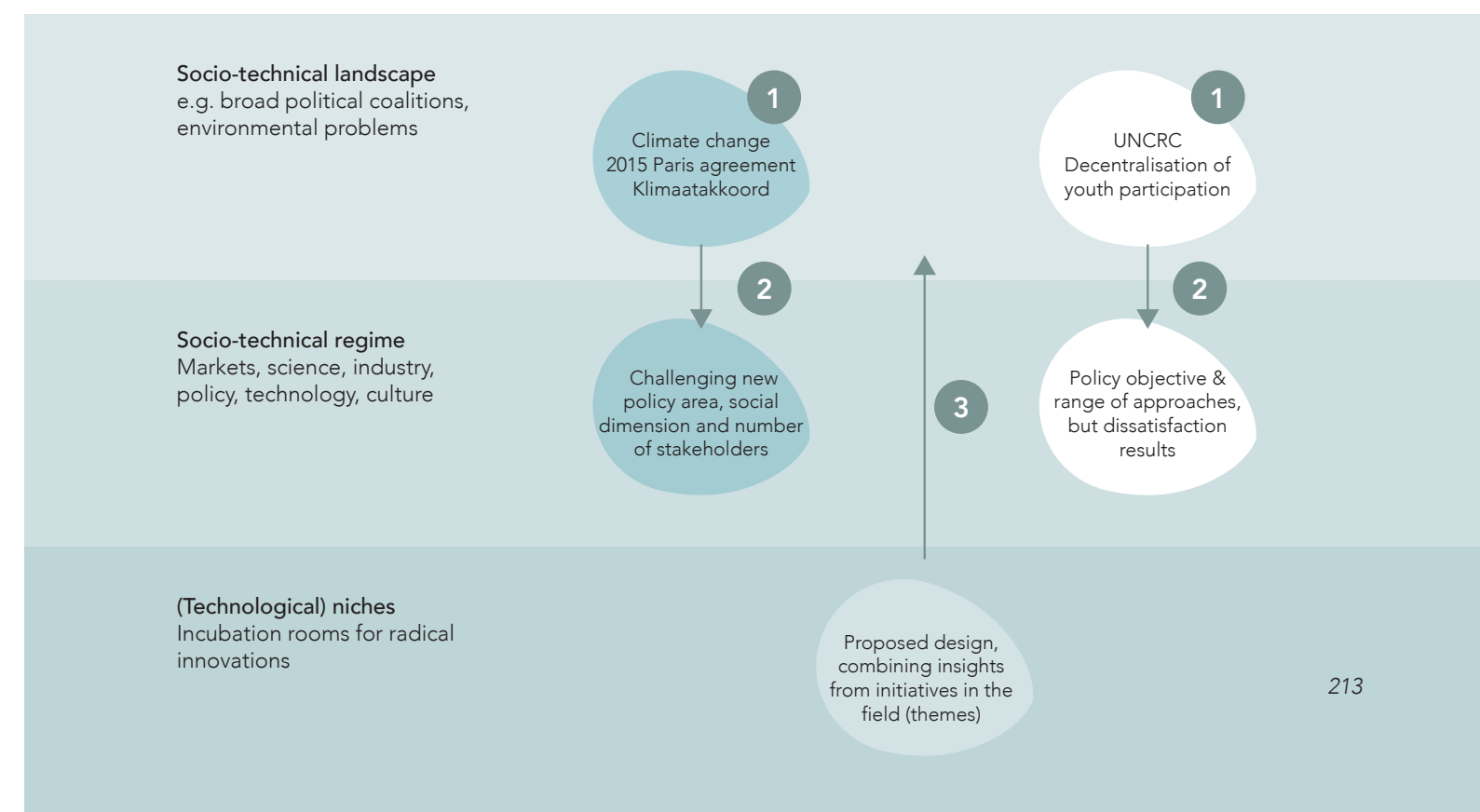
Before looking at implementation from Citisens' perspective, we zoom out a bit and consider the context in which the design proposal would be implemented. Looking at the system as a whole, using the typology from Geels & Kemp (2007), two transitions are relevant for the implementation of this design: the energy transition and the youth participation transition.

A transition is a shift from an old social-technical system to a new one. Developments on the landscape level (1), which is the level of e.g. environmental problems and broad political coalitions, put pressure on the regime (2), the level of e.g. markets and policy, to adapt. When the regime is unable to solve the problems, there is a window of opportunity for innovations (3), from niches, to break through (Geels & Kemp, 2007).

Figure 59 shows this process applied to the context of this project, based on the analysis in Chapter 3 and 4. Looking at the blue boxes, climate change and the resulting 2015 Paris agreement as well as the Dutch Klimaatakkoord put pressure on municipalities to contribute to the energy transition. However, as explained in Chapter 3, this is a challenging new policy area with a complex social dimension and a wide range of stakeholders and interests. On the other side, in the white boxes, the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child and the decentralisation of youth participation in the Netherlands put pressure on municipalities to involve youngsters in their policy-making process.

In both cases, and no less at the intersection of those topics, the municipality struggles to adapt, creating a window of opportunity for innovations. Since the final design links together the learnings of successful innovations from the niche (the field from Chapter 8), it is in a good position to jump into this window of opportunity in the regime.

Figure 59: Two transitions related to this project, using the typology from Geels & Kemp (2007)



Keeping this context in mind, the roadmap for implementation in Figure 60 was created. The roadmap consists of three horizons. In line with Simonse (2017), the first horizon is about enhancing the value of current products and services, the second focuses on transforming the current business into the business envisioned in the third horizon, in which the new value proposition is implemented. Connecting this to the transitions in Figure 59, the second horizon is about experimenting in the niche, while the third is about scaling up in the window of opportunity.

## Horizon 1: enriching current projects

The first horizon is about the "low-hanging fruit": the ways in which Citisens could benefit from the ideas and insights from project, without changing their value proposition. At the moment, Citisens sometimes involves youngsters on a smaller scale in their projects, with no dedicated method. For such projects they could start applying insights from this project on a very short term. Using the key ingredients (Section 4.3), drivers of stakeholders (Chapter 7) and the themes (Chapter 9), they could make small tweaks to their current (general) approach to make it a bit more tailored to youngsters. Besides using those insights, they could already start reaching out to youngsters via schools if they need to involve them. As the ideas above are minor changes to their current approach, this horizon could be initiated in 2022.

