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Recruited and trained youth: local opportunities and limitations for youth participation in childhood obesity prevention - Deliverable 5.2



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Contributors:	Name	Organisation	Role / Title
Deliverable Leader	Evelyne Baillergeau	UvA	Senior Researcher
Contributing Author(s)	Christian Bröer	UvA	WP5 Lead/Associate Prof
	Sherria Ayuandini	UvA	
	CC Poland WP5	SWPS	Senior Researcher
	CC Portugal WP5	CEIDSS	
	CC Norway WP5	UiO/Press	
CC United Kingdom WP5	LSHTM		
Reviewer(s)	Knut-Inge Klepp Harry Rutter	NIPH University of Bath	
Final review and approval			

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Executive Summary

Setting up Youth Alliances for Overweight Prevention Policies to train adolescents, co-create with them policy ideas to combat childhood obesity and test these ideas in real context is a critical and ambitious step of the CO-CREATE project. As this step entailed a quite novel approach, WP5 leader University of Amsterdam devised a recruitment protocol and an engagement protocol (D5.1), in close collaboration with other WP leaders (in particular WP4, WP6, WP7, WP8 and WP10) and country leads in five European countries (Norway, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Poland and Portugal). In line with the participatory action-based system dynamics approach of CO-CREATE, WP5 is engaging adolescents to collaborate in system relevant research and to enrich and deepen the insights from WP4. At the same time, WP5 enhances political efficacy of adolescents and mobilizes them to seek political opportunities and influence policies by formulating, refining and testing policy ideas for childhood overweight prevention policies. The present deliverable describes the implementation of the recruitment protocol and the engagement protocol, i.e. the CO-CREATE activities geared to recruit and train adolescents in the period of Spring 2019 until Summer 2020.

Deliverable 5.2 is meant to describe the activities geared at recruiting and training young people for the Alliances. A more thorough analysis of the processes, outputs and outcomes of the Alliances will be included in future deliverables (D5.3, D5.5 and D5.6). It is also important to underscore that the Covid-19 measures put in place in all CO-CREATE countries have had affected youth and CO-CREATE research staff significantly, having to switch from an in-person working format to video-conferencing abruptly. Nonetheless, several insights regarding recruitment and training come to the fore to address three key questions: How did researchers recruit adolescents in relation to the proposed criteria and procedures and in relation to local opportunities and limitations? Which recruitment channels have proved most productive? Which training activities have been co-decided by youth and researchers? In future deliverables, using all the data available then, we will discuss how recruitment and training have contributed to the overall goals of WP5. This report is focused on the implementation phase.

The CO-CREATE approach allowed for a number of recruitment channels and all local activities remained within the proposed framework. There has been a strong tendency towards established organizations as recruitment channels, which proved most secure in terms of sustained and sizeable participation. At this point, it seems that a stronger commitment from existing organizations is an important factor. Schools and Scout organisations, but also youth organisations, can muster the collaboration of youth in their respective organization. It has turned out to be much more difficult to collaborate with youth outside existing organizations. While existing organizations help to secure participation, they may also limit the possibilities of youth alliances to become independent organizations.

The 15 Alliances vary in size, some being bigger than 15 people, some smaller. The subsequent WP5 deliverables will show how local teams have managed the size of the Alliances so that they function well and create collaborative spaces. For the time being, the 15 Alliances largely secured the

commitment of young people with very limited political experience, confirming the potential of CO-CREATE to let blossom and flourish unheard voices. In addition, most Alliances reflect some levels of diversity with regard to gender; rural/urban; social-economic background; ethno-cultural background (where relevant). That said, girls were largely overrepresented in almost all cases, except for one alliance mostly populated by boys. Notwithstanding, gender imbalance didn't prove problematic for the functioning of the alliances, since it didn't cause to attrition and those in gender minority consistently participated throughout the whole process.

Large parts of the training programme have been implemented according to the engagement protocol, with some adaptations where deemed necessary to meet the needs and/or the wishes of recruited adolescents in the local context. Based on our Participatory Action Research approach, the adaptations from the protocol were made in accordance with the organizational contexts and in consultation with youth, if not initiated by the young people themselves.

Likewise, it appears that the various training activities included in the training programme were used to enhance capacity building and political efficacy in different but complementary ways. This includes getting the young people to: think about obesity in a systemic perspective; come up with policy ideas (including the preliminary steps such as understanding what a policy idea is); be acquainted with how to refine their policy idea (i.e. researching their environment); and project themselves as (political) actors and ready to engage with other (political) actors (policy-makers, experts committed to executive bodies, opinion leaders).



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List of acronyms / abbreviations

AAGG: Amsterdamse Aanpak Gezond Gewicht (Amsterdam Healthy Weight Approach)

AGGA: Aanpak Gezond Gewicht Almere (Healthy Weight Approach Almere)

EYP: European Youth Parliament

FAS: Family Affluence Scale

HBSC: Health Behaviour in School-aged Children

JOGG: Jongeren op Gezond Gewicht (Youth on Healthy Weight - The Netherlands)

PAR: participatory action research

WP: Work Package

YPAR: Youth-led participatory action research

1. Introduction

Youth Alliances for Overweight Prevention Policies (WP5) aims to promote and support adolescent participation and political efficacy complementary to the formulation of policies for upstream obesity prevention, particularly in tapping into means and modalities more suitable to and identified by adolescents themselves (in Grant Agreement, Objective 5.1) and therefore to establish sustainable and transferable Youth Alliances for Overweight Prevention (in Grant Agreement, Objective 5.2).

In line with the community-based system dynamics approach of CO-CREATE, WP5 is engaging adolescents to collaborate in systems-relevant research and to enrich and deepen the insights from WP4. WP5 at the same time enhances political efficacy of adolescents and mobilizes them to seek political opportunities and influence policies. In Norway, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Poland and Portugal, CO-CREATE empowers adolescents, and has developed sustainable and transferable Youth Alliances for Overweight Prevention Policies to formulate policies. Therefore, WP5 leader UvA has developed a youth led participatory approach (YPAR) tailored to local situation (contextualised approach).

Consistent with those objectives, this deliverable reports on Tasks 5.1 and 5.2, namely:

Task 5.1: To reach out to diverse adolescents and identify opportunities and obstacles to participation in overweight prevention policies.

Task 5.2: To bring adolescents together, train them and to co-create with them the most suited organizational form for Alliances for Overweight Prevention Policy, and to specify with adolescents what kind of Alliances are suited for them depending on political level (European, national, city).

Setting up Youth Alliances to support adolescents to contribute policy ideas to combat childhood obesity and test these ideas in real context is a critical and ambitious step of the CO-CREATE project. As this step entailed a quite novel approach, WP5 leader University of Amsterdam devised a recruitment protocol and an engagement protocol, in close collaboration with other WP leaders (in particular WP4, WP6, WP7, WP8 and WP10) and country leads (see as reflected in D5.1). This extensive documentation serves to coordinate ongoing activities and to enable a transfer and sustainability of our approach. We assume that the protocols serve as a guideline or template, which needs to be adjusted to the local situation in two ways: generally, local conditions will pose limits to our approach or offer opportunities for other approaches. More specifically, the youth-led participatory approach by definition means that the number of participants and the actual training activities depend on youth preferences. Based on the two protocols devised by WP5 lead, the country leads applied for ethical clearance to the respective ethical board, under the supervision of WP10 lead. All necessary ethical clearances were granted in advance of the establishment of the Alliances in the summer of 2019.

The present deliverable describes the implementation of the two protocols and asks: How did researchers recruit adolescents in relation to the proposed criteria and procedures and in relation to local opportunities and limitations? Which recruitment channels have proved most productive?

Which training activities have been co-decided by youth and researchers? Inviting a reflection on their commitment to decision-making regarding the training activities at Alliance level, the last question mainly points to the involvement of adolescents in the implementation of the training programme. It was also used as an opportunity to delve into the ways the enhancement of political efficacy of young people was actually carried out throughout the implementation of the training programme in the 15 Alliances. In political science, political efficacy is usually an indicator of health of civil society. In the understanding of WP5, political efficacy goes about the extent to which individuals/citizens understand public affairs and are able to influence public affairs, either directly (internal efficacy) or through (elected) representatives/political leaders (external efficacy) (Sulitzeanu-Kenan & Halperin, 2013). In WP5, enhancing political efficacy regards enabling young people to understand obesity as a systemic perspective but also getting acquainted with what a policy idea is and how to refine it. Beyond enhancing political efficacy may lead young people to project themselves as political actors, possibly involved in interface with other stakeholders such as policy makers, experts, etc.

Although all Alliances have the same goal – involve adolescents to contribute to policy ideas for childhood obesity prevention – the way this is achieved will differ from one city/country to another. Therefore, this deliverable reports on the preparatory fieldwork carried out in the respective countries (November 2018-September 2019) to explore the local specificities, in particular the obstacles to youth participation in the local context, the opportunities to mitigate these obstacles and the decisions made to start the Alliances. In addition, this deliverable addresses the steps taken by the local teams to recruit adolescents to start the alliances and the way the training programme was implemented across the school year 2019-2020.

While Section 1 serves as a general introduction, the rest of this report consists of four parts. Section 2 recalls the way we have devised the recruitment strategy for the country-based alliances and reports on the way the local partners have implemented the recruitment strategy (in particular, including reaching out to the underrepresented youth). Section 3 reviews how adolescents have been trained alongside taking part in the Alliances, namely which training activities have been carried out, the extent to which the adolescents have been involved in decision-making regarding the training programme and which aspects of political efficacy were actually dealt with in the implementation of the training programme. Section 4 reviews how adolescents have been involved in recruitment and training. Section 5 documents how we have refined the design of getting adolescents to address the EU-level policy (to be implemented in collaboration with the European Youth Parliament, in March 2022, COVID-19 crisis management permitting).

It is important to note that this deliverable is meant to be chiefly descriptive and to focus on recruitment and training activities carried out in the Alliances. The outputs and outcomes of Youth Alliances for Overweight Prevention Policies will be reported and analysed in the subsequent deliverables (D5.3, D5.5 and D5.6).

This report has been chiefly written by the WP5 lead team (UvA) and builds on materials collected by the facilitators of the 15 Alliances that have been setup since September 2019, in particular their fieldwork preparation sheets, as well as the first sets of data they produced, including Field Notes



and Logs. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 crisis the country visits scheduled for March-April 2020 were cancelled. They were replaced by online and email conversations across which the respective facilitators kindly answered UvA team's questions, in addition to coping with the consequences of the crisis on the life of the Alliances. The UvA team is deeply grateful for their contribution to reporting in this demanding period.

2. Recruited youth for the Alliances

CO-CREATE researchers committed themselves to ‘reach out to diverse adolescents (in terms of gender, ethnicity, health status, political experience and socioeconomic background and thus in terms of vulnerability and political efficacy) and identify opportunities and obstacles to participation in overweight prevention policies’ (task 5.1.). In particular, CO-CREATE researchers endeavoured to learn from the common limitations in youth research and reach out to the adolescents whose views are usually underrepresented in public health policy although their participation matters much to effective preventive policy. In subsection 2.1. we explain how we have operationalised this commitment, starting from the underlying rationale of a ‘full representation of views and experience’ to the need of an investigation of underrepresented youths and the ways they could be involved in CO-CREATE Alliances. Subsequent subsections review the recruitment strategies designed and implemented in the respective countries, namely, to identify relevant geographical areas, relevant gatekeepers and recruit co-facilitators. As the local teams did not proceed exactly in the same way to implement the recruitment protocol and let the Alliance flourish, depending on local circumstances, the structure of each subsequent subsection may slightly vary, to better reflect each local process.

2.1. Towards a ‘full representation of views and experience’

The CO-CREATE Alliances have built on the underlying rationale of a ‘full representation of views and experience’. There are several reasons for that, which are important to describe here:

First, the Alliance activities are part of a democratic and public process (Hajer, 2003; Fung, 2006; Abelson, 2003; Telford et al., 2004). Inclusiveness is important, since all citizens - or in this case youth - have a right to participate in the making of policies which affect them directly. Democratic rule is more legitimate and effective if it is inclusive and based on the assumption on basic human rights of self-determination. Obviously, youths are not obliged to participate, but as researchers we need to ensure none are hindered and participation is stimulated. Given that some sections of youth are usually even more under-represented than youth in general, we need to make an effort to enhance their access to the Youth Alliances.