## Horizon 2: developing the value proposition

In the second horizon, the new value proposition is developed in the niche. In this step, all steps of the final design presented in Section 12.6, except the fifth step (which involves the online platform), are tested and iterated on a smaller scale. The online



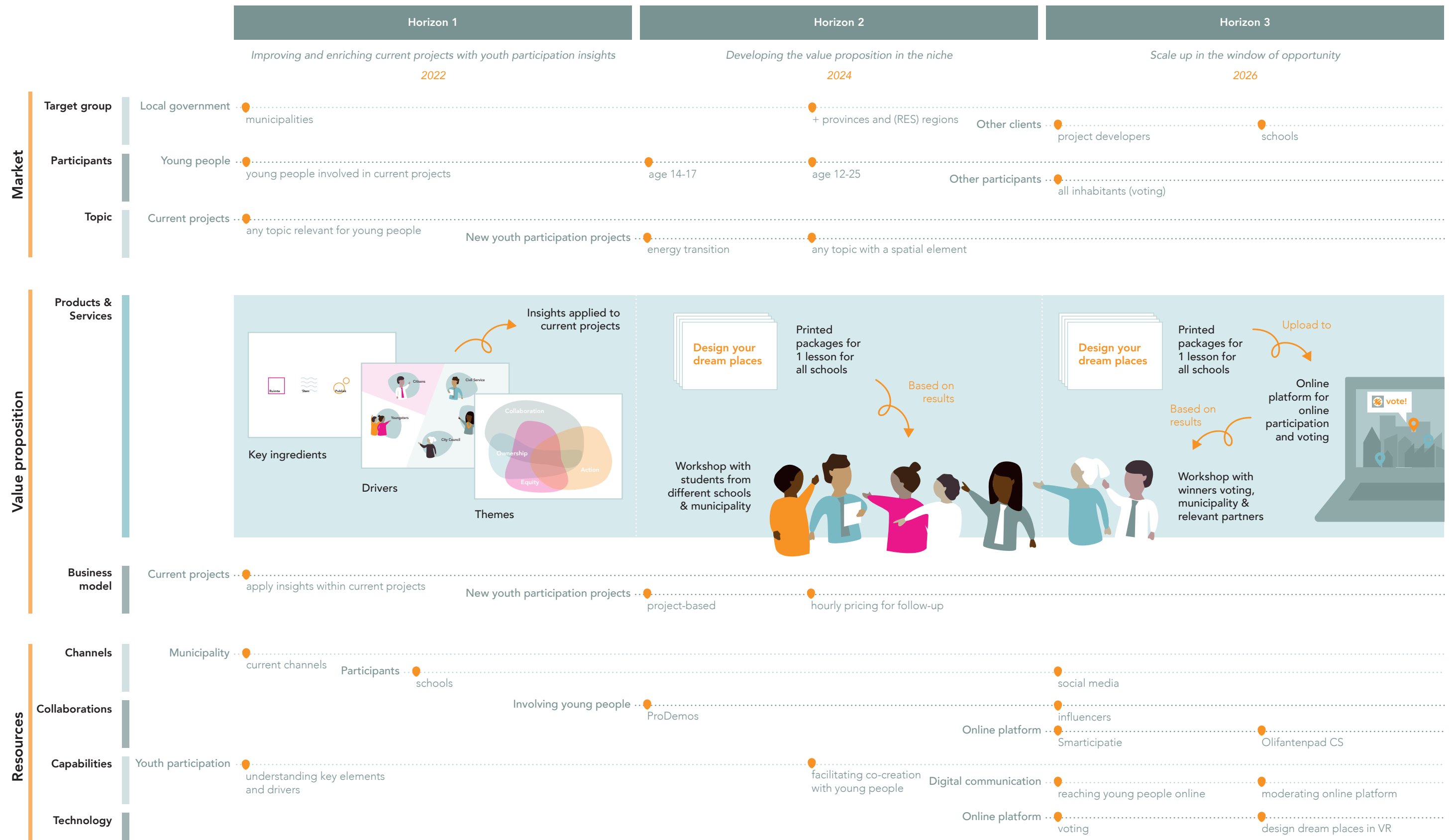


Figure 60: Roadmap for implementation

platform is excluded from this horizon, because this would require a major investment and much more time to develop, while also strongly increasing the scale of the projects as the whole municipality should be involved in the voting step. The other steps of the final design would already be feasible on a much shorter term, which provides a chance to perfect those steps before increasing the scale of the projects with the platform.

The second horizon would therefore mainly focus on testing and iterating the following steps of the final design:

- **Step 1:** facilitating the session with the municipality to come up with questions for the youngsters. This fits very well with Citisens' current competences: they have a lot of experience with facilitating sessions with stakeholders from the municipality and creating good questions for citizen participation processes.
- **Step 2:** Reaching out to schools should primarily be done by the municipality, but Citisens also has experience in involving additional stakeholders in participation processes.
- **Step 3 & 4:** Facilitating the guest lesson is something Citisens is not experienced at. It would therefore make sense to initially collaborate with a party such as ProDemos, who have 30 years of experience in involving youngsters in local democracy (ProDemos, 2021). At a later stage however, it might be interesting to develop this capability in-house. Citisens could for example train students, like they currently do for their voting aid application, to facilitate these sessions. This would make sense because the guest lessons would take up a sizeable part of the hours in the project as a whole, if you want to reach all youngsters, while students with an aptitude for facilitation would only need a few trainings to be able to facilitate the sessions.
- **Step 6:** Another argument for developing the capability for facilitating sessions with youth in-house is step six, in which the municipality and youngsters collaborate. To be able to facilitate this step, Citisens would need to understand and be able to support both groups. As step five, the online platform, is initially left out, in step six a small delegation from each school could be involved instead. Optionally, schools could organize their own small (internal) elections and send the winners from their school to the session with the municipality.
- **Step 7:** For the follow-up, Citisens could stay involved to facilitate the few interactions between the municipality and the youngsters who stay involved. To tailor this to the needs of both groups, hourly pricing would be recommended.

During the second horizon, the steps above could be further tested and iterated. The steps could be offered as a package, but Citisens could also experiment with a more modular approach, similar to their own current approach (Section 5.2), e.g.:

- Leaving out step 1, if the municipality already has questions for the youngsters that fit well with the approach.
- Leaving out step 2 and conducting step 3 and 4 with a youth council that is already in place. A huge disadvantage of this approach is the representation, but some municipalities might

prefer this due to the time and effort it saves.

- Leaving out step 5, which is done in this horizon anyway, could be tested to explore the (dis)advantages and decide whether this is an interesting option to still offer in the third horizon.

Looking at the target group, in the second horizon Citisens could start experimenting with other clients such as provinces and RES regions that are also involved in the energy transition. Furthermore, they could test and iterate the approach for a broader age group. Initially, the approach was designed for youngsters aged 14-17, but the mbo sessions for this project also involved youngsters up to 24 years old, and a civil servant that works on youth participation mentioned after the pilot that this could also work for children aged 10-12. This seems promising enough to further explore different age groups during the second horizon. Keeping the lower age bound on 12 ensures that only high schools and higher education need to be reached out to.

The second horizon starts in 2024, as some, but not a lot of time will be needed to prepare for this horizon. At a later stage during this horizon, Citisens could start experimenting with this approach to youth participation for other topics with a spatial element, as the (plans for the) energy transition should be well underway by then.