Second, as we aim to come to new policy ideas, it is important to reach out to those who tend not to be involved in political process as they might come up with ideas we have not thought of before.

Third, as stated in the Grant Agreement, we value experiential knowledge and it is important to include people who are the ones facing the ‘problem’ personally or very close to them (in this case being at risk of obesity, e.g. at risk of a reduced access to healthy food and/or to physical activity facilities). Without their point of view, we might miss the mark completely and what we are doing might turn into an imposition of an uninformed outsider. As our project aspires to co-create, that is something we really want to avoid.

Overall, we assume that the Alliance activities would benefit from being carried out by a diversity of participants, of whom we assume they are likely to contribute in different but complementary ways:

some young people having experiential knowledge of political commitment and some not; some young people having experiential knowledge of overweight and some not; some people having experiential knowledge of a lifestyle due to which overweight/obesity has different implications/connotations than in the mainstream (in which we assume existing policy is based).

Stepping from principle to implementation of the Alliances led us to identify different kinds of obstacles:

- Although this principle holds for all the countries involved, obstacles and opportunities for participation and political efficacy differ between countries. Likewise, while some indicators of underrepresentation are relevant in one country, they may not make sense in another (e.g. ethnicity in The Netherlands, vs. Norway and Portugal). To arrive at transferable insights, we needed to know how to adjust our general goal to local conditions.
- Reaching out to underrepresented youth could turn out to be a highly demanding endeavour, possibly ranging beyond the resources available under the auspices of CO-CREATE. Therefore, we need to decide how far we go and at which point facilitators and co-facilitators have made enough efforts reaching out to under-represented youth, namely that in each country there is evidence of active participation of young people with initially little to no experience of participation. Evidence for this will be provided by filled questionnaires and by observations of facilitators and co-facilitators during the Alliance activities.
- Besides, although in principle getting participants from diverse backgrounds taking part in the same Alliance seems to be a good chance to let variety of opinion flow and make brainstorming more productive and creative process (coming up with new ideas) richer, there might be – in the local context – practical and/or ethical obstacles to getting adolescents from different backgrounds together.

Gaining knowledge about these obstacles and looking for opportunities to overcome these obstacles in each local context appeared to be a prerequisite to operationalise our recruitment strategy and proceed with the setting of Alliances so that both adolescents who are likely to be underrepresented and other youths could take part in the Alliance activities in all the respective countries. Therefore, we carried out fieldwork preparation, to:

- Make sure we are sufficiently aware of important local contextual factors when reaching out to youths to engage in policy co-creation, in particular to gain a more specific understanding of political and social opportunities and obstacles in reaching out to gatekeepers and to young people (e.g. Are there youth organizations and do they have political leverage?),
- Have a more specific understanding of different segments of the youth population that need to be recruited to be part of CO-CREATE alliances, (e.g. ethnic diversity and/or inequality play differently across the participating countries),
- Increase our data interpretation capacity (both in a local and comparative perspective), by accessing existing local knowledge that is relevant to our research, e.g. better understand how the stigma issue may play in the local context of the five countries/cities involved.

Fieldwork preparation was conducted in each of the five countries involved in WP5-WP7: The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal and the United Kingdom, from November 2018 till June 2019. Therefore, the WP5 leader devised a fieldwork preparation topic list, which were filled by the respective local teams in collaboration partners (see Appendix).

As a prerequisite each local partner identified two geographical areas where the alliances could be formed and tested (typically one alliance to be set in one political unit and two in the other). Each of these geographical areas needs to match a political unit (typically a municipality or below that level, e.g. boroughs in some capital cities), as small as possible where it will be possible to project the realisation of policy ideas that adolescent groups come up with (hence rather a small town than a village). So, essentially, the Alliances were to be set within certain polity/governance units. However, participating adolescents are not limited in their creativity in coming up with policy ideas because their ideas might also be able to be implemented on a national level/addressing issue on a national level.

Alongside the organisation of co-facilitators' training (held in Lisbon in September 2019, in collaboration with Press and CEIDSS) and the facilitators' training (held in Amsterdam in September 2019), the WP5 lead team devised an Alliance Handbook, containing all the information needed for running alliances in CO-CREATE, and consisting of three parts: 1) preparing the alliances, 2) running the alliances, and 3) the research accompanying them. The Alliance Handbook recaps the way the Youth Alliances have been designed, how Alliance sessions are organized step-by-step or how to observe Alliance meetings for the purpose of research, as well as templates of FieldNotes and Alliance Logs and examples of co-facilitator's contract, consent forms and graphic materials.

In September 2019, the first Alliances started meeting up. At the same time, WP5 lead team started holding online progress meetings with each country lead and facilitators (on a monthly basis) in order to monitor progress and offer guidance if need be. Such online meetings also provided opportunities to address recruitment progress in each alliance.

Table 1 – Human resources committed to the setting of the Alliances

	Facilitators	Co-facilitators	Main gatekeepers	Supplementary resource
The Netherlands	3	3 (local youth organisations)	Secondary school teachers (3)	Local youth organisations
Norway	2	3 (local youth organisations)	Local youth organisations	Secondary schools
Poland	4	7 (university students)	Secondary school teachers	
Portugal	2	8 (local youth	Local youth	

		organisations - scouts)	organisation (scouts)	
United Kingdom	2	2 (local youth organisations)	Local government	Secondary schools

2.2. Youth recruitment in the Netherlands

Selecting two geographical areas: Amsterdam and Almere

The Dutch team has chosen Amsterdam and Almere, respectively the Dutch capital city (821.000 inhabitants) and a smaller city (197.000 inhabitants), located 30 kilometres outside of Amsterdam. Amsterdam and Almere are interesting to compare because Amsterdam has a high level of spatial segregation between people of different social and economic status as well as those coming from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds (Scheffer 2006; Broekhuizen et al. 2008) while Almere has a lower level of spatial segregation and a larger portion of lower middle-class citizens (Huygen 2017; Metaal & Reijndorp 2013; see also Emmelot et al. 2010, when compared to Broekhuizen et al. 2008).

In addition to being the city where the team operates and therefore has a lot of local connections, **Amsterdam** has been a model city when it comes to dealing with childhood and adolescent's obesity. From 2012 to 2015, the percentage of children with obesity declined from 21% to 18.5% (Volkskrant, Het Parool). In spite of the efforts, obesity remains an issue for local governmental authorities, which is addressed along an area-based strategy (AAGG, Amsterdams Aanpak Gezond Gewicht). Despite the overall trend of decline, the prevalence of obesity among young people in Amsterdam is higher among those who are of migrant background (Franssen and Jansen 2015) and young people from lower social economic status (SES) are still dealing with the challenges of healthy living more than those from higher SES.

In Almere, 19 per cent of children and youth are considered overweight or obese (respectively 15% and 4%), which is higher than the average of 12 per cent of children and youth in the Netherlands.¹ Therefore, the municipality has launched the AGGA policy approach named 'Aanpak Gezond Gewicht Almere'/'Gezonde Jeugd in Almere' (Healthy Weight Approach Almere/Healthy youth in Almere) and the municipality coordinates and synchronizes all efforts focused on youth health. Hence, stakeholders of the municipality, the GGD (Municipal Health Organization), JOGG (Youth on a Healthy Weight, focusing on primary school children) and De Schoor (the community organization providing youth work in all neighbourhoods in Almere and responsible for all youth playgrounds, 'buurthuizen' (community centres) and activities in the city and successfully involved with diverse youth in all neighbourhoods in the city, as well as with youth participation and youth councils drawn from these young people) meet on a regular basis to join forces and promote youth health. Stakeholders from all

¹ Source: Gemeente Almere (2010). Monitor Voortijdig Schoolverlaten. Verkregen op 10 juni, 2012 van http://www.almere.nl/leven_en_werken/onderwijs_en_studeren/

these parties were eager to collaborate with Team NL, especially since AGGA is currently focusing on children rather than on adolescents and all parties are keen to include older age groups and on the participation of young people. Almere offers several vocational educations (MBO and HBO) where students acquire knowledge about health, food, life style and the environment. Multiple initiatives contribute to the Floriade, an important international event to be held in Almere in 2022, with the overall theme 'Growing green cities' and sub-themes: 'feeding the city', 'healthying the city', 'energizing the city' and 'greening the city'. The Floriade has strong implications for the municipality and policies designed and executed to realize the Floriade and the related initiatives, and important partners (in terms of research and student involvement) are also Aeres Hogeschool (school of Applied Sciences in Almere), the Floriade Academy and the Flevo Campus, organizing think tanks, research and student projects and initiatives tailored towards designing and investigating food systems, sustainability and citizen engagement in Almere as a 'living lab'. The Floriade matters for CO-CREATE because, since the municipality has committed to this massive project, it affects the city in several ways:

- The ambitions are similar to CO-CREATE: making food systems healthier and sustainable, with citizen engagement
- The food systems are researched, made visible and influenced, in particular the relation between the rural surroundings and the urban consumer site, but also urban shops and sellers
- The built, natural and leisure environment is changing for a large part of the city, with sites being demolished and rebuilt, which is noticeable to the youth
- The infrastructure is changing (roads, bridges)
- There is a huge budget involved, paid for by tax, which citizens are aware of
- There is marketing and citizen perception involved ('it is too costly and ugly')

The Floriade Academy and Flevo Campus invite youth to develop ideas, thereby offering them a 'living lab'. Youth participation and ideas by youth are in general actively sought and promoted in Almere. A co-creating approach for adolescents focused on healthy environments and (over)weight is still missing, but this fits very well within the current local contexts. We are in touch with Aeres, have used some examples of the Floriade in the alliances, and are looking into collaborations and opportunities of making CO-CREATE sustainable on the longer term by linking it to the Floriade and related initiatives. <https://floriade.almere.nl/growing-green-cities/>

Reaching out to under-represented youth in the Netherlands: lessons learned and decisions made regarding the composition of the Alliances and the identification of co-facilitators

In the Netherlands, there are many opportunities for youth to participate in public affairs, in particular youth councils appointed by municipalities and/or by secondary schools. However, research shows that there are sharp differences within the youth population: adolescents from higher socio-economic background are more represented than adolescents from the lower socio-

economic background in youth councils (Feringa, 2013; Feringa & Tonkens, 2017)². This strongly correlates with differences in parents' educational levels (high/low) and tier of secondary education of adolescents (upper/lower). Actually, the tier of secondary school these young people are enrolled in serves as a proxy of their socioeconomic positions (Kloosterman 2010; Fukkink et al. 2016; Van Daalen 2010). On the lower tier, vocational high schools, 'VMBO's', have higher portions of students whose parents have lower educational levels and disadvantaged social backgrounds while on the upper tier, high schools for university preparation, 'VWO's', have higher portions of students whose parents have higher educational levels and are relatively more affluent (Cohen 2018; Kloosterman 2010).

Consequently, recruiting in various tiers of secondary education sounded as a relevant way to ensure that both under-represented adolescents and well represented adolescents get a chance to take part in the Alliances (in line with WP4 recruitment strategy). However, while investigating schools populated with a sizeable share of under-represented youths, the UvA team figured that it would be difficult to enrol them outside of school hours, since many of them have a job and contribute to the income of their households, so we looked for a way to hold the Alliances during class time. This entailed that teachers in charge of classes compatible with the CO-CREATE research to become important **gatekeepers**. Two of those teachers have attended the co-facilitators' training in Lisbon (September 2019).

Regarding the recruitment of **co-facilitators**, the UvA team contacted Almere-based community organization De Schoor as well as members of the youth councils and checked whether to collaborate, integrate and build on their work. De Schoor has been involved in supporting, developing and facilitating youth participation in general and youth councils in particular for 8 years. Eventually, two members of Almere's youth councils were recruited as co-facilitators in Almere. Each of them first engaged with the youth in both alliances. However, after a few meetings, in a rather natural and spontaneous way, each of them started to focus on a particular alliance.