### Horizon 3: broadening and scaling up

In the third horizon, all steps of the final design presented in Section 12.6 are implemented as a complete, new value proposition. Following the conclusions from the second horizon, different modular options may still be offered. Besides local governments, Citisens could now also start targeting project developers or schools that want to involve youngsters in the process of designing new buildings and their surroundings. In the added voting step, Citisens now involves all inhabitants through this participation process.

Including step five would require several new capabilities, technologies and collaborations:

- Citisens would need channels to reach out to all inhabitants. This is something they are very experienced at, except for reaching youngsters. To achieve this, they could collaborate with influencers and support the youngsters themselves in sharing their dream places with their friends as explained in step five of Section 12.6.
- Building an online platform is something that is not Citisens' expertise, and requires a lot of dedicated knowledge and resources. It would therefore make sense for them to collaborate on this platform with Smarticipatie, a company that specializes in digital participation, with whom they have started to collaborate during this project. One of their current tools, Maptionnaire, facilitates online participation on maps, which could be a good starting point for developing the youth participation platform, as this shares some features with the third and fourth step of the new design proposal. Smarticipatie



- could also be the party that moderates the online platform to ensure all contributions are genuine.
- In a later stage in the third horizon, Citisens could consider to start experimenting with designing the dream places digitally in VR. This is something that Olifantenpad CS currently already offers to municipalities, but does not yet function very smoothly (personal experience at DDW, 2021). In the future, this might allow groups of youngsters to be at the place they are redesigning, fully experiencing it while creating their dream place directly on the platform.

The third horizon starts in 2026 to provide enough time to develop and iterate the value proposition in the second horizon, as well as for preparing the new elements that are added in the third.

## 13.2 Integration

The aim of the final step of the Frame creation process, integration, is ensuring that new frames are well integrated in the organizations involved, as new frames may hold patterns of relationships relevant to other areas of the organization (Dorst, 2015, p. 79).

Section 10.1 introduced the frame Holacracy, from which the final design proposal originated, as a new way to look at the problem situation. Although the frame of Holacracy was a useful tool to get from themes to futures, it might be more difficult to understand for people that are not familiar with this way to structure and run an organization. Therefore, a new frame that is easier to communicate, but showcases relationships similar to Holacracy was developed: a colony of ants.

Colonies of ants perform very complex tasks without a leader or blueprint, by following a few simple rules. An example of this is how they build bridges. When an ant detects a gap in the road, it starts building a bridge. These bridges can be made up of hundreds of ants and span tens of centimetres (Singer, 2014).

Figure 61: The new frame of a colony of ants building a bridge



**Citisens:**  
Simple rules



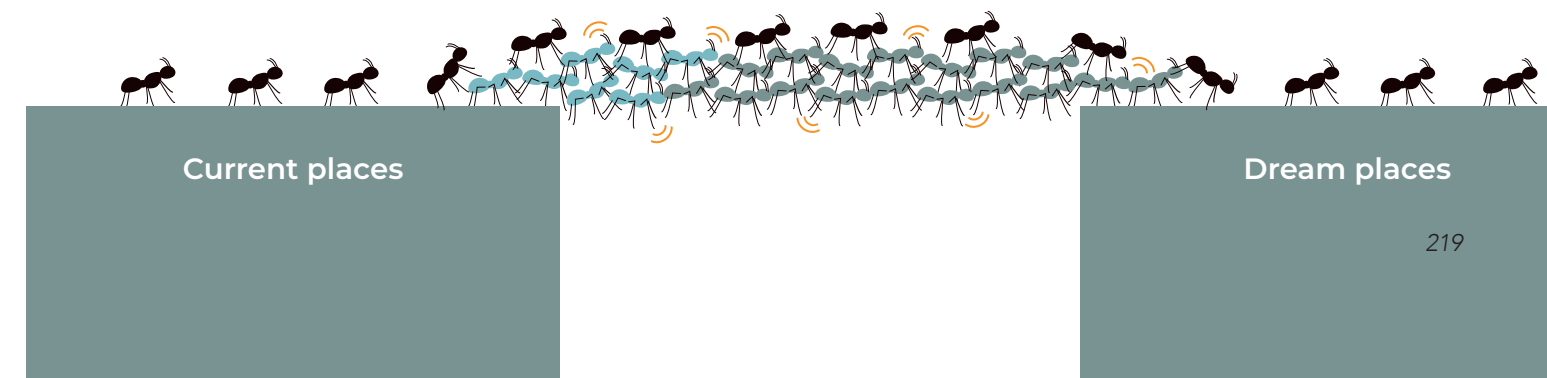
**Youngsters**



**Municipality**



**Inhabitants**



Looking at the three main stakeholders through this frame provides a new perspective on their roles in youth participation:

- Youngsters are the ants that detect a gap in the road and want to start building a bridge. They function as “sensors” for steering the municipality.
- The municipality ants are the first to join the youngsters in building the bridge. Together they create a new structure that everyone in the municipality can make use of.
- Citisens is the party that came up with and observes the simple rules that the ants use to work together.

Figure 61 visualizes the new frame. Taking this new frame as a starting point, the remainder of this section will dive into the new roles, activities and capabilities for the three main stakeholders, as visualized in Figure 62.

### Citisens

In the new frame, Citisens takes on the role to create the right, simple rules that allow the municipality and youngsters to work together. To be able to do this, they have to become a knowledge leader or expert on youth participation. Activities that fit with this new role are advising municipalities, facilitating collaboration, creating the right approach (by iterating the final design from Section 12.6) and potentially even provide interim youth participation professionals, similarly to the Necker van Naem interim department. These activities require new expertise and knowledge, as well as consultancy and facilitation skills tailored to youth participation.

This new knowledge can be created through further iterating the approach, but also through data collection within the approach itself. Citisens is a data-driven company, as explained in Section 5.3, and could benefit from the data this new approach to youth participation creates in several ways:

- By analysing the ideas youngsters come up with for their dream place (in step three) they could learn which topics are important to youngsters.
- By analysing the responses of youngsters (in step four) to the questions from the municipality, they could learn which questions work well, and which do not.
- By analysing the voting behaviour (in step five), they could learn which ideas get most votes, link voting behaviour to their engagement profiles and learn about the differences in the preferences of youngsters and adults.

### Municipality

The municipality is the client and executive party, that follows-up on the input from youngsters:

- The mayor and aldermen will usually be the project’s client. They monitor the project from a distance and embrace the youngsters’ ideas. The city council and mayor & aldermen should keep each other on their toes to ensure enough progress is made in following-up on the outcomes.