On the side of Amsterdam, attempts to recruit co-facilitators involved contacts with youth organisations like Humanity in Action, United Network of Young Peacebuilders, Butterfly Works, DOCK, societal organizations like JOGG and academic student organisations. In the end, the co-facilitator for Amsterdam came through the network developed in Almere with AERES. Their students were interested to be connected to CO-CREATE as an internship and learning opportunity. While selecting candidates, the UvA team looked at the kind of youth in the alliance in relation to the skills of the co-facilitator, and also at practical things like «could they start right away in September» and «would it be a problem to travel to Amsterdam from Almere». Tasks assigned to the co-facilitators are: writing PAR minutes; making photos and videos; making a vlog, supporting the internal communication (between the facilitation team and the youth); and helping with small on the spot tasks.

² Feringa's point is also that even though on paper participation is possible, many councils get an inwardly turned culture, become 'closed' and have weak ties to their constituency.

In addition to the 2 Almere-based teachers, 3 co-facilitators attended the co-facilitators' training held in Lisbon (September 2019).

Recruiting adolescents in Dutch schools

While approaching gatekeepers in **Almere**, Team NL was told by members of the municipality and AGGA that youth with a practice level education were deemed an underrepresented group of youth in terms of political participation. These gatekeepers connected Team NL with the **PRO Almere** school, whose students are not able to follow regular education, due to (a mixture of) cognitive challenges, behavioural problems and/or poverty (entree criteria include lagging behind for three years and being below 18), so that eventually students are issued a certificate acknowledging their basic labour market skills in different directions (such as catering, stores, construction). In particular the teachers at the 'entree klas' thought the CO-CREATE project connected very well to the youth in the activities they need to do to complete the certificate that provides access to regular education. The school was also interested in relation to the "Healthy School" label they have and pursue to keep, as do 335 other secondary schools in the Netherlands. This label concerns a national initiative, partnered by several health organizations and Ministries (including Education, Public Health, Agriculture and Social Affairs), and establishes coordinators internal and external to the school and an action plan which, when accomplished, promotes healthy behaviour in schools and assures the possibility to use the "Healthy school" label (see: <https://www.gezondeschool.nl>). Therefore, the UvA team successfully engaged with the possibility to enrol two exam classes (of about 15 students each) of the PRO Almere school, leading to the setting of two alliances in Almere.

In Amsterdam, the UvA team reached out to the **Montessori Lyceum**, a school based in the centre of Amsterdam, preparing for the higher secondary educational degrees (VWO and HAVO). Montessori schools are based on the Montessori education philosophy, in which emphasis is placed on stimulating individuality and initiative coming from the students learning needs. Generous amount of rooms for open meeting spaces are offered. To know one another personally, and to make communication easy; are other focal areas of the Montessori philosophy. The hierarchy is very flat and critical and 'out of the box' thinking is highly appreciated in this setting. Education should be focussed on gathering knowledge but also other (intra- and interpersonal, and creative) skills. Hence, learning is approached as a lifelong process and creativity is welcomed. The Montessori Lyceum in Amsterdam is a recognized 'culture profiling' school. The coordinator of the 'culture profile' of the school in charge of all the arts projects, gave Co-create access to the school. Students choosing this school are mostly from middle to high-income families. There is a random selection done in Amsterdam, so the 12-year olds have to fill out a couple of choices in terms of the high school they want to go. Then the random selection decides where they go. For the Montessori Lyceum this means the youth is not all coming from the neighbourhood where the school is. The teachers specifically choose for this kind of educational setting. The hierarchy is very flat and critical and 'out of the box' thinking is highly appreciated in this setting. The 4th year students of the Montessori Lyceum need to select an elective course that runs 1 hour a week for a couple of months. CO-CREATE's youth alliance programme was shaped to fit the mould of being an elective. The purpose of the 'elective program' for the fourth-year students is to broaden their perspective. They have to

choose 1 elective but are free to choose which one. Modules are offered on a wide range of topics like philosophy, dance, drawing, photography, climate change, Spanish. The CO-CREATE elective course started in September 2019 with 10 participants, that chose to take part in the elective themselves.

Alongside the Montessori Lyceum, the UvA team explored possibilities to set up an alliance in less privileged areas of Amsterdam. In South-East, North, and certain parts of West there is a more multicultural low-income population of which the youth is less likely to be involved in societal or political debates and less likely to be active in letting their voice be heard regarding political and societal issues. The UvA team managed to hold a WP4 mapping session in a mixed income, multicultural neighbourhood in West. The UvA team worked half a year on getting access to lower income areas like South-East and Nieuw-West through connections with youth organizations and other organisations, directly through contacting schools, for example by offering an opportunity of a project that their students could chose as an internship. This could only work if the UvA team would have found a sustainable welfare or youth organisation partner, and this was not the case. The reason for seeking collaboration with a welfare or youth organisation is twofold: the CO-CREATE project would be an internship for the youth so it was a requirement from their school. And secondly, Team NL wanted to start a non-school-based alliance, in collaboration with an organisation based within society with the prospects for this organisation to continue after the CO-CREATE team finished their work. The UvA contacted a range of youth organisations and youth work organisations (7), in collaboration with the Amsterdamse Aanpak Gezond Gewicht (AAGG), a large local governmental organisation staffed to decrease obesity amongst children in Amsterdam (till age 12) and more recently among youth, through research and lots of projects implemented in the community. Unfortunately, it did not work out. Along the process, the UvA team learned that even though the contacted organisations expressed interest and were enthusiastic to support kickstarting a CO-CREATE alliance, however, when getting close to the materialization, none of the organisations felt they had enough personnel capacity to be the lead partner.

2.3. Youth recruitment in Norway

Fieldwork preparation in Norway: selecting municipalities, identifying gatekeepers and recruiting co-facilitators

In order to recruit for a diversity of youths and to include different societal and ethnic backgrounds, the CO-CREATE Team Norway (UiO) decided to focus on Oslo, the capital city and the most populated area (693,491 inhabitants) and one rural area, Hadeland, located 70 kilometres North from Oslo, with a population of 27,892 inhabitants. Oslo is a highly divided city – the highest proportion of immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents live in Oslo, i.e. approximately 33% of the population in the capital city. The largest groups of immigrants in Norway are from Poland, Lithuania, Sweden and Somalia. Oslo is also a contrasted city geographically, with lower SES and higher rates of ethnic minorities concentrating in the Eastern parts of the city. As a result, the UiO identified two political units within the capital city, namely Søndre Nordstrand and Vestre Aker (low and high SES areas, respectively).

UiO partnered with youth non-governmental organisation Press – Redd Barna Ungdom (Press - Save the Children Youth), a formal CO-CREATE partner. Press is politically and religiously independent, and consists of youth between the ages of 13 and 25. Press works on structural causes of violations of children's rights, and therefore focuses on changing large systems so that as many children as possible can get even better opportunities. Press announced and selected the **co-facilitators**. They informed youth organizations about the positions and asked applicants to submit a short text about themselves, their organizational background and why they wanted to be a co-facilitator. Out of the four applicants for three jobs, the UiO team choose for the three young ones (+/- 17 years old) to have them all at an equal level. Two of the co-facilitators (at Søndre Nordstrand and Vestre Aker) are involved in Press.

In Norway, there are varied opportunities for adolescents to have a voice in the local context. As a result, the UiO team could consider a variety of gatekeepers. Most municipalities have established youth councils or similar bodies for children and young people to be able to influence local politics. The youth councils are, as of September 2019, mandatory for all municipalities. They still work varyingly, and few municipalities have strong youth councils with real and meaningful participation, but they all (are required to) have one. The age range is usually 12-20 years. There are major differences between youth councils in how they work and how active they are. The differences go on mandate and composition. How well they work probably also varies with how much resources are devoted to this in the individual municipalities. The municipalities report that the areas over which young people primarily have influence are cultural measures (such as concerts and other events) and the establishment of measures such as youth clubs and youth cafés (meeting places for youth). The school is the most important recruitment arena for members of municipal participation bodies, but young people are also recruited from leisure clubs and youth organizations. Schoolchildren from resourceful homes are over-represented in youth councils. There are no formal demands for representation in youth councils (recruited in different ways). In a report from 2011 “Ungdom, makt og medvirkning” (“Youth, Power and Participation”) (BLD 2011), it is assessed that the real decision-making power of many contributing bodies is considered small. The fact that a group of young people allocates a sum of money to various youth activities in the municipality at an annual meeting makes them to small extent real players in local politics. Additionally, there is a wealth of youth organisations that would be suitable to become partner of CO-CREATE researchers. CO-CREATE Team Norway identified 9 youth organisations (beyond Press) that were likely to help with co-facilitating and potentially continuing the alliance in the future. All of them were called and have seemed interested in the project and said that they would spread the word, although it seems the contact has not resulted in anything specifically thus far, and this seems to be equally the case across the three chosen locations. Obviously, there is a value in informing the youth organizations about the CO-CREATE project. One important aspect of youth participation is that youth run initiatives should be respected and included by adult run initiatives. By informing the youth organisations about the Alliances the CO-CREATE team Norway have made sure to let them know that they are welcome if they want to participate, now or later.

Recruitment of adolescents

In each community, the facilitators and country lead met with a wide array of gatekeepers, the most useful ones proved to be the following:

Gran at Hadeland – Secretary of the youth council, having a stand at the school, the co-facilitator

Søndre Nordstrand (37,913 inhabitants, southernmost borough of Oslo, with the highest rate of immigrant population) – the leader of the youth council, the secretary of the youth council, having a stand at school, the leader at one of the youth club, possibly social/youth workers.

Vestre Aker (49,153 inhabitants, Western district within Oslo) - the secretary of the youth council and the leader of the only (new) youth club, stand at the school, the co-facilitator

In all areas the recruitment of youth chiefly involved facilitators and co-facilitators and occurred through the youth council and youth clubs, through Students at upper secondary school (at a stand during break time and eventually during class time) and through youth organizations, either political, religious or thematic (health and/or social justice). A number of incentives were announced to the youth:

- Opportunity to meet other youth and get new friends
- Something to put on your resume
- Valuable experience with research methods, good preparation for further studies
- Gift card for 500 NOK
- Pizza at the information meeting (and food at the other meetings)

In spite of significant efforts (from June 2019 till December 2019) and a few meetings with youth in Søndre Nordstrand, the UiO had to give up due to too few adolescents attending. Before making such a decision the UiO had visited the school and talked to almost every class in the general study program, so they were hoping at least five people would want to join the alliance. Unfortunately, only one boy showed up. He was offered to join the other Oslo alliance. The UiO team realized that the name “alliance” in Norwegian can be mistaken for controversial/radical political party. While advertising the CO-CREATE project it turned out that quite a few people did also get negative vibes from the word “alliance” in Norwegian. They immediately stopped using the word in recruitment settings and decided to change the youth alliances to “CO-CREATE-groups” instead to avoid more misunderstandings. The difficulty of recruiting youth in Oslo might also be that engaged youth in Oslo already have several options if they want to work with politics. In contrast, there are few organizations in Hadeland.

Since January 2020, the UiO team in collaboration with Press are organising another Alliance based on Press membership.

Hadeland

Hadeland High School, the school where the UiO team recruited youth from and where Alliance meetings take place (in a classroom), does provide several vocational education programs. These are: electricity and electronics, construction work, healthcare, childhood and youth development, Service and Transport, Technical and Industrial Production and Restaurant and Food Processing.

Vestre Aker

The UiO team recruited youth and are holding Alliance meetings at Persbråten High School. This school does not provide vocational education programs, but have two sports programs, one generally connected to Sports and Physical Education and one for Top-level sports. The alliance members who do not attend Persbråten High School do not attend vocational education programs.

Press Alliance

Youth are recruited from Press local groups and organize longer and fewer meetings (in order to make it easier to attend for the youth with busy schedules). Due to the restrictions on gatherings of groups of people (COVID-19 pandemic), UiO and Press are holding this alliance digitally. To begin with they were considering recruiting from Press local groups outside of Oslo: Drammen and Asker og Bærum Press. Drammen is about an hour outside of Oslo, has 69 472 inhabitants and 30% of the population is first- and second-generation immigrants (according to the national statistical institute of Norway). Asker og Bærum are two municipalities about half an hour outside of Oslo, with respectively 62 103 and 127 732 inhabitants, and 21,7% and 22,5% immigrants. Both could be described as (semi) urban and it is usual to live in these municipalities and commute to work in Oslo. Asker and Bærum is usually considered high SES. But: since Team Norway ended up with having to arrange this meeting(s) digitally, they agreed to invite in all Press-members, from all over the country and try to focus more on national policies. The reason for this is that they hope to get more participants. Since Drammen and Asker & Bærum Press were informed about the opportunity first, they might be well represented at the meeting, but this could also not be the case.

2.4. Youth recruitment in Poland

The recruitment of adolescents in Poland involved the CO-CREATE team Poland (country lead and facilitators), 7 co-facilitators, 3 gatekeepers (3 teachers from respective schools) (2.06. 2019-30.09.2019). The three-stage approach was used to recruit the location, gatekeepers, and participants: (1) selecting the geographic location to represent diversity, (2) the selection of the schools in each geographic location, (3) establishing the pre-Alliance collaboration within the organization (the school). To recruit the co-facilitators, Team Poland initially contacted the representatives of Polish Youth Parliament, however researchers didn't get any response. After discussing the issue of conducting the alliances meetings with school gatekeepers and principals it was decided that due to legal circumstances (that the meetings should be led by at least 18 years old co-facilitators since most participants supposed to be minors) and taking into account that the

meetings of alliance could potentially take place in-between the meetings held in schools (e.g., for additional activities to be done such as vlogging), as well as the safety of participants during the alliance activities (i.e., the meetings held in school settings supervised by facilitators and co-facilitators), it was decided to recruit co-facilitators among psychology students below 23 years old at SWPS university and university organizations (such as student council, student science clubs). The CO-CREATE team Poland reached potential co-facilitators either by e-mail or organizing recruitment meetings. To recruitment criteria were: former or current engagement in youth or student organization or any experience with working with youth, willingness to work with youth between 16-18 and facilitate the group processes (such as creating a policy idea), English language skills at least at B1-B2 level. By applying this approach, Team Poland have recruited 7 co-facilitators.

Stage 1: selecting location to represent diversity and inclusiveness

The Alliances are established in three locations, two rural-urban communes (Polish: gmina), Swidnica and Miejska Gorka, and one urban commune, Wroclaw. A commune is the lowest administrative level in the country, with local government responsible for developing and implementing local policies (including, education, health, social development and equity-related policies). The three locations allow for accounting for inequalities in terms of economic, social, geographic aspects (e.g., low family income on average, social exclusion related to the transportation due to a lack of an infrastructure and/or public transport facilitating mobility to wealthier communes with more social, economic, employment, and educational opportunities).

The communes were selected using G-index of SES, which qualifies each commune in Poland based on personal income per capita in a commune. The G index refers to taxable income per capita in a commune. The G-index therefore allows to determine the communes in Poland that are in the lowest SES areas and thus require social and educational subsidies from the national government.

The two rural-urban communes (Miejska Gorka, Swidnica) represent the lowest SES (G index below 75% of the national average). They are communes with small population, higher distance from cities with more educational, economic, and employment opportunities, and poor or moderate public transport system. See Miejska Gorka https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miejska_G%C3%B3rka https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miejska_G%C3%B3rka and Swidnica <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C5%9Awidnica>. The urban commune (Wroclaw) represents the highest SES (G index above 125%), a large and diverse population (metro area > 1 million, with diverse educational, economic, and employment opportunities, and well-developed public transport system. For local information see e.g. Wroclaw <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wroc%C5%82aw>. The CO-CREATE team had been conducting their previous research in these three communes and therefore the schools in the respective communes were approached as the first option, due to their previous contacts with stakeholders and schools in the regions. Also, it was agreed that the two smaller communes shouldn't be further than approx. 80 km from the city of Wroclaw (for the feasibility of holding alliance meetings for the facilitators and co-facilitators). As the two schools in Miejska Górką and Świdnica were contacted first and they both agreed, thus, other potential schools

were not approached. The overall population of Świdnica commune is 57,041 and Miejska Górka is 9,288 (Polish Central Statistical Office, 2019; available from: <https://stat.gov.pl/en/topics/population/population/population-size-and-structure-and-vital-statistics-in-poland-by-territorial-divison-in-2019-as-of-30th-june,3,26.html>) Wrocław (city) is 640,648 (Polish Central Statistical Office, 2019, available from: <https://stat.gov.pl/en/topics/statistical-yearbooks/statistical-yearbooks/demographic-yearbook-of-poland-2019,3,13.html>).

Stage 2: selection of schools

In each location, schools were chosen as the local organization supporting the Alliances. Schools were chosen for participants' safety, due to legal regulations (being minor until 18 years old; a legal requirement is to obtain an active parental consent for activities of youth younger than 18 years old), sustainability potential, and the Institutional Ethics Board recommendations.

In Poland, communes with a small population may have 1-2 high schools only. Miejska Gorka has only one public high school. This approach (i.e. choosing a commune with one high school only) provides a unique opportunity to enrol young people across the socially and economically diverse population. The second location, Świdnica, has three public high school in the commune; all three high schools have similar profiles and students' achievements. CO-CREATE Poland select the first high school based on former contact established with the principal due to their previous research (they knew that the students of this high schools live in either Świdnica or other neighbouring urban-or rural areas which would cover the diversity requirements). In Wrocław, a public high school was chosen from the district of high economic diversity. The school is considered mid-tier in terms of student achievements and the majority of young people enrolled are living in the respective district of Wrocław.

Stage 3: The Pre-Alliance collaboration

Across the three invited schools, the CO-CREATE team conducted a series of meetings with the head teacher, the school counsellor [with a degree in social work, or psychology, or education sciences], the teachers interested in youth empowerment, social, and health issues (preliminary identified by school principal), and youth representatives (including youth and student government representatives) to discuss the details of the Alliance. This included its content, the delivery, the feasibility, the conditions in terms of time, location, the outcomes, and integration with the existing activities and programs. There were between 3 and 6 pre-Alliance collaboration meetings in each location.

The pre-Alliance collaboration led to establishing the following rules of Alliances:

(1) in each location, the Alliances will take place at the school facilities, to secure youth safety; it was agreed that the actual timing of the Alliance (i.e., whether it will take place during the time when the

classes are held or it will not overlap with the school curriculum) will be discussed together with Alliance participants and gatekeepers across locations, the Alliance activities were not included as a part of the official school curriculum (i.e., no credits for participation).

(2) in each location, the school counsellor and the teachers engaged in promoting youth empowerment and youth health and equality would help to promote Alliance participation, engagement, and maintenance. They will also inform youth at schools about the opportunities to join Alliances. Additionally, the CO-CREATE team met with youth (without teachers' presence) in each location (during the classes and after classes), to provide information about Alliances and opportunities to join. Team Poland have also indicated that there will be some thank-you gifts for the participation, which will be agreed upon with Alliance participants (e.g., powerbanks) and some catering will be offered during the Alliance meetings. Student government body representatives in each school will be invited to join the Alliances (it was not followed up, if the participating Alliance members were enrolled in any organizations, e.g. student government body);

(3) preliminary timeframe for each Alliance was discussed in each location. To accommodate public holidays (December, April), school holidays (January/February), and the final exams period (May/June), the feasible number of meetings was established. This was done in collaboration with the school representatives, co-facilitators, and youth representatives (potential participants). Team Poland have set the very preliminary dates for 6 monthly meetings in each location (November till April). Conducting Alliance meetings more than once per month was not feasible, according to the involved school, potential participating youth, and facilitators;

(4) the diversity and inclusiveness issues were discussed as the core aspect of the Alliances; teachers, counsellors, and youth participating in the pre-Alliance collaboration (e.g., school council members) declared to search for and invite youth with various background and experience to secure the inclusiveness and representativeness of a variety of youth involved. In particular, gatekeepers in each school agreed to individually talk to some potential candidates for the Alliance participants, that were known to them as representing diversity.

Alliance communication strategy

We established private Facebook (Fb) groups for all alliances to communicate between the meetings of alliances and share materials/views/opinions. In addition, youth in Świdnica (A1) after the first meeting indicated that they would rather like to get important messages (for instance about the date, place, time of next meeting or materials being uploaded on Fb by co- or facilitator) via Messenger. In Wrocław (B1) additionally, youth decided to communicate via Whatsapp group. In Świdnica after second meeting co-facilitators also established Messenger groups of participants working on a particular policy idea to be in better touch with them (as participants indicated that they prefer Messenger groups communication). However, in all alliances, co-facilitators are also sending private messages via Messenger or SMS to particular participants (for instance to ask for consent to share vlogs they made or how come so far they didn't share their photovoice pics, to ask if they need any help). In general, Team Poland mostly use online communication to: 1) share

materials (that are used during alliances meeting by facilitators or co-facilitators, such as powerpoint presentations, templates of policy form, photovoice method instruction, sharing sheet); 2) Inform participants about important details of the Alliance meetings (place, date, time); 3) Remind about the purpose of the projects and in between the meetings homework (from meeting two constantly working on policy idea and policy idea form, otherwise dependently on the activities planned, e.g., doing photovoice, vlogs); 4) Facilitate the awareness of system thinking while developing the policy idea (sharing examples of already existing policies, social campaigns, examples of youth being socially concern, e.g. The Bite Back 2030 initiative); 5) Share other relevant encouraging to act within alliance materials (e.g., Team Poland shared through all three alliances the short vlogs that participant made during the third or fourth meeting). It was agreed that the on-line communication is supposed to be facilitated by co-facilitators, however, facilitators are also obligated to supervise the process/share relevant information with participants. So far, alliances members are mostly passively observing the activity at Fb groups, reacting with fixed options that FB is providing (e.g., “like it”, “love it” reactions), they rather don’t initiate discussions/ask questions. Team Poland found that the best way to encourage people to be more engaged in online communication is setting polls with questions (e.g., How far are you with policy form filling out? Do you need more time? If one answer is that they need help or more time, Team Poland are approaching the person via private message to ask how they can help).

2.5. Youth recruitment in Portugal

Fieldwork preparation in Portugal: identifying gatekeepers and selecting municipalities

In order to recruit for a diversity of youths, the CO-CREATE Team Portugal (CEIDSS) identified the scout organisation CNE (National Group of Scouts) as most relevant **gatekeeper**. CNE is a non-formal movement of youth education, non-profit, non-political and non-governmental. Currently it counts with over 72.000 scouts in 1.100 local groups on the national territory, the autonomous regions of the Azores and Madeira. Scouting is based on a “learning by doing” system. Through activities that are designed, developed and implemented by the project method and team work, the goal is to have scouts working on the following development areas: character, affective, intellectual, physical, social and spiritual. According to the age range, these activities may involve building, games, exploring, hikes or community service, but above all, are intended to reflect the challenges that young people find during their life cycle, preparing them for an active citizenship, relationships, environmental sustainability and integral personal development. The Catholic Church decided to adopt scouting to pursue its goals, like other religious confessions did, but there are some scouts that doesn’t follow the religion way. Young scouts are perceived as “citizens-in-the-making”, learning relevant knowledge, values, and skills while being prepared to exercise their citizenry in the future, when they reach adulthood, in a good way by adopting “a distinct set of responsibilities as active citizens whilst Scouts”. These members of voluntary organisations are more civically and politically active than non-members. Scout associations are described as a positive connection with socialising and engaging young people into politics as other types of voluntary associations, they constitute contexts for the development of politically relevant skills. CNE is the largest Portuguese scout association, as well as

the biggest Portuguese youth association. CNE offered a potential to reach out not only to youth with high or middle socio-economic status but also youth with a lower socio-economic status or there may also be some young people from other nationalities.

Therefore the CEIDSS team contacted CNE at national level (former chairperson of the World Scout Committee and, through him, one of the members of the National Group of Scouts' pedagogical office), The pedagogical office sent information about CO-CREATE to several Scout groups located around Lisbon to see which ones could be interested and willing to participate in the project. This strategy influenced the way the CEIDSS team identified the **three geographical areas/political units**. In selecting the scout groups, the CEIDSS team had to consider the distance and time that would be needed to perform the WP5 activities, since CEIDSS' headquarters is located in Lisbon. For this reason, contacts were only established with Scout groups in the Lisbon district. In WP4, the selected municipalities were Oeiras and Cascais. In addition, CEIDSS has a long experience in working with these municipalities since they have national and international projects taking place in these municipalities, such as COSI Portugal and MUNSI. So, the CEIDSS team maintained these two participating municipalities and added Lisbon. Five Scout groups showed interest to be part of the project. CEIDSS contacted directly the Scout groups and after this, only three Scout groups were willing to meet in person and move forward with the project, the Scout groups of Oeiras, Parque das Nações (based in Lisbon) and São Domingos de Rana (based in Cascais).