## Citisens



Knowledge leader / expert youth participation



Advising, facilitating, creating approach, interim



Expertise / knowledge, consultancy & facilitation skills



## Municipality



Client & executive party, open to input from youngsters



Connecting (schools), testing feasibility, implementing



Possibilities implementation, in touch with youngsters

## Youngsters



Active participants, involved and constructive



Participate (structurally), giving input & being ambassadors



Knowledge, thinking in possibilities



Figure 62: New roles, activities and capabilities of three main stakeholders



- The civil servants have an active role in the project, using their network at schools in the second step, and testing feasibility and implementing the outcomes in the final step. They keep in touch with the youngsters to ensure they are involved and up to date.

The policy-making process from Section 3.2 provides an important context to take into account when thinking about the next steps from the municipality. Figure 63 shows the basic layout of this process, including the connections to the follow-up of the final design proposition in pink.

The main connection between the final design and the policy-making process is in the policy research and development stages, as youngsters provide input on the problems and deliver a vision in the shape of dream places, connected to the energy transition

or another topic that the municipality is working on. Besides that, new topics could come up that require new policies to be made, hence the connection to the agenda setting stage. Furthermore, some ideas might not require new policies, but new permits or subsidies that fit within current policies. Finally, some ideas might not even require any new policies or permits, but could be implemented as separate projects so long as they fit within current policies. Therefore, while the focus is probably mostly on the policy research and development stages, the follow-up of the participation process could connect to different stages of the policy-making process, or not connect to it at al, depending on the outcomes and context.

One final remark on follow-up, is that if the municipality is to play their supportive role as ants that first join the youngsters to build their bridge, it is key that they beforehand ensure they have

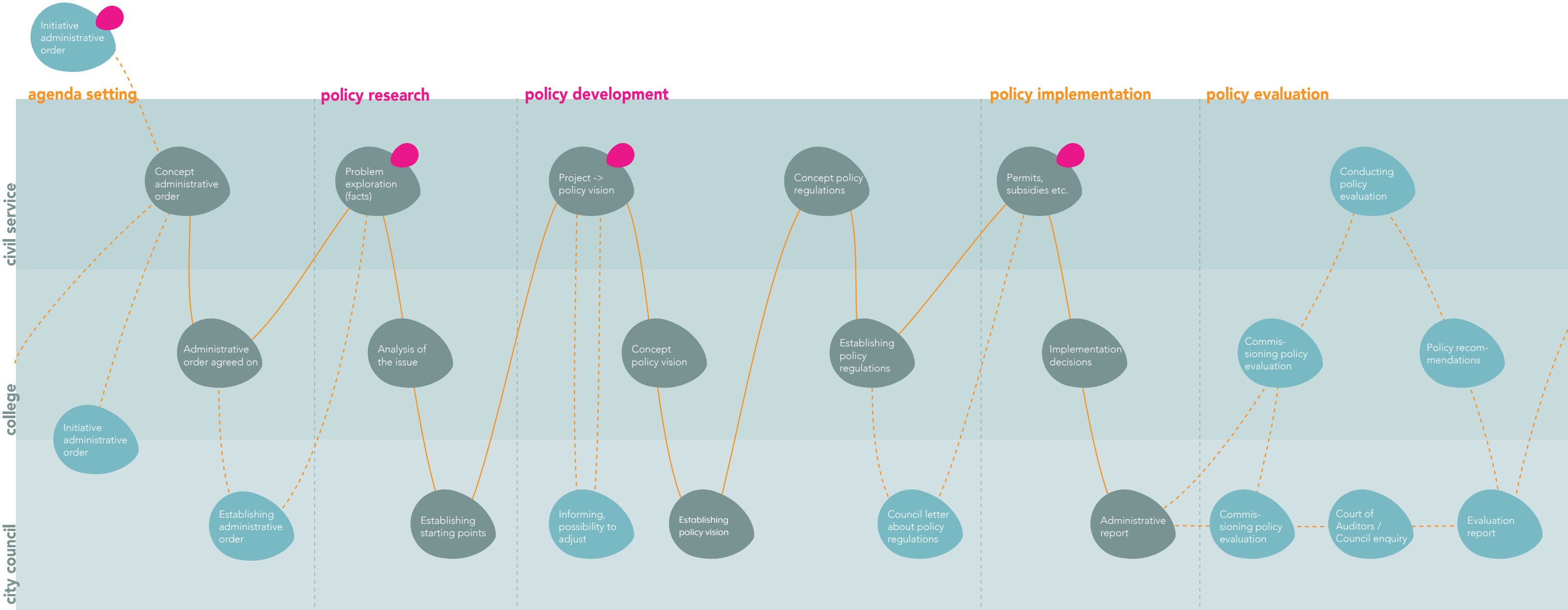


Figure 63: The municipal policy-making process and possible points at which the final design could be embedded (in pink)

enough capacity and budget within the organisation to fulfil that role, as well as a sincere intention (but no guarantee) to implement the youngsters' ideas.

### Youngsters

Finally, the youngsters are active participants, who are involved and constructive. They participate, give input and are ambassadors of the youth participation process. They provide their knowledge and ideas, being an expert of their own experience, and think in possibilities to get to solutions.

Letting youngsters fulfil this role potentially has a wide range of benefits for both youngsters themselves and society as a whole:

- Youth participation can have a positive influence on youngsters' self-efficacy, empowerment, confidence and skills (RAND Europe, 2021).
- Youth participation can contribute to youngsters' social responsibility and political self-determination (Hart, 1992).

Recent research by I&O Research shows that currently only 30% of Dutch 16- and 17-year olds would definitely vote for the municipal elections if they would be allowed to. As the actual numbers are usually 10% lower than the poll, only 20-30 percent of them would actually vote. Comparing this to the 65% of adults that indicate they would definitely vote, shows that Dutch youngsters are not very excited about voting (Van Engeland, 2022). The municipal elections this year had a historically low turn-out, and the lowest turn-out in the age group 18-24. Most people who did not vote, did not know which party to vote for (Ipsos, 2022).

It therefore seems that contributing to youngsters' political self-determination is more important than ever, to give a much-needed positive impulse to our local democracy.

## Key insights

This chapter presented a plan for implementation in three horizons:

1. The first horizon focuses on improving and enriching the current products and services from Citisens using the insights from this project.
2. In the second horizon, the new value proposition is implemented, excluding the online platform.
3. The complete value proposition is implemented in the third horizon, and used in projects with a wider variety of clients, participants and topics.

For communication purposes, a new frame that showcases similar relationships to Holacracy was developed: a colony of ants. Using this frame as a starting point, showed that:

- Citisens takes the role as expert or knowledge leader, providing the simple rules that allow the ants to collaborate.
- The youngsters are the ants that detect a gap in the road and start building a bridge, being active, involved and constructive participants
- The municipality are the ants that join the youngsters to build their bridge, taking the role of the executive party that is open to input from youngsters.





# Conclusion

This thesis investigates how youngsters aged 14-17 can participate in municipal policy- and decision-making, in the context of the energy transition, and proposes a new youth participation process that was created in co-creation with 163 key stakeholders and experts. The client for this project is Citisens, a consultancy company that specialises in (adult) citizen participation. The project is approached through the Frame creation method, with a central role for co-creation with all key stakeholders.