Cascais

Cascais is a coastal town, 30 kilometres west of Lisbon. Cascais is an urban municipality outside of the Lisbon municipality but located within the Lisbon district It is cosmopolitan and one of the richest municipalities in Portugal. The population is 206,479, in an area of 97.40 km². In the beginning of 2018, Cascais was chosen as the European Youth Capital. The underlying idea was to bring together young people not only from Portugal but also from diverse countries and geographic points of Europe. Cascais is a very dynamic and innovative municipality that develops several projects involving young people. This was one of the reasons Team Portugal chose Cascais and also because they have a lot of health-related initiatives. In this municipality, the group of Scouts of "São Domingos de Rana" counts with 140 members.

Lisbon

Lisbon is the capital city of Portugal, incorporated in a metropolitan region with 2.8 million people. This has been one of the municipalities chosen by young people to live and study. These young people are from different nationalities, mostly from Brazil, Africa and other European countries. Here we can find a lot of diversity. In this municipality, the group of Scouts of "Parque das Nações" has 185 members. Young people, families and communities are part of this Scout group and aims to empower and give children and young people tools to become responsible and active citizens.

Oeiras

Oeiras is an urban municipality located in the district of Lisbon with 174.249 inhabitants. According to Immigration and Borders Service, foreigners represent around 5% of the total population. Oeiras is therefore a diverse municipality, enriched with people from Brazil, Cape-Verde, Ukraine, Romania, Moldova, China, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, ST. Tome and Principe, Spain, UK among others. The municipality of Oeiras integrates the Portuguese Healthy Cities Network, an association of municipalities that share the concern for the development of a healthy and balanced urban environment. In this municipality the group of Scouts of Oeiras counts with 120 members.

The **co-facilitators** were recruited through the same Scout groups (Oeiras, São Domingos de Rana and Parque das Nações) because they are used to work with adolescents and they already know the adolescents aged 16 to 18 years old. When the CEIDSS presented the project to the responsible of each Scouts group, they mentioned that they would also need someone to be a co-facilitator, explained the role of a co-facilitator and what it means and asked them if they could help us find or suggest people from their group who would be interested in becoming a co-facilitator. In the Scouts group of São Domingos de Rana there were four people interested, in Oeiras one and in Lisbon three. Then CEIDSS team spoke directly to all of them and they were all selected to be co-facilitators, due to their interest to be part of the Project. 5 co-facilitators attended the (international) co-facilitators' training session held in Lisbon (September 2019). After the Co-facilitator training, CEIDSS team decided to gather all the Portuguese co-facilitators in order for them to get to know each other, to discuss the activities of the project together and to review the content of the previous training and clarify some questions that they might had. Particularly for the co-facilitators from Parque das Nações, this was also an opportunity for them to get to know the CEIDSS team and to get more information about the project in person. In this meeting, the facilitators also handed them a document (the Co-facilitator Commitment or "Contract") which contained detailed information about their roles and responsibilities as co-facilitators, as well as about what they would get from the project, namely the payment conditions and amount. They took the document home in order to carefully read it and returned it signed on 20 November 2019.

In each alliance the co-facilitators were given the freedom to organize themselves as they wished: they decide, according to their availability, who is going to be present in the session. Communication between facilitators and co-facilitators is maintained through a WhatsApp group (2 facilitators and all the co-facilitators – 4, 3 or 1 depending on the Alliance). The co-facilitators are slightly older (between 20 and 22 years old) than the youth from the Alliance.

Organising the Alliance work and the recruitment of youths in collaboration with the scout groups

For the recruitment of the adolescents, CEIDSS facilitators gathered at the same time the adolescents aged between 15 and 18 years old and their parents (in Portugal, parental consent is required up

until 18). Due to some time-conflicts it was only possible to schedule the meetings in November 2019. Facilitators made a presentation for the parents and adolescents where they presented and explained the Project. They informed that every adolescent participant will benefit from the project in many ways, including that they will learn new things, collaborate with researchers and other youth, talk with stakeholders, work to try to make a difference, make new friends, vlog/blog/use social media. In addition, adolescents were informed that they would get a certificate that they could include in the CV after the Project. In this same meeting, it was given an invitation letter to all the adolescents as well as a sticker with a QR code for youth to sign up if they were interested. Facilitators also handed the consent form to the parents. Instead of individual thank-you gifts, the CEIDSS team opted to give a present to each scouts' association. They will decide what they do need. It can be a tent, or camping material. The recruitment of co-facilitators and of adolescents has been supported by the responsible person of the Scout group: an older member, who takes care of the management of the activities of this group and knows every member of the Scouts. In the Cascais group, since there were some adolescents aged 15 years old who were really keen on being part of the project, after discussing this possibility with WP5 team, 15 years-old were also allowed to sign up for the Project and to participate.

The youth have decided the place to hold the meetings. All the in-person meetings have taken place in the Scouts facilities. Because the adolescents live close to the Scouts facilities, it doesn't require much effort from their part to come to the meeting (facilitators are the ones that have to go to the youths. It's difficult to indicate exactly how often the Alliances meet because a Doodle is usually used, which has different possible dates for the youth to choose the one that is the most suitable and, in that way, it is possible to schedule the meeting. Sometimes there are 3 weeks, 2 weeks or even 1 week between meetings, so it varies. The youth have given suggestions of the snacks they would like facilitators to prepare and adapt for a healthier version.

The Portuguese Alliances have decided from the beginning that they would have only 10 meetings, contrary to the 12 planned on the protocol. This was decided due to the school calendar and the delay with the recruitment. The assigned period of collaboration with the Alliances is until the end of May 2020, in accordance with the school calendar. From June onwards, the adolescents start the national exams, not having further availability to participate in the Alliance's meetings. Additionally, the recruitment took longer than expected which resulted in a late start of the meetings – December 2019. Therefore, and regarding the gap of 2/3 weeks between each meeting, they decided to have only 10 meetings. To keep momentum in between meetings, they created a WhatsApp group for each Alliance with all the Alliance members. Besides being a channel for communication about logistic aspects of the meetings, it's also a space for discussion and it can encourage the youth to reflect more about their ideas and take action.

2.6. Youth recruitment in the United Kingdom

Identifying political units and gatekeepers and recruiting co-facilitators

In order to reach to a diversity of adolescents the UK Team (LSHTM) decided to focus on Greenwich (London) and Hackney (London). They selected each of these **political units** based on their levels of diversity and deprivation (they used a similar framework that they applied to recruitment for WP4). The UK Team also had existing contacts and connections in both boroughs that connected them to the local public health authority in both councils.

Both areas – Hackney and Greenwich – are very diverse and have notable numbers of ethnic, religious and other minority populations, as well as considerable deprivation. The LSHTM team are not targeting specific individuals, rather going for a diverse recruitment via the various channels which, de facto, represent a range of young people e.g. the Children in Care Council in Hackney which represents young people who have been in foster care.

- Hackney Borough Profile
 - About 25% of Hackney’s population is under 20 (2011 census)
 - Culturally diverse area with significant ‘Other White’, Black and Turkish/Kurdish communities (See table 1 in report)
 - 6th most diverse borough in London
 - 11th most deprived LA in England (2015 IMD); 17% of its LSOAs were in decile 1 (most deprived)
 - We will recruit through youth organisations in Hackney, many of which have recruitment strategies of their own that seek to represent and outreach to diverse youth
- Greenwich Borough Profile
 - About 26% of Greenwich population is under 20
 - Majority White/white British (62%); 19% black/black British; 11.7 % Asian/Asian British
 - Context of Royal Greenwich and its Children and Young People
 - 25% of total population under 18
 - The under 18 population has risen approximately 14% since 2011 and will rise a further 3% by 2021. The fastest growing age group will be 16 to 17-year olds (9% increase).
 - Children and young people from Black and minority ethnic groups account for approximately 64% of children aged 0-17 living in the area

In order to recruit **co-facilitators** for each of the Alliances, the LSHTM team asked adults they were in contact with at the councils and other leading organisations (e.g. Young Hackney) to mention CO-CREATE to particular people they knew who may be interested. The first person to put himself forward as a co-facilitator in Hackney immediately seemed like the right person so they looked no further; he has worked with both Young Hackney and the Children in Care Council as well as many other civil society organisations locally. In Greenwich, the UK team interviewed two people who put themselves forward through contacts at the council; they chose the current co-facilitator largely for

practical purposes as the other was about to start university in a different city. A co-facilitator contract was made.

In Greenwich, in December 2019, the contact with the co-facilitator became increasingly limited towards the final stages of alliance recruitment. For this reason, the UK team made the decision to terminate the contract with their co-facilitator and to hire two part time research assistants to join CO-CREATE to act as a co-facilitator and facilitator for the alliance(s). One of the research assistants is an acting facilitator in one of their alliances in the school. She facilitates alliance activities, helps plan meetings, and completes field notes. The other research assistant takes PAR minutes as a co-facilitator would and supports with any other admin/tasks needed by the facilitator.

Recruiting youth

For the UK Team the gatekeepers that proved most useful to reach out to adolescent participants for the Alliances have been Senior members of the Public Health teams in both councils, that have been actively engaged and excited to be involved in the project. They have introduced the researchers to various other organisations locally. Besides public health (Children and young people) and a youth organisation (Young Hackney) that works closely with young people the co-facilitator has been most helpful in reaching out to adolescents in Hackney given his many connections to existing local organisations. In Greenwich, Youth commissioning services has been most useful so far for helping to recruit young people. Youth commissioning services are responsible for overseeing and organising all youth programmes in the council). Youth commissioners are a group of local young people aged 13 to 19 (or up to 25 if the young person has a disability) from a diverse range of backgrounds. They receive a programme training young people to make professional decisions on the services available to young people in Greenwich. Young commissioners have the opportunity to do some of the following: support commissioning and procurement activities, lead on specific projects, run focus groups and consultation activities, participate in interview panels, sit on project boards, undertake research, monitor services, make recommendations about services. These objectives of the young commissioners' programme are similar to those of CO-CREATE and thus the LSHTM team thought it would be good ground for recruitment. The UK team didn't specifically reach out to underrepresented adolescents, rather they tried to reach out to a range of young people to aim for diversity. In Hackney, they reached out to schools in general but with little success/response. Talks with gatekeepers aimed at youth recruitment involved the all CO-CREATE team at LSHTM (research assistant; lead researcher and researcher). In Greenwich the co-facilitator attended the co-facilitator training in Lisbon and reached out to existing contacts within his former school and local hockey programme he is a part of to help with recruitment. Neither of these avenues resulted in successfully recruiting any young people.

Although it was written into their ethics protocol that they would provide vouchers to young people to thank them for their time in the alliance, LSHTM made the active decision not to mention this in the recruitment process as to not cross over into coercing young people into participating. Participating adolescents have received 20 pounds vouchers per Alliance meeting.

In Greenwich, the youth alliance is set up within a sixth form school and logistically organised by the main gatekeeper, the head of sixth form. Alliance meetings take place on Mondays at 2pm given that all the sixth formers finish school early, at 1:30pm on Mondays. The Alliance members meet in their common room. In January 2020, the alliance started as one large group of 12 but was split into two smaller alliance groups based on their areas of interest in pursuing policy ideas. Although they have formed two smaller groups, they begin and end each meeting in a large group to continue building group dynamic and streamline the facilitation process. Since the meeting room is quite large, the two groups still meet in the same room but at two separate tables.

In February 2020 the two Greenwich youth alliances were regrouped based on the young people's place of residence (the school within which both alliances are, has students that live in two local boroughs) to help them better tailor their policy ideas to their own local context.

In Hackney, logistical oversight for the alliance, i.e. organising room bookings for the Alliance meetings, is through Young Hackney. The meetings so far have all taken place in a room in the local town hall. The co-facilitator knows 3 of the 5 young people personally so the alliance was largely built around this connection. The young people feel comfortable in approaching and confiding in the co-facilitator about any sensitive issues regarding the alliance.

In both boroughs, to keep in touch with the alliance between meeting the LSHTM team have been using a whatsapp group. They also send email when necessary if there is a larger sum of information/material to send out—if this is the case, they communicate it to the young people over whatsapp that they should check their emails.

2.7. Youth recruitment and diversity

In this section we indicate achievements in terms of diversity among the youth recruited for the alliances. We do so from two points of view: in table 2 we present general characteristics and in table 3 survey data.

Based on the information provided by the facilitators, it is possible to sketch a profile of the recruited groups and their settings across the five countries (Table 2). Table 2 shows the number of participants and their gender, urban/rural differences, organizational embedding and the running period.

Table 2. The 15 Alliances and their settings in a nutshell

Alliance	Recruited youth	Gender	Rural-urban	Host organisation	Running period
Almere 1	13	11f/2m	197.000 inhabitants (periurban)	School	Since 02-09-2019 [16]
Almere 2	15	12f/3m	197.000 inhabitants	School	Since 02-09-2019

			(peri-urban)		[16]
Amsterdam	10	9f/1m	821.000 inhabitants (urban)	School	Since 02-09-2019 [12]
Wroclaw	20	20f/0m	641.607 inhabitants (urban)	School	Since 18-11-2019 [3]
Miejska Górka	20	18f/2m	9.288 inhabitants (rural-urban)	School	Since 25-11-2019 [3]
Świdnica	27	23f/4m	57.041 inhabitants (rural-urban)	School	Since 14-11-2019 [5]
Vestre Aker (Oslo)	13	7f/5m	49.153 inhabitants (urban)		Since 05-12-2019 [3]
Hadeland	12	8f/4m	27.892 inhabitants (rural)		Since 22-10-2019 [9]
Norway 3: Press Alliance	11	8f/3m		youth organisa tion	Since 29-03-2020 [1]
Lisbon	13	5f/8m	2.8 million inhabitants (urban)	Scouts group	Since 18-12-2019 [6]
Cascais	19	16f/3m	206.479 inhabitants (urban)	Scouts group	Since 30-11-2019 [5]
Oeiras	9	7f/2m	174.249 inhabitants (urban)	Scouts group	Since 15-12-2019 [4]
Greenwich A	7	3f/4m	286.186 inhabitants (urban)	School	Since 13-01-2020 [5]
Greenwich B	5	3f/2m	286.186 inhabitants (urban)	School	Since 13-01-2020 [5]
Hackney	5	3f/2m	279.665 inhabitants (urban)	Borough council	Since 08-01-2020 [4]
Total	199	153 f/ 45 m			

Given the local recruitment strategies, we were able to recruit 199 participants. Youth alliances members are overwhelmingly female (76,9%), mostly come from urban areas and are recruited in almost all cases through existing organizations: schools, scouts, PRESS and a council. The running period varies a lot across the 15 Alliances: some Alliances have set up quickly and have met quite a few times since the beginning of the school year (Amsterdam, Almere, Hadeland), allowing the Alliance members to build a strong relation and come up with varied policy ideas. In contrast, some Alliances have settled down somewhat later and were still in development at time of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Although girls were overrepresented in the Netherlands, Poland and Portugal, almost all alliances in these three countries consisted of girls and boys, except in one Polish alliance (only girls). In the UK and Norway, gender was balanced in all alliances and in one Portuguese alliance boys were overrepresented. In fact, the gender imbalance in the Dutch, Polish and Portuguese alliances

reflected the gender imbalance of the respective scout groups or school groups in which the Alliances were set. Notwithstanding, gender imbalance didn't prove problematic for the functioning of the alliances, since it didn't cause attrition and those in gender minority consistently participated throughout the whole process.

Table 3 – Youth diversity in the Alliances (WP7 Survey)

BACKGROUND QUESTIONS	UK (n=6)	NETHERLANDS (n=36)	NORWAY (n=21)	POLAND (n=58)	PORTUGAL (n=21)
Gender					
Female	67% (n=4)	78% (n=28)	62% (n=13)	91% (n=53)	57% (n=12)
Male	33% (n=2)	19% (n=7)	38% (n=8)	9% (n=5)	43% (n=9)
Missing		3% (n=1)			
Active member of a political or non-political organization					
No, and I have never been	50% (n=3)	81% (n=29)	67% (n=14)	22% (n=13)	38% (n=8)
No, but previously	17% (n=1)	19% (n=7)	5% (n=1)	45% (n=26)	5% (n=1)
Yes	33% (n=2)	0% (n=0)	28% (n=6)	33% (n=19)	57% (n=12)
Birth country					
UK/NL/Nor/Pol/Port	83% (n=5)	78% (n=28)	86% (n=18)	100% (n=58)	100% (n=21)
Country within Europe	17% (n=1)	0% (n=0)	5% (n=1)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)
Country outside of Europe	0% (n=0)	22% (n=8)	9% (n=2)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)
Mothers birth country					
UK/NL/Nor/Pol/Port	67% (n=4)	47% (n=17)	48% (n=10)	100% (n=58)	86% (n=18)
Country within Europe	0% (n=0)	3% (n=1)	38% (n=8)	0% (n=0)	5% (n=1)
Country outside of Europe	33% (n=2)	50% (n=18)	14% (n=3)	0% (n=0)	9% (n=2)
Fathers birth country					
UK/NL/Nor/Pol/Port	67% (n=4)	53% (n=19)	48% (n=10)	100% (n=58)	62% (n=13)
Country within Europe	0% (n=0)	3% (n=1)	38% (n=8)	0% (n=0)	5% (n=1)
Country outside of Europe	33% (n=2)	44% (n=16)	14% (n=3)	0% (n=0)	28% (n=6)
Missing					5% (n=1)
FAS categories					
Low FAS (0-6 score)	50% (n=3)	22% (n=8)	10% (n=2)	16% (n=9)	5% (n=1)
Medium FAS (7-9 score)	50% (n=3)	45% (n=16)	29% (n=6)	36% (n=21)	57% (n=12)
High FAS (10-13 score)	0% (n=0)	33% (n=12)	57% (n=12)	48% (n=28)	33% (n=7)
Missing			4% (n=1)		5% (n=1)

In addition to Table 2, Table 3 informs us about the ways in which the respective teams have achieved recruiting a diversity of adolescents along the criteria outlined in the recruitment protocol. Table 3 builds on the questionnaires filled by adolescents right after signing up for an Alliance, as part of WP7 (evaluation). The questionnaire partly uses indicators of the HBSC (Health Behaviour School-aged Children) Survey, such as FAS indicators (Family Affluence Scale). More details on the data and more detailed analysis will be provided in WP7 (UiO) reports.

Table 3 shows that all country teams have secured the recruitment of a **diversity of income groups**, including youths from low-income backgrounds. Most of the teams have recruited a comfortable majority of youths with little experience of political/organisational participation. The Portuguese team serves as an exception here and understandably so as they chose to recruit among scout groups. However, interestingly, they have recruited several youths who do not regard themselves as active members of an organisation. In terms of ethno-cultural diversity, in all countries with large migrant or post-colonial groups, the local teams have managed to recruit within young people of migrant descent (first generation in all countries except for Portugal and Poland and second generation in all countries except for Poland only – which was expected in the case of Poland, as there is not much ethno-cultural diversity).

3. Trained youth

Section 3 reviews how adolescents have been trained alongside taking part in the Alliances. In the Alliances young people have been facilitated to work together as a group, building on and integrating the information gathered in WP2, WP3 and WP4 to learn more about the systemic factors that affect health related lifestyles to produce policy ideas while preparing themselves for WP6 and creating input for WP7. Since formulating policies is the most important part of WP5, the engagement process contains a range of activities to tease out, refine, research, and prioritize policy ideas. As described in the Engagement Protocol (D5.1b, April 2019) and in the Alliance Handbook (November 2019), young people receive capacity building to collect information in order to support their policy ideas.

In line with the objectives of CO-CREATE and following from youth-led PAR, youth themselves eventually co-decide with facilitators and co-facilitators on the activities and forms of the alliances, e.g. in what way and how often they want to communicate and/or meet, what topics to discuss during their regular meeting, what capacity building they need to support their creation of policy ideas, etc. WP5's engagement protocol serves as a starting point and offers activities for young people to do. In total WP5 lead UvA have designed 10 meetings, lasting 1 to 3 hours. Youth and (co)facilitators jointly and openly decide on what they actually do, based on the same program being offered by facilitators and opened up for youth to change it. The changes and the reasons for that are documented in meeting minutes and Field notes and Alliance Logs.

The outputs and outcomes of the implementation of the CO-CREATE youth training and capacity building programme are to be analysed and discussed in Deliverables 5.3, 5.5 and 5.6, based on full-fledged data analysis of the observations reflected in the Field Notes. It is however possible to give an overview on the training activities that have been carried out in each country. Besides, to be able to discuss the involvement of adolescents in the training programme, we invited the facilitators to reflect on what the training programme was actually used for in the respective Alliances with regard to enhancing political efficacy and on the extent to which the adolescents people seemed to be involved in the selection of training activities in the respective Alliances. Section 3 largely builds on the responses of the facilitators, to which some analytical thoughts from WP5 lead were added. These thoughts form a baseline for further interactive data analysis in the respective countries and at WP5 level (See Deliverables 5.5. and 5.6).

3.1 Training activities in the five countries

Netherlands

Amsterdam:

System mapping exercise, photo voice, privacy/ethics, vlogging training, Conversational interview training & role games

Almere:

The two alliances in Almere partly did similar trainings, but their paths deviated at the same time, due to the challenges each of them faced, which were a bit different for B1 and B2. In particular, the youth in the alliance mentioned from the beginning that they liked only short explanations and they had a strong preference to start activities sooner rather than later, especially in terms of organizing a sports day. The other group focused on food (the foodbank and later food prices) were more patient. The facilitator team (facilitators, teacher, co-facilitators) that they will not take out their drive and speed completely, but facilitate them with applied parts of the training (e.g. system mapping, photo voice, interviews, youth advocacy) that helps them to continue. Overall, there were more training activities than proposed in the engagement protocol, due to the challenges applying to the PRO students.

Almere 1: photovoice; system maps; Instagram take-over, debating skills; searching on the Internet; studying the urban environment; training in interviewing and observation; Gaining a better understanding of the system level; workshop youth participation by co-facilitators)

Almere 2: photo voice; system maps; policy ideas; Instagram take-over; how to ask questions to researchers; debating skills, having a lunch (not in protocol, but in line with connecting to WP2 and WP3, activities co-designed with WOF) ; youth participation through Dutch videos; searching on the Internet; studying the urban environment and preparing an excursion (including research questions); training in interviewing and observation; Gaining a better understanding of the system level, policy proposals and choosing ideas they wanted to work on; workshop youth participation (by co-facilitators)

Norway

Hadeland: System mapping; Photovoice; Advocacy training; research training (some made a questionnaire). Two alliance members got help with formal email writing. So, training in Hadeland was mostly as protocol.

Oslo: Only system mapping. The UiO team tried to follow protocol but because of the situation (delayed recruitment and COVID-19 crisis) they were not able to do much. Consequently, they merged everything and provided more individual, additional support.

Press Alliance: System mapping; Photo voice

Poland

All Polish Alliances received training in system mapping, photo voice, vlogging, (advocacy was already provided). Youth training was mainly supported and given by the co-facilitators and with the facilitators supporting.

Portugal

All Portuguese Alliances received trainings in System Mapping, Photo Voice, Data Management, how they could do research and using websites. In Lisbon they also received interview training. Regarding the research, the CEIDSS team developed an e-book and added links to give them suggestions for research.

United Kingdom

All British Alliances received training in system mapping. Photo Voice and Vlogging are planned and therefore the LSHTM team arranged people who could help hold these workshops. In Hackney, survey training; the meaning of policy (while visit to the council).

3.2. Co-deciding training activities with the adolescents

Country teams were equipped with a training programme defined and refined at (supra-national) project level. To implement this, they had to involve recruited adolescents and local partners (in particular youth organisations) in decision-making regarding the Alliance activities and training. In most countries the adolescents have been involved – alongside facilitators and co-facilitators – in making decisions as to which training activities were deemed necessary for their Alliance, in particular:

- Policy definition/understanding what a policy idea is (with examples) in Poland; - Introduction to policy & example policy proposal form in the UK (Hackney)
- Research training (questionnaire) in Norway (Hadeland) and the Netherlands (Almere);
- Formal email writing in Norway (Hadeland), in the United Kingdom (Greenwich) and in the Netherlands (Amsterdam).