Through literature review, expert interviews and co-creation sessions, the main challenges, or paradoxes, of youth participation in the energy transition were established:

1. While youngsters are easily engaged on the topic of climate change, they drop out instantly when you start talking about the energy transition.
2. Youngsters should participate within the system to provide meaningful feedback, but not lose their fresh outsiders' perspective.
3. Municipalities want to involve youngsters, but are not sufficiently aware of their preferences and capabilities, and do not allocate sufficient resources.
4. Participation aims to make policy-making more inclusive and democratic, but mostly stakeholders with apparent interests and more resources participate.
5. The energy transition aims to transition society as a whole to prevent climate change, but has a narrow focus on energy generation and usage only and fails to distribute the pains and gains fairly in society.

Putting these challenges aside, an analysis of frontrunners in the areas of sustainability and (youth) participation yielded four main

underlying values, or themes:

1. Equality: providing the right opportunities and resources to create equal outcomes.
2. Ownership: giving participants a degree of ownership.
3. Collaboration: creating and leveraging collaboration.
4. Action: taking action, instead of waiting for others to change.

These four values were the basis for a new frame to look to the problem situation: a colony of ants that performs complex tasks following a few simple rules. The youngsters are the ants detecting a gap in the road, and start building a bridge. The municipality ants are the first to join them, and they create the bridge together. Citisens creates the simple rules that allow the ants to collaborate.

The final design proposition is a seven-step participation process, designed in co-creation with key stakeholders, called Design your dream places:

1. The municipality drafts 4 questions for youngsters about the energy transition in a creative session facilitated by Citisens.
2. Youngsters are involved during guest lessons at schools.
3. Youngsters design their dream places by adding ideas to a picture of those places.
4. Youngsters make their dream places sustainable by answering the questions from the municipality from step 1.
5. All inhabitants vote online for their favourite dream place.
6. The youngsters from the winning places participate in a session with the municipality on implementation.
7. Citisens reports on the outcomes, while youngsters stay involved to advise and communicate on next steps.

During a small pilot session with all key stakeholders, step 1, 3, 4 and 6 were tested and evaluated. The findings indicate that the final design is a good fit with the (drivers of) all stakeholders and the themes, contains many key ingredients for participation and addresses several challenges from the paradoxes.

Finally, an implementation plan in three horizons was created in co-creation with Citisens:

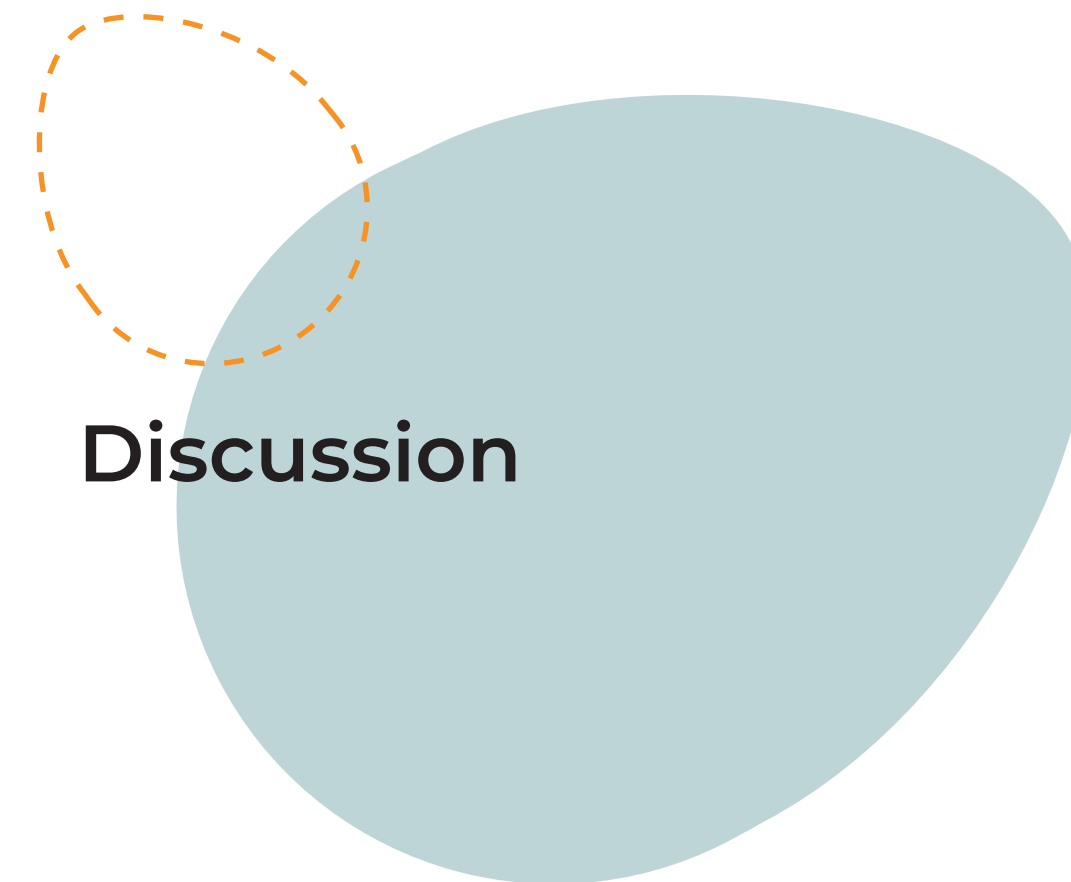
1. In the first horizon, Citisens uses the insights from this thesis to improve and enrich current products and services.
2. The second horizon focuses on the implementation of the new value proposition, without the online platform.
3. In the third horizon the complete value proposition is implemented and applied to a wider variety of clients, participants and topics.

This thesis contributes to the field of design in several ways. First of all, it illustrates how different groups of key stakeholders, in this case the client, stakeholders from the municipality and youngsters, can be involved throughout the different stages of a design process through co-creation sessions. In particular, it shows how youngsters can be meaningfully involved through these sessions, and truly given a voice in the process of designing a solution that also aims to give them a voice. Finally, it illustrates how continuously staying in touch with all key stakeholders contributes

to creating a solution that fits with their drivers.

Secondly the project combines a participatory approach with the Frame creation method, showing how stakeholders can be meaningfully involved during each of the steps. It also illustrates the different levels of research and design between which the designer, but in some cases also participants, are required to switch throughout such a process, as described by Stappers & Sleeswijk Visser (2014). From the **philosopher** thinking about new themes and frames, the **methodologist** adjusting the approach to the project, the **tool developer** creating the lay-out for co-creation sessions, the **product developer** designing the solution, the **consumer** piloting the new approach, to exploring the role of sustainability in youngsters' **lives**.