- Photo voice in the UK (Greenwich and Hackney - although eventually in Hackney young people were interested but expressed not having the time to participate in the training) and in Amsterdam
- Advocacy training in Amsterdam
- Debating skills, Organizing urban excursion/observation and Networking/connecting to stakeholders in Almere

In most countries young people were actively engaged in selecting the training activities. CO-CREATE Portugal carefully followed the engagement protocol and provided all the trainings planned, so there wasn't much for the youth regarding the selection of trainings. However, the facilitators helped the young people with research (by making the e-books and giving them feedback on the google forms they developed), as well as with the conversational interview (with the Q&As sessions and planning interviews with other experts). Therefore, even though they were not actively involved in selecting which trainings activities provided by the facilitators, the young people explored, with their help, the ones they felt that could be more useful for their policy idea progress.

Additionally, in countries where co-facilitators were recruited within youth organisations in particular (Norway and the Netherlands), co-facilitators were also involved in the selection of training activities. Furthermore, whilst most training activities were provided by the facilitators (following on training session organised by UvA in September 2019), some co-facilitators provided some of the training sessions (in particular advocacy training, both in Norway and the Netherlands - following on training session organised by UvA and Press in September 2019).

3.3. Enhancing political efficacy in practice: What was the training programme actually used for in the respective alliances

Across the 15 Alliances, the training programme appeared to be used for diverse purposes in the matter of capacity building for youth. This was confirmed by the respective facilitators in regular meetings with youth and in monthly coordination meetings with WP5 lead.

- **Help the alliance members to think about obesity in a systemic perspective:**

In all countries, system mapping training was used to aid the young people to think about obesity in a systemic perspective, i.e. an important step in better understanding public affairs around them. In Portugal, the system map training helped the alliance members recognize the multi-level factors related to obesity and how they are interlinked with each other, particularly factors clustering around dietary patterns or physical activities.

Additionally, the photovoice training helped the Portuguese youth to identify factors within their immediate surroundings that contribute to adolescents' obesity, likewise showing the systemic perspective of this problem. The increased awareness about own surrounding in relation to systemic problems of obesity was also observable among youth in Norway (Hadeland) and in Poland. To round

it up, researching and finding out about the existing policies on obesity also supported young people to more readily think of obesity as a systemic challenge. In Portugal, for example, the alliance members learned that taxing sugary-sweetened beverages led to the reformulation of these products, resulting in less sugar consumption. Similarly in Almere, honing debating skills and engaging in debates on obesity issues as well as organising an urban excursion for observation exposed young people to a mode of systemic thinking of obesity. In Poland, training in policy definition also has been proven to help the youths to understand what a policy idea is and supported young people to think about obesity in a systemic perspective.

- **Support the alliance members to come up with policy ideas (including the preliminary steps such as understanding what a policy idea is)**

Another important step in political efficacy, becoming able to come up with policy ideas was specifically addressed in all alliances.

In Portugal, the system map training was the starting point for the young people to think and discuss which issue they would like to tackle and then formulate their policy ideas. The research inspired them to revise it and in some cases even restructure the policy idea. Same in the Netherlands (Almere), the UK and Poland, training in the system mapping was used towards getting the young people to come up with policy ideas, as well as (in the case of Almere) photovoice, advocacy training, organising an urban excursion/observation and networking/connecting skills training. In Norway, system mapping training was also used to get the young people to come up with policy ideas, as well as photovoice training in the case of Hadeland.

Photovoice also proved necessary in that regard in Amsterdam.

In the case of Poland, more training activities were deemed useful by facilitators and co-facilitators to get the young people to come up with policy ideas, namely: Testing elements of policy ideas in the local community/young people's environment; Refining policy ideas using group discussion, revisiting system maps, photovoice results, testing elements of policy ideas; Planning for discussion of policy ideas with the local stakeholders (e.g., retail representatives, local authority representatives, media representatives).

In the case of the UK, an introductory training in policy & example policy proposal form was deemed necessary by facilitators and participating adolescents to get the young people to come up with policy ideas.

Judging from the diversity of training activities used to help young get acquainted with coming up with policy ideas illustrates how little evident it is for older adolescents who are not yet involved in some voluntary organisational activity or with little experience of activism.

- **Help the alliance members to refine their policy idea through gathering information from their surrounding and environment**

In Portugal, with photo voice, youth started discussing which target group they would like to address as well as the settings they would like to work on (similarly in Amsterdam). Again in Portugal, the research done about other policies and initiatives, already in place, was crucial to further develop and strengthen the policy ideas. The Q&A sessions, that helped to put in practice the conversational interview training, were also very important to give new and different insights to the youth alliance members, helping them to define some aspects of their policy ideas. The Q&As alongside with the test for the dialogue forums really motivated them to refine their policy ideas, as well as the arguments to support it, preparing them for the next phase of the project (WP6).

in Almere, Photo voice was also used to help the young people to be acquainted with how to refine their policy ideas, as well as research training. Same in Norway (Hadeland). In Almere, more training activities were deemed necessary by the facilitators to get the participating adolescents to be acquainted with how to refine their policy ideas: networking/connecting to stakeholders, advocacy training and interviewing and organising an excursion.

Similarly, in Poland, in addition to photovoice, more training activities were deemed necessary by facilitators to get the youths refine their policy ideas, namely: Budgeting for activity; planning for testing elements of policy ideas using SMART method; testing elements of policy ideas in the local community/young people's environment; refining policy ideas using group discussion, revisiting system maps, photovoice results, testing elements of policy ideas; planning for discussion of policy ideas with the local stakeholders (e.g., retail representatives, local authority representatives, media representatives).

In the case of the UK, an introductory training in policy & example policy proposal form was deemed necessary by facilitators and participating adolescents to get the young people to be acquainted with how to refine their policy ideas.

Several countries, such as The UK and the Netherlands, also decided to support young people in making and distributing surveys to their network. The surveys were then used to refine their policy ideas, either to tweak the direction the policy is taking or to gauge the need for their ideas to be implemented.

Overall, helping the young people to refine their policy ideas entailed a diversity of training activities in most alliances who have reached that stage yet. This too illustrates that this step was not self-evident for older adolescents who are not yet involved in some voluntary organisational activity or with little experience of activism.

- **Help the alliance members to project themselves as (political) actors and ready to engage with other (political) actors (policy-makers, experts committed to executive bodies, opinion leaders, and so on)**

In Portugal, especially the Q&As sessions (where they could ask queries but were also questioned about their policy idea by the young professionals invited), as well as the pilot-test of the dialogue forums, were very important to motivate them to get ready for engaging with other actors. The

advocacy training was also crucial for the youth to become more confident to communicate with stakeholders and advocate for their ideas.

Advocacy training and formal email writing in Amsterdam and Hadeland (as well as research training/questionnaire in the case of Hadeland). In Almere, other training sessions were used in that regard: system mapping, photo voice, debating skills, networking/connecting to stakeholders, research training and organising an excursion.

In the Polish Alliances, photovoice and advocacy training were used to get the young people to project themselves as (political) actors and ready to engage with other stakeholders as well as other training activities: Policy definition/understanding what a policy idea is (with examples); planning for testing elements of policy ideas using SMART method; testing elements of policy ideas in the local community/young people's environment; refining policy ideas using group discussion, revisiting system maps, photovoice results, testing elements of policy ideas; planning for discussion of policy ideas with the local stakeholders (e.g., retail representatives, local authority representatives, media representatives).

In the case of Poland, some training activities were used towards other purposes deemed necessary by the facilitators and the co-facilitators: training in budgeting for activity for the purpose of getting the young people to know what actions could be carried out in order to refine a policy idea; vlogging training for the purpose of sharing the policy ideas with others; privacy/ethics guidelines while doing research for the purpose of raising awareness and responsibility for undertaken actions in order to refine a policy idea or doing research. Interestingly, Team Poland were the only one to mention privacy/ethics guidelines as a training activity in itself. More data is needed to know how other local alliances have dealt with this important matter with the participating youth.

As a whole, the entire CO-CREATE activities with youth were designed to increase the alliance members' confidence in interacting with stakeholders and policy makers particularly in discussing about their policy ideas. Through doing Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) activities such as photovoice or survey, young people created a more robust policy idea and therefore more informed and more prepared to discuss this idea when engaging with the stakeholders. By focusing more on issues that were relevant to their immediate surrounding and age group, young people also have a unique knowledge to share with policy makers which also boost their confidence in interacting with these duty bearers. The regular meetings, the group works, the increasing familiarity of obesity as a systemic issue, and the support from the facilitators and the co-facilitators also empowered young people to more actively take part in addressing the challenge of adolescents' obesity. This was observed quite uniformly by the facilitators across all countries.



4. Youth addressing the EU level strategy

Section 4 documents how we have refined the design of getting adolescents to address the EU-level policy

The overall aim of CO-CREATE is to reduce the prevalence of obesity among adolescents in Europe (particularly among disadvantaged youth) through policy actions to promote a healthier food and physical activity environment. The European Youth Parliament (non-governmental youth organisation, later on: EYP) carries out CO-CREATE activities by providing a chance to EYP membership to deal with the CO-CREATE topic and come up with policy ideas at the European policy level.

The point of the involvement of the EYP in CO-CREATE is to carry out a range of activities dedicated to the CO-CREATE topic during the EYP international session to be held in March 2022 (Novi Sad, Serbia, to be confirmed). The objectives of the collaboration are:

- to develop policy ideas at the European level and turn these ideas into recommendations to be submitted and discussed at the EYP General Assembly;
- therefore to invite EYP youth to critically address the policy agenda in the matter of childhood obesity prevention at the European level (in the spirit of supporting the formation of one's own opinion and consensus building against a European background, as usual in EYP activities).

Support needed from the EYP leading up to, during, and after the event:

- A commitment to the overall aim of formulating youth-led system-based obesity prevention policy proposals
- Assistance in organising a committee fully dedicated to the CO-CREATE topic (3 days full time), resulting in recommendations to be presented at the plenary session and discussed by other committees (preparing discussion points and amendments if need be) up until the plenary session, including:
 - Appointment of a co-facilitator for the committee work, expectedly a slightly older young person who had attended at least one of such EYP Session as a participant before (same profile as the 'chairpersons' usually appointed to guide committee work at EYP international sessions) well ahead of the session so that this person can partner with the facilitator and organise the session early enough (date)
 - Forwarding information material to potential committee members
 - recruiting committee members and ensuring that that a group of 15 adolescents aged 16-18 participate in committee work dedicated to the CO-CREATE topic



- Facilitating informed consent process and signatures for the research component
- assistance in passing pass on invitations to most committed adolescent participants (at least to committee members, and possibly also to delegates involved in writing amendments during General Assembly) to join a CO-CREATE Forum (namely a session geared at discussing the policy ideas reflected in the recommendation with stakeholders from the policy world and the corporate world, facilitated by the EAT Foundation as part of the CO-CREATE project)
- if voted, assistance in passing on the recommendation to the respective European Authorities

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This report is largely descriptive and focused on the activities carried out to recruit and to train young people to come up with refined policy ideas and discuss them with other stakeholders involved in childhood obesity prevention. The outputs and the outcomes of the Alliances are to be fully presented and discussed in subsequent deliverables 5.3, 5.5 and 5.6. Regarding the recruitment and the training of youth, the data presented in this report come to the fore to address the questions posed in the beginning of this report:

1. How did researchers recruit adolescents in relation to the proposed criteria and procedures and in relation to local opportunities and limitations?
2. Which recruitment channels have proved most productive?

A short answer to question 1 and 2 is that the CO-CREATE approach as reflected in the recruitment and engagement protocol (See Deliverables 5.1.a and 5.1.b) allowed for a diversity of recruitment channels and that all local activities remained within the initially designed framework, with a strong tendency towards established organizations as preferred recruitment channels, which proved most secure in terms of sustained and sizeable participation. As a result, most recruited young people engaged in Alliances run through schools or existing youth organization such as scout groups.

In more detail: thanks to their efforts and commitment to careful fieldwork preparation ahead of the kick-off of the Alliance work, the five country teams have identified local opportunities and limitations for youth recruitment, leading them to become able to recruit 199 adolescents to take part in their Alliance training activities. Although participants are in vast majority female and from urban areas, these adolescents are diverse in terms of political experience, income and ethno-cultural diversity (where relevant).

All country teams managed to identify recruitment channels, in particular secondary schools (The Netherlands and Poland) and youth organisations (scout groups in Portugal), with which they initiated partnership ahead of summer 2019. In Norway and the United Kingdom, adolescent recruitment proved more difficult and time-consuming than in the three other countries involved (except for Hadeland, Norway). Deliverable 5.5 will reflect the outcomes of the critical reflection and analysis carried out in collaboration with the respective country teams to interpret the challenges and the ways they have been addressed. At this point it seems to be the case that a stronger commitment from existing organizations is an important factor to secure the recruitment of sizeable and stable groups of adolescents for the purpose of participatory action research. Schools and scout organisations, but also youth organisation PRESS, can muster the collaboration of youth in their respective organization. More open forms of recruitment, in part in the UK and Norway, lead to less participants and less sustained participation, regardless of the incentives made available for all Alliance youth members-to-be. Faced with time constraints, it seems easier to recruit through existing organizations.

The diverse ways in which countries have recruited youth also sheds light on the total number of participants. We had originally estimated to recruit 225 youth, based in the calculation of 15 youth per alliance or 45 per country. Where we collaborated with schools and scouts, these numbers were achieved. In other cases, the number of participants per alliance or country is lower. This, however, needs not be a problem. The number of 15 per Alliance is not a goal. Rather, the goal is substantial (training, empowerment, co-created policy proposals) and as far as we can see now, smaller groups (less than 15) seem to work well to achieve this. In fact, many of the larger groups have split after the initial phase. Again, we need all data and a full analysis to conclude on this topic.

Moreover, the differences between countries are a desired outcome. Following on the Grant Agreement that included a model for all alliances, the recruitment and engagement protocols further specified this model and comprised the possibility to deviate from the protocols to allow for local fit while retaining the general logic of the set-up. Based on the protocols, the respective local teams made their own choices which led to alliances smaller and bigger than 15. The subsequent WP5 deliverables will show how local teams have managed the size of the Alliances so that they function well and fulfil their duties.

We will learn even more when it is possible to access the questionnaire and other results per Alliance (as reflected in Table 3), in particular the extent to which diversity at the country level translates into diversity at the Alliance level. Additionally, content analysis applied to the Alliance FieldNotes will provide complementary information regarding diversity (possibly reflecting situations in which alliance participants explicitly identified in a way or another (see Deliverable 5.5).

In our local engagement we found that youth recruitment worked faster through building on partnership with institutionalised organizations such as schools (Poland and the Netherlands) and scout groups (Portugal). However, resorting to such recruitment channels and host organisations, CO-CREATE research teams must walk a tight rope between securing the voluntary engagement of participant adolescents and the needs and temporalities of the organizations. This was expected and addressed through the setting of agreements with the partners ahead of the creation of the Alliances. Notwithstanding, along the unfolding of the training programme, new questions arise and the ambition to pursue a research agenda in a real context needs constant attention, especially in the difficult circumstances and high uncertainty due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Additionally, the example of Hadeland in Norway shows that open recruitment works as well, although it took longer time and entailed significant efforts on the side of the local CO-CREATE team, building on a variety of recruitment strategies and a variety of gatekeepers, including youth organisations.

Since recruitment in most case happened through schools and scouts, most of the youth stayed with the alliances most of the time. In those cases, peer recruitment was not necessary nor did it fit with the organizational context. For example, working within a school project means that once students have signed up and started, new students can hardly join. Having said that, young people did here and there invite a friend or a family member to join the alliances whenever the organizational structure allowed them to. Conversely, in the UK and Norway, peer recruitment happened as planned with some success (though limited). Therefore, more open recruitment takes longer time and effort, while working with existing organizations is more effective in terms of number of recruited youth, albeit carrying with it the limitations of the organizations.

Another important expectation was to reach out to youth beyond the usual suspects of youth participation, i.e. to young people with limited or no prior experience of youth participation. Our data provides evidence that in all countries a significant share of participant adolescents – if not the majority – were no active member of political or non-political organizations at the outset. This confirms the potential of CO-CREATE to let blossom and flourish unheard youth voices. In addition, in the Netherlands, Poland, and the UK, there is confirmed evidence that adolescents from low-income backgrounds have been successfully recruited and engaged in Alliance work.

This deliverable also pertains to training and asks:

3. Which training activities have been co-decided by youth and researchers?

In all Alliances, The training was largely implemented according to the CO-CREATE engagement protocol, with some adaptations where deemed necessary to meet the needs and/or the wishes of recruited adolescents in the local context. In Portugal and The Netherlands, some training activities were added to suit the local alliance and adolescents' needs (debating in The Netherlands) or to accommodate the circumstances of the COVID-19 measures (online Q&A sessions in Portugal). Based on our Participatory Action Research approach, the adaptations from the protocol were made in accordance with organizational contexts and in consultation with youth. Some of these adaptations were initiated by the young people themselves, for example when they felt a specific need to fully understand what is policy and what is a policy idea. These adaptations also had to do with other factors and constraints: working in a school context can limit the time slots available or the location of an alliance can be hard to travel to, for example. The actual training activities are thus negotiated given youth preferences and organizational constraints.

All countries and alliances worked with the core training modules combined with other, locally specific activities which were partly co-decided with youth. The activities were geared to the core goals of the Alliances: system-thinking, generating and refining policy ideas and political efficacy.

This was achieved in a collaborative structure which entailed young people, a (senior) research staff member and a (more junior) co-facilitator in each alliance working closely together, supported by repeated feedback within and between countries and joint problem solving across CO-CREATE. How the actual achievements of the Alliances emerged in the process, are assessed in deliverables 5.5 and 5.6, based on full data analysis, as well as assessing the impact of social distancing and other Covid-19 policies on training and the Alliances in general.

Importantly, it appears that a diversity of training activities included in the training program were used and combined to enhance the political efficacy of young people. This includes a better understanding of childhood obesity as a public issue that needs to be addressed in a systemic perspective towards the projection of oneself as a producer of policy ideas, for which one may become ready to engage with other (political) actors (policy-makers, experts committed to executive bodies, opinion leaders) in a dialogue forum dedicated to policy ideas formulated in the Alliances.



These are just a few central facets of enhancing political efficacy that appeared quite prominently and homogeneously across the five countries. Consolidated analysis might reveal more of such purposes. Similarly, consolidated analysis will allow us to know about the extent to which the expectations of facilitators at time of deciding which training activity match what the respective training activities eventually proved helpful for, in regard of the outputs of the Alliances.

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7. Appendix

7.1. Topic list – fieldwork preparation

All topics are important! For each topic described below, there is a main question that ought to be addressed comprehensively. There are also sub-questions to help, especially in case the main question does not suggest a straightforward answer.

To be sure what follows is not a survey questionnaire but a topic list (i.e. a set of topics that need to be addressed qualitatively) so, local teams are welcome to reformulate the questions and sub-questions in more suitable words to better match the local context.

Youth and politics in the local context

- **Main question: to what extent and in what ways do adolescents have a voice in the local context?**

- Are adolescents allowed to have a voice in local politics? For example: is there a youth council at the municipal level? If so, what is it meant to contribute?

- Are adolescents (and/or young adults) locally or nationally actively encouraged to have a voice in politics? If so, in what ways?

- Are there any recent or upcoming political changes or social conflicts that might affect WP5 recruitment and activities?

- What is demographic and socio-economic composition of the (young) population? Are there neighbourhood differences?

- Are there segments of the local population that are identified as on average less active on the political level? If so, is there any representative body/structure such as cultural community-based organisations that are likely to act as gatekeepers for our activities involving youth?

Youth organisations

- **Main question: Are there youth organisations that would be suitable to become partner of C)-CREATE researchers with regard to WP5-WP6 (particularly in helping us with co-facilitating and potentially continuing the alliance in the future)? Namely:**

o Youth organizations that have a democratic approach to their organization

o Youth organizations that knows about bottom-up approach to organization building

- o Youth organizations that do advocacy and engage in politics
- o Youth organizations that have systemic approach to obesity and health (non-individualizing)
- o Youth organizations that have commitment to health and/or youth empowerment/involvement
- o Youth organizations that have an organizational structure and have ways to recruit new members
- o Probably not youth organizations that are specifically too focused on one particular topic (e.g. only about cycling, etc.)
- o Probably not youth organizations that are linked to political parties
- Are there youth organisations and/or semi-formal youth-led movements already active on some topics related to ours, namely addressing youth mental health, nutrition, physical activity in a systemic perspective?

Schools

- **Main question: In what ways and to what extent can local schools help us reaching out to potential participants for the alliances?**
- How is secondary education organized in the two geographical areas? Is it track-based (e.g. gymnasium/vocational)? Until what age or which educational level/degree is education compulsory?
- Do secondary schools reflect local social-economic cleavages in the local context?
- Is there any period during which 16-17-year-olds are likely not to be able to take part in our training and engagement activities (e.g. exam periods, internship period)?
- Can secondary schools be approached directly for research purposes?
- Are secondary schools provided with a student participation system (e.g. student board)? If so, what is the leverage of these participative bodies?

Policy re nutrition and obesity (national/local context):

- **Main question: what is the official policy regarding youth health and overweight and is there a systemic component to it?**
- What are the (central/local) governmental/measures aimed at guiding adolescents regarding nutrition/healthy diet (i.e. national dietary guidelines, policies regulating food and drinks offered in schools or the nearby area, nutrition, health)? What is their key message? Do they rather aim at making adolescents healthier or thinner? Is there any evaluation of these measures?

- How are these initiatives/measures channelled to adolescents? -- e.g. dedicated school-based classes? Messages/posts on TV/social media?
- Which actors are involved in health and obesity-related policy and how are responsibilities distributed? What are the actors/professionals committed to health education/promotion who are likely to address obesity-related issues and/or body-image-related anxiety with adolescents? -- e.g. adolescent/youth health promotion clinics, etc.
- Is there any 'body positive' advocacy group (fighting obesity stigma and social consequences - even if not focusing on youth) active in your country/city?
- Are there any high influencers in the area of health and overweight? Who are the most influential political vloggers discussing health in your country? Is there any political angle in the way they address health in general or obesity in particular?
- Is there any research about how adolescents perceive obesity preventative measures? If so, do they reveal any noticeable (social/economic/ethno-cultural/geographical/historical) disparities?

Policy re physical activity, active transportation and the built environment (national/local context):

- **Main question: Are adolescents actively encouraged to engage in physical activity in your country/local political unit?**
- Are there compulsory PA classes in secondary schools?
- Are there (financial) incentives to engage in informal PA classes? After school sport activities? If so, please indicate who are the local actors/influencers in the matter.
- Are adolescents actively encouraged to engage in active transportation -- e.g. walking or biking to school, etc.? If so, please indicate who are the local actors/influencers in the matter.
- Are there any existing research data regarding how adolescents are engaged in physical activity and/or active transportation in your country/local political unit? If so, do they reveal any noticeable (social/economic/ethno-cultural/geographical/historical) disparities?

Body image norms:

- **Main question: to what extent and in what ways is obesity stigmatised in the local context?**
- Is there any research about the ways in which and the extent to which obesity is stigmatised in your country/local political unit?
- Is there any civil society organisation/social movement addressing body image issues in your country/local political unit? (e.g. plus size modelling?)

- Is there any segment of the local population that is likely to have a specific view on obesity/overweight due to a particular lifestyle or worldview, e.g. leading them not to view obesity/overweight in a similar way as the local mainstream view (on which we assume that existing obesity prevention policy is grounded)?

Diversity in the local context:

- **Main question: what are the diversity components that need to be considered to ensure that no population groups or communities are likely to be under-represented in the alliances?**
- Are there groups publicly known (in the local context) as marginalised or stigmatised, based on ancestry, ethnicity, religion/ideology or along any other cultural line? If so, are these groups organised? This would be useful to know to identify gatekeepers.
- Is there any official measurement of stigmatised groups in the local context?
- Is there any official measurement of ethnicity in the local context?



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