Furthermore, this thesis informs several fields besides design. For municipalities, consultancy companies and other organisations that seek to improve their approach to youth participation, this thesis provides an overview of current approaches and their strengths and weaknesses, as well as key ingredients for successful youth participation and the main drivers of the key stakeholders. Besides that, the overview of frontrunners and the themes and frames derived from those frontrunners could provide inspiration for organisations aspiring to create new approaches to youth participation themselves.



#### Reflection on results

This thesis aims to create a new approach to youth participation that leverages the key ingredients of youth participation and themes, and addresses the paradoxes or challenges of the context and drivers of stakeholders. The evaluation of the resulting design proposition shows encouraging results regarding those topics, although more research is required to validate those results. Furthermore, the final design proposes a way for municipality to reach a representative group of youngsters, gives youngsters a voice while they are not yet allowed to vote and may contribute to increased political engagement among youngsters.

Some risks of the final design are disappointment of participants when the participation process does not have the intended impact (e.g. when there is not enough capacity or budget to implement the outcomes), a(n unbridgeable) gap between the expectations of youngsters and the municipality and a new city council and college following elections that do not subscribe to the (outcomes of the) participation process, or youngsters that cannot stay involved anymore as they move away (e.g. to study somewhere else).

#### Validity, reliability and generalisability

This thesis argues that the Frame creation method is appropriate for the open, complex, dynamic and networked challenges of youth participation in the energy transition. Furthermore, the co-creation sessions in which key stakeholders were involved throughout the process provided rich, new perspectives and allowed stakeholders to have a say in the final design. Although the group of stakeholders that are involved are not necessarily representative for e.g. all youngsters aged 14-17 or all civil servants, the large number of people involved, namely 163, does



enhance the validity of the results. Additionally, key stakeholders overall positively assessed the final design proposition during the pilot session.

To increase reliability, this thesis aimed to combine insights from literature with insights from interviews and co-creation sessions for this project. Although every co-creation session was different, most sessions did include a short recap of the insights and ideas that the session would build on and allowed participants to provide feedback on this before addressing the new topics of that session. Besides that, replicability and transparency are increased through the detailed explanation of the setup and insights from each session and interview in the appendices.

This thesis suggests that the key ingredients for youth participation, the themes and the frame that the final design proposition was built on, are generalisable to other approaches to youth participation on other topics besides the energy transition, for a wider age range and other clients besides the municipality. Future research is required to confirm this. Furthermore, this thesis suggests that final design proposition may also be used for other topics, a wider age range and other clients. While several participants confirmed the generalisability of the final design, mostly in the final session on implementation with Citisens employees, further research is required to confirm this.

### Limitations

There are several limitations regarding sampling. First of all, the (two mbo and one vwo) classes that were involved twice in the project are not necessarily representative for all youngsters aged 14-17 in the Netherlands. On top of that, most of the mbo students were aged 17-21, so slightly older than the intended target group.

The other participants in creative sessions all chose to participate themselves, meaning they were already interested in (youth) participation and/or the energy transition to some extent. For example, the municipality of Alphen aan den Rijn is a municipality that cares a lot for youth participation and already puts a lot of effort into several youth participation initiatives. This made it easier to organise two co-creation sessions and the pilot session there, but does mean that the civil servants there are probably more enthusiastic and involved than they are on average.

Furthermore, the 7 experts that were interviewed at the beginning of the project were chosen to represent a variety of perspectives on the topics related to this project. Therefore only one or two experts from every relevant field were interviewed (two experts on youth participation, two on the municipality and two on the energy transition).

Besides the sampling, in co-creation sessions it is always the case that participants have varying degrees of involvement. Although this can be balanced to some degree by good moderation, especially in online co-creation sessions there is a varying degree

of activeness that may have caused the most outspoken people to have more influence on the outcomes of the session.

Another element that influences the outcomes of the session is the moderation style of the moderator, which is something that reduces the replicability of the approach as a whole. Although all sessions were moderated by the same person, the moderation style also slightly varied per session, depending on the participants, their backgrounds and their mood.

A limitation of the approach, mostly concerning the side of the municipality, is that the co-creation and pilot sessions were all part of a graduation project, instead of an actual design or participation process. This may have influenced the results, as there are no consequences or actual next steps, while these next steps would be key for the actual impact of the final design as well as the overall experience of participants.

Finally, while this thesis aimed to truly give participants a voice in the final design, there was still an asymmetry between the designer, who weighs the outcomes of the session and ultimately makes the decisions, and participants. Transparency about the process, goals and outcomes aimed to reduce this, but cannot fully take away this asymmetry.

### Recommendations

The first recommendation would be to further test, iterate and detail the overall approach. While the final design provides a good starting point for a new youth participation process, especially the steps that involve creative sessions should be iterated and detailed further. Furthermore, the online platform needs to be designed, in line with some of the recommendations explained in the section on the final design.

Secondly, the final design should be validated on a larger scale, including all steps of the designed participation process and a larger group of participants from both the municipality and youngsters. Ideally, this validation would be an actual participation process with actual next steps, as this might have an influence on the behaviour and goals of the stakeholders from the municipality. Besides that, only an actual participation process would allow for the validation of the seventh step including follow-up.

Furthermore, it would be interesting to test the generalisability of the final design, most notably for other clients such as project developers or schools, a broader age range of participants (e.g. 12-25) and other topics with a spatial element, such as a redesign of public space or improving safety.

Finally, the current approach would mostly fit in the policy research and development stages of the municipal policy-making process. It might be interesting to explore whether the new frames from this project could also inspire new approaches to youth participation for other stages of the policy-making process.

# References

## A

Advocacy Academy (n.d.). *We are the Advocacy Academy*. Retrieved on 06-12-2021, from <https://www.theadvocacyacademy.com>

Arnstein, S.R. (1969) A Ladder Of Citizen Participation, *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 35:4, 216-224.

Arnstein, S.R. (2019). A Ladder of Citizen Participation. *Journal of the American Planning Association* 85:1, 24-34.

## B

Burning Man Project (n.d.a). *What Is Burning Man?* Burning Man. Retrieved on 20-12-2021, from <https://burningman.org/about/>

Burning Man Project (n.d.b). *What Is Burning Man? The 10 Principles of Burning Man* Burning Man. Retrieved on 20-12-2021, from <https://burningman.org/about/10-principles/>

## C

Challe, T. (2021). *The Rights of Nature - Can an Ecosystem Bear Legal Rights?* Columbia Climate School. Retrieved on 06-12-2021, from <https://news.climate.columbia.edu/2021/04/22/rights-of-nature-lawsuits/>

Coalitie-Y (n.d.). *Coalitie-Y pleit voor structurele jongereninspraak*. Retrieved from 06-12-2021, from <https://coalitie-y.nl>

CollAction (2021). CollAction in a nutshell. Retrieved on 20-12-2021, from <https://www.collaction.org>

Community Fund (n.d.). *A toolkit for communities to listen, tell stories and imagine better futures together*. Retrieved on 06-12-2021, from <https://www.toolkit.community>

Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (2015). *Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life*. Council of Europe.

Crowley, A. & Moxon, D. (2017). *New and innovative forms of youth participation in decision-making processes*. Council of Europe.

## D

Deci E.L. & Ryan R.M. (2000) The “What” and “Why” of Goal Pursuits: Human Needs and the Self-Determination of Behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11:4, 227-268, DOI: 10.1207/S15327965PLI1104\_01

De la Kethulle de Ryhove, J. (2020). *What is the 3 horizons model & how can you use it?* Board of Innovation. Retrieved on 17-03-2022, from <https://www.boardofinnovation.com/blog/what-is-the-3-horizons-model-how-can-you-use-it/>

De Vries, G. (2020). 'Watt Nou': jongeren blijven meepraten over energie. Retrieved on 08-09-2021 from <https://www.nmu.nl/nieuws/watt-nou-jongeren-blijven-meepraten-over-energie/>

De Vries et al. (2019). *Gemeentelijke bestuurskracht en de energietransitie*. Den Haag: PBL.

Dorst, K. (2015). *Frame Innovation: Create new thinking by design*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Drissen, E. & Vollebergh, H. (2018). *Kan de circulaire economie een bijdrage leveren aan de energietransitie?* Den Haag: PBL.

## E

Ebskamp, B. & Verbraak, M. (2019). *Strategisch positie kiezen in de energietransitie (Wegwijzer voor Gemeenten)*. De argumentenfabriek.

Erdmann, N. (2021). *Defining: Equity, Equality & Justice*. Achieve Brown County. Retrieved on 06-12-2021, from <https://achievebrowncounty.org/2021/05/defining-equity-equality-and-justice/>

ExpEx (2021). *Wat is ExpEx?* Retrieved on 06-12-2021, from <https://www.expex.nl/over-expex/wat-is-expex/>

Extinction Rebellion (n.d.). *Waarom we bestaan*. Retrieved on 06-12-2021, from <https://extinctionrebellion.nl/over-ons/>

## F

Freeke, R. M. (red.) (2021). *Ik Raadslid. Handboek soldaat voor de gemeenteraad*. Necker van Naem.

FridaysForFuture Nederland (n.d.). *Over ons*. Retrieved on 06-12-2021, from <https://fridaysforfuture.nl/over-ons/>

## G

Geels, F. W., & Kemp, R. (2007). *Dynamics in socio-technical systems: Typology of change processes and contrasting case studies*. *Technology in Society*, 29(4), 441–455. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techsoc.2007.08.009>

## H

Habraken, N., de Vries, G. & van de Ven, H. (2021). *Jongerenparticipatie in de energietransitie: hoe organiseer je dat?* Natuur- en Milieufederaties.

Hart, R. (1992). *Children's participation: from tokenism to citizenship* (Florence, International Child Development Centre/UNICEF).



Het Groene Brein (2021). *Circulaire economie: een definitie en uitleg van het concept*. Kenniskaarten - het Groene Brein. Retrieved on 14-02-2022, from <https://kenniskaarten.hetgroenebrein.nl/kenniskaart-circulaire-economie/is-definitie-circulaire-economie/>

Hogehuis, B. (2018). *Four key elements for a successful innovation strategy*. Fronteer. Retrieved on 07-10-2021 from <https://fronteer.com/updates/four-key-elements-for-a-successful-innovation-strategy/>

Hogehuis, B. (2019). *Holacracy Light - How our clients benefit from our way of working*. Fronteer. Retrieved on 20-12-2021, from <https://fronteer.com/updates/holacracy-light/>

HolacracyOne (2021). *Explore Holacracy*. Holacracy. Retrieved on 20-12-2021, from <https://www.holacracy.org/explore>

Hooijman, F. & Van Walen, T. (2019). *De rol van de gemeente in de energietransitie*. Rebel. Retrieved on 02-09-2021 from [https://venray.raadsinformatie.nl/document/8385114/1/2020-004\\_RIB\\_Bijlage\\_1\\_Rapport\\_Rol\\_gemeente\\_in\\_energietransitie](https://venray.raadsinformatie.nl/document/8385114/1/2020-004_RIB_Bijlage_1_Rapport_Rol_gemeente_in_energietransitie)

Human Rights Watch (2014). *25th Anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Questions and Answers*. Retrieved on 30-09-2021 from <https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/11/17/25th-anniversary-convention-rights-child>

I

Ipsos (2022.) *Overzicht Gemeenteraadsverkiezingen 2022*. Retrieved on 25-03-2022, from <https://www.ipsos.com/nl-nl/overzicht-gemeenteraadsverkiezingen-2022>

J

Jonge Klimaatbeweging (2021). *Wij zijn de stem van jongeren in het klimaatdebat*. Retrieved on 06-12-2021, from <https://www.jongeklimaatbeweging.nl>

K

Kusnetz, N., Surma, K. & Talmazan, Y. (2021). ‘Ecocide’ movement pushes for a new international crime: Environmental destruction. *NBC News*. Retrieved on 06-12-2021 from <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/ecocide-movement-pushes-new-international-crime-environmental-destruction-n1263142>

L

Lego (2021). *Building instructions for a better world*. Retrieved on 06-12-2021, from <https://www.lego.com/nl-nl/sustainability/building-instructions-for-a-better-world>

Lisa Hu (2016). *Terra Nova Minimaatschappij*. Retrieved on 06-12-2021, from <http://www.lisahu.nl/terra-nova>

Lundy, L. (2007). “Voice’ is not enough: conceptualising Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child’, *British Educational Research Journal*, 33(6), 927-942.

M

Mak, J., Gilsing, R. & Wróblewska, A. (2016). *De staat van jeugdparticipatie in Nederland 2016: Restulaten online enquête 122 gemeenten en overzicht van goede voorbeeldpraktijken*. Verwey-Jonker Instituut. Retrieved on 08-10-2021 from <https://www.verwey-jonker.nl/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/staat-jeugdparticipatie-nederland-2016-2.pdf>

Mbo Talent (n.d.). *Ons Verhaal*. Retrieved on 06-12-2021, from <https://mbotalent.com/onze-missie/>

Milken Institute School of Public Health (2020). *Equity vs. Equality: What’s the Difference?* Retrieved on 09-12-2021 from <https://onlinepublichealth.gwu.edu/resources/equity-vs-equality/>

Ministerie van Economische Zaken en Klimaat (2021, March 18). *Lokaal duurzame energie opwekken*. Participatie: Doe mee | Klimaatakkoord. Retrieved on 02-14-2022, from <https://www.klimaatakkoord.nl/participatie/lokale-energieopwekking>

Ministerie van OCW (2021). 8 vragen over de nieuwe wet burgerschapsonderwijs. Leraar24. Geraadpleegd op 19 maart 2022, van <https://www.leraar24.nl/2628203/8-vragen-over-de-nieuwe-wet-burgerschapsonderwijs/>

Movisie (2020). *Tijd om te gaan doen wat werkt bij jongerenparticipatie*. Retrieved on 08-10-2021 from <https://www.movisie.nl/artikel/tijd-om-te-gaan-doen-wat-werkt-jongerenparticipatie>

N

Nationaal Programma Regionale Energiestrategie (n.d.). *Home*. Retrieved on 28-09-2021 from <https://www.regionale-energiestrategie.nl/default.aspx>

Nationale DenkTank (2019). *Samen met jonge denkers kraken we taaie maatschappelijke vraagstukken*. Retrieved on 06-12-2021, from <https://nationale-denktank.nl/wat-doen-we/>

Necker van Naem (n.d.). *Contact*. Necker.nl. Retrieved on 14-02-2022, from <https://www.necker.nl/contact/>

Nederlandse Vereniging voor Raadsleden (2019, March 4). *Raadslid en minderjarig, hoe zit dat?* Retrieved on 02-11-2022, from <https://www.raadsleden.nl/actueel/nieuws/raadslid-en-minderjarig-hoe-zit-dat>

NOS (2020, 8 October). *Jonge Klimaatbeweging op de eerste plek Duurzame 100 van Trouw*. Retrieved on 07-12-2021, from <https://nos.nl/artikel/2351582-jonge-klimaatbeweging-op-de-eerste-plek-duurzame-100-van-trouw>

No Waste Challenge (n.d.). *Cut waste. Cut emissions. Fight climate change*. Retrieved on 06-12-2021, from <https://nowaste.whatdesigncando.com>

O

OHCHR (1990). *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Retrieved on 30-08-2021 from <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

Olifantenpad CS (2021). *WHAT IF ... It's up to you?* Retrieved on 06-12-2021, from <https://olifantenpad.vr-mamaproducties.com>

Ostaaijen, J. (2018). *Tussen eerste overheid en tweederangsdemocratie: Het functioneren van de lokale democratie in Nederland*. Den Haag: Boom bestuurskunde.

## P

Participatory City Making Lab (n.d.). *Collaboration in City Making*. Retrieved on 14-10-2021 from <https://delftdesignlabs.org/about/>

Pater, M. (2017). *I stopped being a boss; here are the 3 lessons I learned*. Fronteer. Retrieved on 20-12-2021, from <https://fronteer.com/updates/stopped-being-boss-3-lessons-learned/>

ProDemos (2017, May 2). *Het ambtelijk apparaat*. Retrieved on 11-02-2022, from <https://prodemos.nl/kennis-en-debat/publicaties/informatie-over-politiek/nederland/het-ambtelijk-apparaat/>

ProDemos (2020a). *De invloed van burgers*. Retrieved on 11-02-2022, from <https://prodemos.nl/kennis-en-debat/publicaties/informatie-over-politiek/de-gemeente/de-invloed-van-burgers/>

ProDemos (2020b). *De organisatie*. Retrieved on 11-02-2022, from <https://prodemos.nl/kennis-en-debat/publicaties/informatie-over-politiek/de-gemeente/de-organisatie/>

ProDemos (2021). *Jongerenparticipatie*. Retrieved on 25-03-2022, from <https://prodemos.nl/samenwerking/gemeenten/jongerenparticipatie/>

ProDemos (n.d.). *Jongerengemeenteraad*. Prodemos.nl. Retrieved on 07-10-2021 from <https://prodemos.nl/programmas/jongerengemeenteraad/>

## R

RAND Europe (2021). *Study on child participation in EU political and democratic life*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

RIVM (n.d.). *Energietransitie*. Retrieved on 26-09-2021 from <https://www.rivm.nl/onderwerpen/energietransitie>

## S

Sanders, E.B.N., & Stappers, P. J. (2012). *Convivial Toolbox: Generative Research for the Front End of Design*. Amsterdam: BIS Publishers.

Stappers, P.J. & Sleeswijk Visser, F. (2014). Meta-levels in design research: Resolving some confusions. *Proceedings of DRS 2014: Design's big debates*, Umeå, Sweden, 16-19 June 2014.

Simonse, L. (2017). *Design Roadmapping* (1st edition). Amsterdam: BIS Publishers.

Singer, E. (2014). The remarkable self-organization of ants. The Guardian. Retrieved on 24-03-2022, from <https://amp.theguardian.com/science/2014/apr/11/ants-self-organization-quanta>

Stappers, P. & Giaccardi, E. (2017) Research through Design. In Soegaard, M. & Friis-Dam, R. (eds.), *The Encyclopedia of Human-Computer Interaction, 2nd edition*. Retrieved from <http://www.interaction-design.org/literature/book/the-encyclopedia-of-human-computer-interaction-2nd-ed/research-through-design>

Studio Moio (n.d.). *Studio Moio: Maatschappelijk ondernemen met jong talent*. Retrieved on 06-12-2021, from <https://www.studiomoio.nl>

## T

Tomico Plasencia, O., Lu, Y., Baha, S. E., Lehto, P., & Hivikoski, T. (2011). Designers initiating open innovation with multi-stakeholder through co-reflection sessions. In N. F. M. Roozenburg, L. Chen, & P. J. Stappers (Eds.), *IASDR2011, The 4th World Conference on Design Research* (pp. 317-329). Technische Universiteit Delft.

## V

Van Boeijen, A.G.C., Daalhuizen, J.J. & Zijlstra, J.J.M (Eds.), (2020, Rev. Ed.). *Delft Design Guide: Perspectives-Models-Approaches-Methods*. Amsterdam: BIS Publishers.

Van Engeland, W. (2022). *16- en 17-jarigen staan niet te springen om te stemmen*. I&O Research. Retrieved on 25-03-2022, from <https://www.ioresearch.nl/actueel/jongeren-staat-niet-te-springen-om-te-stemmen/>

Van Gaalen, E. (2018). Middelbare scholen gooien de roosters om. AD.nl. Retrieved on 20-03-2022, from <https://www.ad.nl/binnenland/middelbare-scholen-gooien-de-roosters-om~a933e4fa/>

Van Zoelen, B. (2019). *De ongekende opmars van het klimaatprotest*. In Het Parool. Retrieved on 30-09-2021 from <https://www.parool.nl/nieuws/de-ongekende-opmars-van-het-klimaatprotest~b4ceda44/?referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F>

Veenhoff, J. & Pater, M. (2021). *Collaborate or Die: Het Co-Creatie Handboek voor de Veranderaar*. Culemborg: Van Duuren Management.

## W

Wronski, K. (n.d.). *Autonomous Tree*. Dutch Design Week. Retrieved on 06-12-2021, from <https://ddw.nl/nl/programma/5684/autonomous-tree>